



## AGENDA

### AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 26 October 2021

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT\*

Membership:

Councillors Derek Carnell, Simon Clark (Chairman), Steve Davey, Simon Fowle, James Hall (Vice-Chairman), Ann Hampshire, Denise Knights, Peter Macdonald and Eddie Thomas.

Quorum = 3

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#### Information for the Public

\*Members of the press and public can listen to this meeting live. Details of how to join the meeting will be added to the website on Monday 25 October 2021.

Meeting Link: To be added.

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The Chairman will inform the meeting that:

(a) in the event of the alarm sounding, everybody must leave the building via the nearest safe available exit and gather at the Assembly points at the far side of the Car Park. Nobody must leave the assembly point until everybody can be accounted for and nobody must return to the building until the Chairman has informed them that it is safe to do so; and

(b) the lifts must not be used in the event of an evacuation.

Any officers present at the meeting will aid with the evacuation.

It is important that the Chairman is informed of any person attending who is disabled or unable to use the stairs, so that suitable arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency.

## 2. Apologies for Absence and Confirmation of Substitutes

## 3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 26 July 2021 (Minute Nos. 183 - 190) as a correct record.

## 4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or

person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

**Advice to Members:** If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

#### **Part A Report for Recommendation to Council**

5. Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2020/21 5 - 16

#### **Part B Report for the Audit Committee to decide**

6. Annual Financial Report 2020/21 and Audit Findings Report 17 - 146

### **Issued on Monday, 18 October 2021**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Audit Committee, please visit [www.swale.gov.uk](http://www.swale.gov.uk)

**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,  
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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<b>Audit Committee</b>		<b>Agenda Item:</b>
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 October 2021	
<b>Report Title</b>	Annual Treasury Management Report 2020/21	
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources	
<b>Head of Service</b>	Phil Wilson, Head of Finance and Procurement	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Phil Wilson, Head of Finance and Procurement and Olga Cole, Management Accountant	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	
<b>Classification</b>	Open	

<b>Recommendations</b>	1. Approve the Treasury Management stewardship report for 2020/21.
	2. Approve the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators within the report.

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Treasury Management activity is underpinned by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice on Treasury Management ("the Code"), which requires local authorities to produce annual Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on the likely financing and investment activity. The Code also recommends that members are informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice a year. The latest version of the Code was adopted by the Council in February 2021.
- 1.2 Treasury Management is defined as "the management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks". No Treasury Management activity is without risk; the effective identification and management of risk are integral to the Council's Treasury Management objectives.
- 1.3 For 2020/21 the Investments Section of the Kent County Council (KCC) Finance Department had operational responsibility for the daily treasury management duties. KCC Finance in undertaking this work had to comply with this Council's Treasury Management Strategy. Overall responsibility for Treasury Management remained with the Council.

1.4 This report:

- is prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code;
- details the implications of treasury decisions and transactions;
- gives details of the outturn position on Treasury Management transactions in 2020/21; and
- confirms compliance with Treasury limits and Prudential Indicators.

1.5 This report will be submitted to Council on 10 November 2021.

## 2. Background

### Borrowing Requirement and Debt Management

2.1 The overall borrowing position is summarised below:

	Balance on 31/3/2020	Movement in Year	Balance on 31/3/2021
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement	42,739	5,634	48,373
Other Liabilities (cost of leases for equipment)	0	0	0
<b>Borrowing Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>42,739</b>	<b>5,634</b>	<b>48,373</b>
External Borrowing	(25,000)	10,000	(15,000)
<b>Cumulative External Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>17,739</b>	<b>15,634</b>	<b>33,373</b>

2.2 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.

2.3 The reason for the increase in the CFR in 2020/21 is due to the capital expenditure on works undertaken as part of the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration project which were financed from borrowing. The CFR will be reduced in the future by the Minimum Revenue Provision which will be funded by contributions from rental income.

2.4 In 2020/21, the Council took out five loans from other local authorities. The details of the loans are in the table below:

Local Authority	Loan Value £'000	Borrowing Rate	Duration of the Loan	Borrowing Date	Loan Repayment Date
Essex County Council	10,000	0.50%	30 days	28/04/2020	28/05/2020
Gwynedd Borough Council	5,000	0.24%	32 days	28/05/2020	29/06/2020
Basildon Borough Council	5,000	0.24%	32 days	28/05/2020	29/06/2020
London Borough of Islington	5,000	0.08%	30 days	29/06/2020	29/07/2020
London Borough of Havering	5,000	0.27%	364 days	25/08/2020	24/08/2021

### Investment Activity

- 2.5 The Council holds significant investment funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During 2020/21, the Council held average daily cash balances of £38 million, (£33 million for 2019/20).
- 2.6 The Council's budgeted investment income for 2020/21 was £208,770 and the actual income received was £166,000, of which £135,000 was from the Council's long-term investment in the Church, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Mutual Investment Property Fund.
- 2.7 The table below summarises the Council's investment portfolio at 31 March 2021. All investments made were in line with the Council's approved credit rating criteria at the time of placing the investment, and still met those criteria at 31 March 2021.

Counterparty (MMF = Money Market Funds)	Long-Term Rating	Balance Invested at 31 March 2021 £'000
Invesco MMF	AAAmmf	3,000
JPM Liquidity MMF	AAAmmf	3,000
SSgA MMF	AAAmmf	2,275
Morgan Stanley MMF	AAAmmf	2,840
Black Rock MMF	AAAmmf	3,000
Aberdeen MMF	AAAmmf	3,000
Deutsche MMF	AAAmmf	3,000
<b>Sub Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>20,115</b>
CCLA Property Fund	unrated	3,000
<b>Sub Total Long-Term Investments</b>		<b>3,000</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>23,115</b>

2.8 The ratings above are from Fitch credit rating agency. A description of the grading is provided below:

- AAmmf: Funds have very strong ability to meet the dual objectives of providing liquidity and preserving capital.

2.9 The treasury management position for the year is summarised below:

<b>Investments</b>	<b>Balance on 31/03/20</b>	<b>Movement in Year</b>	<b>Balance on 31/03/21</b>	<b>Average Rate</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>%</b>
Cash and Cash Equivalents	21,238	(1,123)	20,115	0.08
Long-Term Investments	3,000	0	3,000	4.50
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>24,238</b>	<b>(1,123)</b>	<b>23,115</b>	
<b>Borrowing</b>				
Long-Term Borrowing	(5,000)	5,000	0	1.18
Short-Term Borrowing	(20,000)	5,000	(15,000)	0.57
<b>TOTAL BORROWING</b>	<b>(25,000)</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	

2.10 The long-term investment shown in the table above is the Council's investment in the CCLA Property Fund.

2.11 In keeping with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG's) Guidance on Investments, the Council maintained a sufficient level of liquidity through the use of Money Market Funds, overnight deposits and the use of call accounts.

2.12 The Council sought to optimise returns commensurate with its objectives of security and liquidity.

2.13 The criteria applied by the Head of Finance and Procurement for the approval of a counter party for deposits are:

- credit rating - a minimum long-term of A-;
- credit default swaps;
- share price;
- reputational issues;
- exposure to other parts of the same banking group; and
- country exposure.



2.14 The investments permissible by the 2020/21 Treasury Strategy were:

<b>Counterparty</b>	<b>Cash Limits</b>
Debt Management Office (Debt Management Account Deposit Facility) and Treasury Bills	Unlimited
Local Authorities	£3m
Major UK banks / building societies. (Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, RBS Group, Santander UK, Nationwide, Standard Chartered) unsecured deposits	£3m
Svenska Handelsbanken unsecured deposits	£3m
Leeds Building Society unsecured deposits	£1.5m
Close Brothers unsecured deposits	£1.5m
Money Market Funds	£3m each
Pooled Funds e.g. Absolute return, Equity income, Corporate Bond Funds	£3m each
CCLA Property Fund	£3m
Supranational Bonds	£3m in aggregate
Corporate Bonds	£3m in aggregate
Non treasury investments	To be agreed on a case by case basis
Covered Bonds	£3m in aggregate with £1m limit per bank

2.15 This administration takes the view that the Capital Strategy should reflect the following principles:

- investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply;
- using the ability to borrow at low rates of interest for the benefit of the physical and social infrastructure of the borough and for broader social value; and,
- ensuring that the costs of borrowing are manageable long term within the revenue budget

2.16 The maximum permitted duration for deposits is 13 months. The Head of Finance and Procurement in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance may consider longer duration. Bonds can be purchased with a maximum duration of five years.

2.17 The definition of investments in CIPFA's revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council, as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. At 31 March 2021 the Council held £3.599 million of a longstanding portfolio of 13 investment properties within the borough. These investments generated £0.2 million of investment income for the Council in 2020/21 after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 4.5%.

## **External Context**

- 2.18 The coronavirus pandemic dominated 2020/21, leading to almost the entire planet being in some form of lockdown during the year. The start of the financial year saw many central banks cutting interest rates as lockdowns caused economic activity to grind to a halt. The Bank of England cut the Bank Rate to 0.1% and the UK government provided a range of fiscal stimulus measures, the size of which has not been seen in peacetime.
- 2.19 The Bank of England (BoE) held Bank Rate at 0.1% throughout the year but extended its Quantitative Easing programme by £150 billion to £895 billion at its November 2020 meeting. In its March 2021 interest rate announcement, the BoE noted that while Gross Domestic Product would remain low in the near-term due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the easing of these measures means growth is expected to recover strongly later in the year. Inflation is forecast to increase in the near-term and while the economic outlook has improved, there are downside risks to the forecast, including from unemployment which is still predicted to rise when the furlough scheme is withdrawn.

## **Compliance**

- 2.20 The Council has complied with its Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for 2020/21 which were set as part of the Treasury Management Strategy agreed by Council in February 2020.
- 2.21 In Appendix I the outturn position for the year against each Prudential Indicator is set out.
- 2.22 The Head of Finance and Procurement confirms that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

## **Treasury Advisers**

- 2.23 Arlingclose has been the Council's treasury advisers since May 2009. Officers of the Council meet with Arlingclose regularly and high quality and timely information is received from them.

## **Capital Strategy**

- 2.24 The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy for 2020/21, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by Council on 26 February 2020.

## **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 Members are asked to approve the report.

## 4. Alternative Proposals

- 4.1 No alternative proposals have been considered and compliance with the CIPFA Code is mandatory.

## 5. Consultation Undertaken

- 5.1 Arlingclose have been consulted.

## 6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports delivery of the Council's objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	As detailed in the report
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	CIPFA produce a framework for managing treasury activities, called a 'Code'. Councils are legally required to have regard to this Code and members of CIPFA are expected to comply with its requirements. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the MHCLG Guidance
Crime and Disorder	Not relevant to this report
Environment and Climate/ Ecological Emergency	Not relevant to this report
Health and Wellbeing	Not relevant to this report
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Not relevant to this report
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Not relevant to this report
Equality and Diversity	Not relevant to this report
Privacy and Data Protection	Not relevant to this report

## 7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix I: Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators

## 8. Background Papers

None

## Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21

### Introduction

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. To demonstrate that the Council has fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code sets out the following indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

This report compares the approved indicators with the outturn position for 2020/21. Actual figures have been taken from or prepared on a basis consistent with, the Council's Statement of Accounts

**Capital Expenditure:** The Council's capital expenditure and financing may be summarised as follows.

<b>Capital Expenditure and Financing</b>	<b>2020/21 Actual</b>
	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>9,603</b>
Capital Receipts	24
Grants and Other Contributions	2,292
Reserves	848
Direct Revenue Funding	27
Borrowing	6,412
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>9,603</b>

## Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21

**Capital Financing Requirement:** The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose.

Capital Financing Requirement	31/03/21 Estimate	31/03/21 Actual	31/03/21 Difference
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total CFR	43,736	48,373	4,637
Less: Other Liabilities	0	0	0
<b>Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>43,736</b>	<b>48,373</b>	<b>4,637</b>
External Borrowing	(5,000)	(15,000)	(10,000)
<b>Cumulative External Borrowing Requirement</b>	<b>38,736</b>	<b>33,373</b>	<b>(5,363)</b>

**External borrowing:** as at 31 March 2021 the Council had £15 million of external borrowing.

**Operational Boundary for External Debt:** The Operational Boundary is based on the Council's estimate of most likely (i.e. prudent but not worst case) scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements, and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities comprise finance lease, and other liabilities that are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

Operational Boundary and Total Debt	31/03/21 Boundary	31/03/21 Actual Debt	Complied
	£'000	£'000	
Borrowing	45,000	15,000	✓
Other Long-Term Liabilities	500	0	✓
<b>Total Operational Boundary</b>	<b>45,500</b>	<b>15,000</b>	✓

### Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21

**Authorised Limit for External Debt:** The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Council can legally owe. The Authorised Limit provides headroom over and above the Operational Boundary for unusual cash movements.

Authorised Limit and Total Debt	31/03/21 Boundary	31/03/21 Actual Debt	Complied
	£'000	£'000	
Borrowing	55,000	15,000	✓
Other Long-Term Liabilities	2,000	0	✓
<b>Total Authorised Limit</b>	<b>57,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	✓

The Head of Finance and Procurement confirms that there were no breaches to the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary during 2020/21.

**Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream:** This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	31/03/21 Estimate	31/03/21 Actual	Difference
	%	%	%
General Fund Total	4.41	3.17	1.24

**Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest rate exposures, expressed as the proportion of net interest payable was:

Interest Rate Exposures	31/03/21 Actual	2020/21 Limit	Complied
	%	%	
Interest on Fixed Rate Investments	0	-100	✓
Interest on Variable Rate Investments	-100	-100	✓
Interest on Fixed Rate Borrowing	100	100	✓
Interest on Variable Rate Borrowing	0	100	✓

### Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators for 2020/21

**Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing were:

	31/03/21 Actual	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied
	%	%	%	
Under 12 months	100	100	0	✓
12 months and within 24 months	0	100	0	✓
24 months and within 5 years	0	100	0	✓
5 years and within 10 years	0	100	0	✓
10 years and above	0	100	0	✓

**Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than 364 days:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2020/21 £'000
Actual Principal Invested Beyond Year End	3,000
Limit on Principal Invested Beyond Year End	10,000
Complied	✓

### Investment Benchmarking

Average Actual Return on Investments 2020/21	Original Estimate Return on Investments 2020/21	Average Bank Rate 2020/21	Average 7-day LIBID Rate 2020/21
0.08%	0.30%	0.10%	-0.08%

(The London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) is a bid rate; the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks)

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<b>Audit Committee</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	26 October 2021
<b>Report Title</b>	Annual Financial Report 2020/21 and Audit Findings Report
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
<b>Head of Service</b>	Phil Wilson, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Phil Wilson, Head of Finance and Procurement
<b>Classification</b>	Open
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note the external auditor's Audit Findings Report (Appendix I);</li> <li>2. Approve the Letter of Representation (Appendix II) on behalf of the Council;</li> <li>3. Approve the Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021 including the Annual Governance Statement (Appendix III) including the adjustments set out in the Audit Findings Report.</li> <li>4. Approve that the Chairman of this Committee signs and dates the Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021.</li> </ol>

## 1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks the Audit Committee's approval of the Council's Annual Financial Report for 2020/21 and includes the external auditor's Audit Findings Report for their consideration.

## 2. Background

### Audit Findings Report

- 2.1 Grant Thornton UK LLP has been the Council's external auditors since 1 September 2012. Their audit of the financial statements began in August 2021.
- 2.2 The Audit Findings Report highlights the key matters arising from the audit of the Council's Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021. It is also used to report the audit findings to management and those charged with governance. Grant Thornton are required to report whether the Council's Annual Financial Report presents a true and fair view of the financial position, its expenditure and income for the year and whether they have been properly prepared. They are also required to reach a formal conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure value for money.

- 2.3 The Audit Findings Report is Appendix I. Grant Thornton will present this report to the Committee on 26 October.

#### Letter of Representation

- 2.4 The letter sets out assurances from the Council to Grant Thornton that relevant accounting standards have been complied with and gives further assurances that the Council has disclosed information where to withhold it would have undermined the accuracy and reliability of the Annual Financial Report. The letter also covers the responsibilities of the Director of Resources and those of the Council in producing the Annual Financial Report for the Council. Grant Thornton require the Audit Committee to approve the Letter of Representation before they can issue their opinion and conclusion on the Council's accounts for 2020/21.
- 2.5 The Letter of Representation is Appendix II. Grant Thornton will present this to the Committee on 26 October.

#### Annual Financial Report 2020/21

- 2.6 Appendix III is the Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021. This is the version published in July 2021 and Grant Thornton will detail any proposed amendments to the Annual Financial Report in their Audit Findings report (Appendix I).
- 2.7 There has been a change in the timetable for publication and approval of the Annual Accounts for 2020/21. The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 extended the statutory audit deadlines for 2020/21 and 2021/22 for all local authorities. The unaudited accounts had to be published by 31 July 2021 and the publication date for audited accounts was 30 September 2021 for all local authority bodies.
- 2.8 The draft unaudited accounts were published on 29 July 2021 and due to limited auditor capacity, the completion date for the audit date of the financial statements was delayed to October 2021.

### **3. Proposals**

- 3.1 The Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021 is attached as Appendix III.
- 3.2 The Director of Resources and the Head of Finance and Procurement would like to express their thanks to Grant Thornton for their efforts in completing the required audit work in time for reporting to this Committee. As in the past, the Director of Resources and the Head of Finance and Procurement will work with the external auditors to review the accounts and to continue to maintain and improve them in the future.

### **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Annual Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with statutory accounting principles. No other options have been considered as it is a legal requirement that the financial statements are prepared and signed by the person presiding at this meeting.

## 5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 Consultation has taken place with Grant Thornton throughout this process.

## 6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good financial management is key to supporting the Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The External Auditor's opinion is that the Council's accounting statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2021 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The production of the financial statements is a legal requirement under the 2015 Accounts and Audit regulations as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021.
Crime and Disorder	No direct issues
Environment and Climate/ Ecological Emergency	No direct issues
Health and Wellbeing	No direct issues
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No direct issues
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No direct issues
Equality and Diversity	No direct issues
Privacy and Data Protection	No direct issues

## 7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

7.1.1 Appendix I: Audit Findings Report

7.1.2 Appendix II: Letter of Representation

7.1.3 Appendix III: Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31 March 2021

## 8. Background Papers

8.1 Detailed working papers are held in the Finance Department.

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# The Audit Findings for Swale Borough Council

**Year ended 31 March 2021**

Swale Borough Council  
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**Your key Grant Thornton  
team members are:**

**Darren J Wells**

Key Audit Partner

E: [Darren.J.Wells@uk.gt.com](mailto:Darren.J.Wells@uk.gt.com)

**Oliver Durbin**

Manager

E: [Oliver.J.Durbin@uk.gt.com](mailto:Oliver.J.Durbin@uk.gt.com)

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The contents of this report relate only to the matters which have come to our attention, which we believe need to be reported to you as part of our audit planning process. It is not a comprehensive record of all the relevant matters, which may be subject to change, and in particular we cannot be held responsible to you for reporting all of the risks which may affect the Council or all weaknesses in your internal controls. This report has been prepared solely for your benefit and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. 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.

This Audit Findings presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260. Its contents will be discussed with management and the Audit Committee.

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# 1. Headlines

This table summarises the key findings and other matters arising from the statutory audit of Swale Borough Council ('the Council') and the preparation of the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 for those charged with governance.

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## Financial Statements

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Under International Standards of Audit (UK) (ISAs) and 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 Swale Borough Council and their income and expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2021; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting and prepared in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We are also required to report whether other information published together with the audited financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement (AGS), Narrative Report and Pension Fund Financial Statements), is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

Our audit work was completed remotely during June-October. Our findings are summarised on pages 5 to 15. We have identified disclosure and wording adjustments to the financial statements only, resulting in a £nil adjustment to the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Audit adjustments are detailed in Appendix B. Our follow up of recommendations from the prior year's audit are included in Appendix A.

Our work is substantially complete and there are no matters of which we are aware that would require modification of our audit opinion or material changes to the financial statements, subject to the following outstanding matters;

- Quality review by senior auditors of completed work
- receipt of management representation letter
- review of the final set of financial statements.

We have concluded that the other information to be published with the financial statements, is consistent with our knowledge of your organisation and the financial statements we have audited.

Our anticipated audit report opinion will be unmodified.

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# 1. Headlines

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## Value for Money (VFM) arrangements

Under the National Audit Office (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'), we are required to consider whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Auditors are now required to report in more detail on the Council's overall arrangements, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

Auditors are required to report their commentary on the Council's arrangements under the following specified criteria:

- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- Financial sustainability; and
- Governance

We have not yet completed all of our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by 20/01/2022. This is in line with the National Audit Office's revised deadline, which requires the Auditor's Annual Report to be issued no more than three months after the date of the opinion on the financial statements.

As part of our planning assessment, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. At the planning stage we did not identify any significant risks and based on our current understanding this remains the case.

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## Statutory duties

The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the Act') also requires us to:

- report to you if we have applied any of the additional powers and duties ascribed to us under the Act; and
- to certify the closure of the audit.

We have not exercised any of our additional statutory powers or duties.

We have completed the majority of work under the Code and expect to be able to certify the completion of the audit when we give our audit opinion.

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## Significant Matters

We did not encounter any significant difficulties or identify any significant matters arising during our audit.

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# 2. Financial Statements

## Overview of the scope of our audit

This Audit Findings Report presents the observations arising from the audit that are significant to the responsibility of those charged with governance to oversee the financial reporting process, as required by International Standard on Auditing (UK) 260 and the Code of Audit Practice ("the Code"). Its contents will be discussed with management and the Audit Committee.

As auditor we are responsible for performing the audit, in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and the Code, 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.

## Audit approach

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Council's business and is risk based, and in particular included:

- An evaluation of the Council's internal controls environment, including its IT systems and controls;
- Substantive testing on significant transactions and material account balances, including the procedures outlined in this report in relation to the key audit risks

### Delayed completion

The targeted completion date for the audit of the financial statements was 30/09/2021.

Due to limited auditor capacity this has been delayed to October 2021.

Lisa Fillery, who began as the new S151 officer as Director of Resources on 01/10/2021 will be in post to sign off completion procedures with the auditor.

## Conclusion

We have substantially completed our audit of your financial statements and subject to outstanding queries being resolved, we anticipate issuing an unqualified audit opinion following the Audit Committee meeting on 26 October 2021. These outstanding items include:

- Quality review of completed work
- Receipt of management representation letter; and
- Review of the final set of financial statements.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to record our appreciation for the assistance provided by the finance team and other staff. The impact of the pandemic has meant that both your finance team and our audit team faced audit challenges again this year, such as verifying the completeness and accuracy of information provided remotely produced by the entity and cover for sickness absence. This has caused an unanticipated delay in completing the audit testing. The audit team would like to note that the quality of workpapers received from the Council staff was good and that the team was responsive to our queries.

## 2. Financial Statements



### Our approach to materiality

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements and the audit process and applies not only to the monetary misstatements but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to acceptable accounting practice and applicable law.

Materiality levels remain the same as reported in our audit plan March 2021.

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### Council Amount (£) Qualitative factors considered

Materiality for the financial statements	1,560,000	This has been calculated based on 1.95% of your gross expenditure (cost of services) in the draft accounts
Performance materiality	1,170,000	This has been calculated as 75% of materiality for the financial statements, based upon our assessment of the likelihood of a material misstatement.
Trivial matters	78,000	This has been calculated as 5% of headline materiality

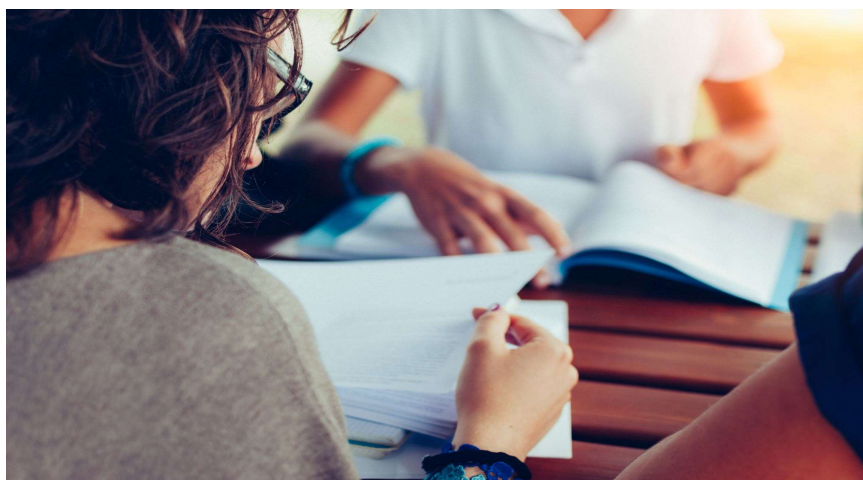


## 2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

Significant risks are defined by ISAs (UK) as risks that, in the judgement of the auditor, require special audit consideration. In identifying risks, audit teams consider the nature of the risk, the potential magnitude of misstatement, and its likelihood. Significant risks are those risks that have a higher risk of material misstatement.

This section provides commentary on the significant audit risks communicated in the Audit Plan.

Risks identified in our Audit Plan	Commentary
Management override of controls	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluated the design effectiveness of management controls over journals through walkthrough testing. The controls in place are considered reasonable.</li> <li>• Analysed the journals listing and determined the criteria for selecting higher risk unusual journals. For Swale Borough Council, our risk scoring identified post year end journals and those posted by irregular system users to be as having the greatest potential of being high risk based on the small number of people with access to the system. Our testing therefore focused on these items, no items to raise to the Audit Committee were found.</li> <li>• identified and tested journals made during the year and at the accounts production stage which scored high in our risk assessment. We tested this sample of journals for appropriateness by corroborating to supporting third party evidence of workings justifying the journal. All journals tested were considered appropriate and could be supported with sufficient evidence.</li> <li>• Gained an understanding of the accounting estimates and critical judgements applied by management and considered their reasonableness</li> <li>• We did not identify nor have we been made aware of, any significant unusual transactions.</li> </ul> <p>From the work performed, there were no items arising in respect to this risk which requires reporting to the Audit Committee.</p>



## 2. Financial Statements - Significant risks

### Risks identified in our Audit Plan

### Commentary

#### Valuation of land and buildings (including Council Investment Properties)

The valuation of the Council's land and building, investment properties and council dwelling assets represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements.

We designed our work to address the risk that the valuation of these assets was materially misstated.

During our audit procedures we have:

- Evaluated management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate, the instructions issued to the valuer and the scope of their work.
- Evaluated the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the valuation expert.
- Written to the valuer to confirm the basis on which the valuation was carried out.
- Challenged the information and assumptions used by the valuer to assess completeness and consistency with our understanding of the valuer's report and the assumptions that underpin the valuation.
- Tested a sample of revaluations made during the year to ensure they have been input correctly into your asset register.
- Evaluated the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management have satisfied themselves that these are not materially different to the current value at year end. The auditor has confirmed that assets have been revalued within the five year cycle specified by the CIPFA code.

Our audit work has not identified any issues in respect of valuation of land and buildings.

#### Valuation of pension fund net liability

The Council's net defined benefit liability represents a significant estimate in the financial statements. The estimate is complex given the large number of scheme members and the sensitivity of the estimate to key assumptions. We focused the significant risk to assumptions used by the actuary.

For the significant risk, we have:

- updated our understanding of the processes and controls put in place by management to ensure that the Authority's pension fund net liability is not materially misstated and evaluated the design of the associated controls;
- evaluated the instructions issued by management to the actuary for this estimate and the scope of the actuary's work;
- assessed the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the Authority's pension fund valuation;
- undertaken procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (as auditor's expert) and performing any additional procedures suggested within the report.

We have also:

- assessed the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Authority to the actuary to estimate the liability;
- tested the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in the notes to the core financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary.

At the date of writing, there are no issues arising from our work in respect of this risk which require reporting to the Audit Committee. We will update this position to the date of issuing our auditor's report.

## 2. Financial Statements - Other risks

Risks identified in our Audit Plan	Commentary
Error in expenditure recognition	<p>Audit procedures undertaken included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An inspection of transactions around the financial year end to assess whether they had been included in the correct accounting period. This also involved a review of post year end bank statement and invoice transactions. No cut-off issues were identified.</li> <li>• Sample testing of year end accruals for expenditure not yet invoiced and agreement to the bill value once received</li> <li>• Assessment of year end accruals in comparison to prior year total and size to ensure completeness. No obvious error or omission was identified.</li> <li>• Manual journals posted as part of the year end accounts preparation reducing expenditure were investigated and considered for reasonableness</li> </ul> <p>From the work performed, there are no issues arising from our work in respect of this risk which require reporting to the Audit Committee.</p>
Accounting for grant revenues and expenditure correctly	<p>Audit procedures undertaken to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions with management to understand the different types of material grants received during 2020/21 and what the conditions are in the grant agreements. Therefore concluding whether the Council should be acting as agent or principal for accounting purposes;</li> <li>• Walkthrough procedures to test the conditions for payment out to other entities and how these are monitored</li> <li>• Testing material grant revenues by corroborating to grant agreement, remittance and bank statement receipt to confirm whether the Council has accounted for these correctly.</li> </ul> <p>From the work performed, there are no issues arising from our work in respect of this risk which require reporting to the Audit Committee.</p>

## 2. Financial Statements – key judgements and estimates

This section provides commentary on key estimates and judgements inline with the enhanced requirements for auditors.

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management's approach	Audit Comments	Assessment
Land and Buildings – £67.0m Heritage Assets – £2.1m Investment Properties - £3.6m	<p>The council's accounting policy for non-current assets is at Note 1n. The policy covers accounting and valuation issues. The policies for heritage and investment assets are 1h and 1j respectively.</p> <p>Management have asked the valuer to consider the year end value of non-revalued properties and the potential valuation change in the assets revalued as at 01 January 2021 movement to 31 March 2021, applying industry average indices and to determine whether there has been a material change in the total value of these properties. The valuer's assessment of assets not revalued has identified no material change to the property's value.</p>	<p>In the course of our work we have performed an assessment of management's expert, checked the completeness and accuracy of the underlying information used to determine the estimate as well as considering the reasonableness of increase/decrease in estimate.</p> <p>The adequacy of disclosure of estimate in the financial statements has also been considered and is deemed reasonable.</p> <p>There were also a number of issues identified in the prior year Audit Findings Report which have been considered below.</p> <p><b>Valuation of Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) assets</b></p> <p>It was identified in the prior year that for specialised assets revalued using the DRC method, the costs were originally being calculated using an "All-in Tender Price Index" from the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS). In 2021, the valuer has confirmed that cost estimates have been resourced from a specialist quantity surveyor and BCIS rates updated and adjusted for the Swale Location.</p> <p><b>Investment properties</b></p> <p>As per the policy for annual valuation, management have had the full investment property portfolio revalued. To check this occurred, we obtained the listing of investment properties on the fixed asset register and agreed that all of them were included in the revaluation report. The revaluation methodology and assumptions used in the valuation are considered reasonable. There are no indicators of material misstatement.</p> <p><b>Heritage Assets</b></p> <p>Management have engaged an expert valuer of clocks to value the clock tower in Sheerness. They did not perform a full valuation exercise but their estimate has been accepted as it has been agreed to the insured value of the clock tower. The asset valuation in the accounts explains the upwards movement in heritage assets.</p>	

### Assessment

- **Dark Purple** We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- **Blue** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- **Grey** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- **Light Purple** We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

# 2. Financial Statements - key judgements and estimates

Significant judgement or estimate	Summary of management's approach	Audit Comments	Assessment																								
<b>Net pension liability – £66.6m</b>	<p>The Council's net pension liability at 31 March 2021 is £66.6m (PY £59.0m) comprising the Kent County Council Local Government Pension Scheme. The Council uses Barnett Waddingham LLP to provide actuarial valuations of the Council's assets and liabilities derived from scheme. A full actuarial valuation is required every three years.</p> <p>The latest full actuarial valuation was completed as at March 2019. Given the significant value of the net pension fund liability, small changes in assumptions can result in significant valuation movements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We assessed you actuary, Barnett Waddingham, to be competent, capable and objective</li> <li>We have used PwC as auditors expert to assess actuary and assumptions made by actuary – use table to compare with Actuary assumptions</li> </ul>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Assumption</th> <th>Actuary Value</th> <th>PwC range</th> <th>Assessment</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Discount rate</td> <td>1.95%</td> <td>1.95%</td> <td>●</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pension increase rate</td> <td>2.80%</td> <td>Set at CPI. PwC report explains that this is centre of range.</td> <td>●</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Salary growth</td> <td>3.80%</td> <td>3% – 4%</td> <td>●</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Life expectancy – Males currently aged 45 / 65</td> <td>21.9 20.5</td> <td>21.5 - 22.1 20.5 - 23.1</td> <td>●</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Life expectancy – Females currently aged 45 / 65</td> <td>24.8 23.3</td> <td>24.8 - 26.4 23.3 - 25.0</td> <td>●</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Assumption	Actuary Value	PwC range	Assessment	Discount rate	1.95%	1.95%	●	Pension increase rate	2.80%	Set at CPI. PwC report explains that this is centre of range.	●	Salary growth	3.80%	3% – 4%	●	Life expectancy – Males currently aged 45 / 65	21.9 20.5	21.5 - 22.1 20.5 - 23.1	●	Life expectancy – Females currently aged 45 / 65	24.8 23.3	24.8 - 26.4 23.3 - 25.0	●
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We assessed the completeness and accuracy of the underlying information used to determine the estimate and checked the reasonableness of the Council's share of LPS pension assets.</li> <li>We consider the disclosure of estimate in the financial statements to be adequate.</li> </ul>																											

## Assessment

- **Dark Purple** We disagree with the estimation process or judgements that underpin the estimate and consider the estimate to be potentially materially misstated
- **Blue** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider optimistic
- **Grey** We consider the estimate is unlikely to be materially misstated however management's estimation process contains assumptions we consider cautious
- **Light Purple** We consider management's process is appropriate and key assumptions are neither optimistic or cautious

## 2. Financial Statements - 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.

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Issue	Commentary
Matters in relation to fraud	We have previously discussed the risk of fraud with the Audit Committee. We have not been made aware of any other incidents in the period and no other issues have been identified during the course of our audit procedures
Matters in relation to related parties	We are not aware of any related parties or related party transactions which have not been disclosed
Matters in relation to laws and regulations	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.
Written representations	A letter of representation will be requested from the Council.
Confirmation requests from third parties	We requested from management permission to send confirmation requests to various financial institutions and other local authorities for bank and investment balances. This permission was granted and requests sent. We have received direct confirmation for all balances.
Accounting practices	We have evaluated the appropriateness of the Council's accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures.
Audit evidence and explanations/significant difficulties	All information and explanations requested from management was provided.



## 2. Financial Statements - other communication requirements



### Our responsibility

As auditors, we are required to “obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence about the appropriateness of management’s use of the going concern assumption in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and to conclude whether there is a material uncertainty about the entity’s ability to continue as a going concern” (ISA (UK) 570).

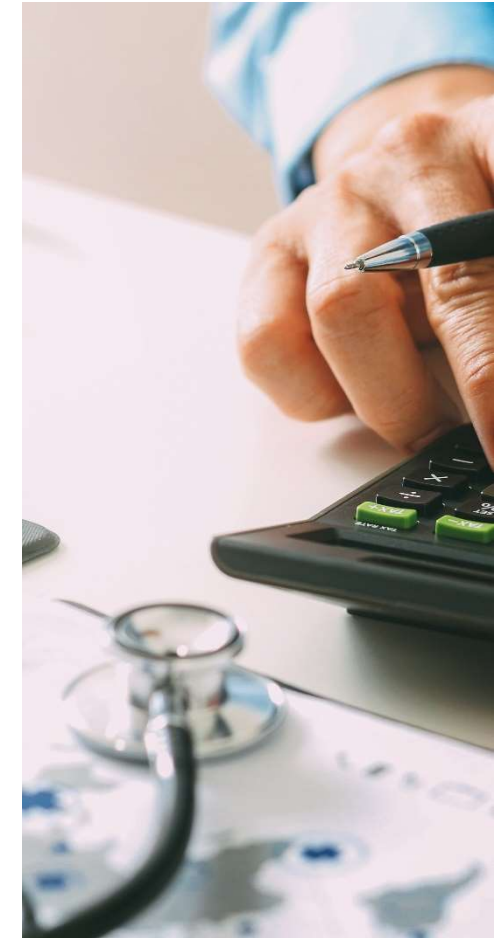
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Issue	Commentary
Going concern	<p>In performing our work on going concern, we have had reference to Statement of Recommended Practice – Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020). The Financial Reporting Council recognises that for particular sectors, it may be necessary to clarify how auditing standards are applied to an entity in a manner that is relevant and provides useful information to the users of financial statements in that sector. Practice Note 10 provides that clarification for audits of public sector bodies.</p> <p>Practice Note 10 sets out the following key principles for the consideration of going concern for public sector entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the use of the going concern basis of accounting is not a matter of significant focus of the auditor’s time and resources because the applicable financial reporting frameworks envisage that the going concern basis for accounting will apply where the entity’s services will continue to be delivered by the public sector. In such cases, a material uncertainty related to going concern is unlikely to exist, and so a straightforward and standardised approach for the consideration of going concern will often be appropriate for public sector entities</li> <li>for many public sector entities, the financial sustainability of the reporting entity and the services it provides is more likely to be of significant public interest than the application of the going concern basis of accounting. Our consideration of the Council’s financial sustainability is addressed by our value for money work, which is due within 3 months of this report.</li> </ul> <p>Practice Note 10 states that if the financial reporting framework provides for the adoption of the going concern basis of accounting on the basis of the anticipated continuation of the provision of a service in the future, the auditor applies the continued provision of service approach set out in Practice Note 10. The financial reporting framework adopted by the Council meets this criteria, and so we have applied the continued provision of service approach. In doing so, we have considered and evaluated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the nature of the Council and the environment in which it operates</li> <li>the Council’s financial reporting framework</li> <li>the Council’s system of internal control for identifying events or conditions relevant to going concern</li> <li>management’s going concern assessment.</li> </ul> <p>On the basis of this work, we have obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to enable us to conclude that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a material uncertainty related to going concern has not been identified</li> <li>management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.</li> </ul>

## 2. Financial Statements - other responsibilities under the Code

Issue	Commentary
Other information	<p>We are required to give an opinion on whether the other information published together with the audited financial statements including the Annual Governance Statement, Narrative Report and Pension Fund Financial Statements, is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.</p> <p>No inconsistencies have been identified. We plan to issue an unmodified opinion in this respect</p>
Matters on which we report by exception	<p>We are required to report on a number of matters by exception in a number of areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• if the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with disclosure requirements set out in CIPFA/SOLACE guidance or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit,</li> <li>• if we have applied any of our statutory powers or duties.</li> <li>• where we are not satisfied in respect of arrangements to secure value for money and have reported significant weaknesses.</li> </ul> <p>We have nothing to report on these matters</p>

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## 2. Financial Statements - other responsibilities under the Code

Issue	Commentary
<b>Specified procedures for Whole of Government Accounts</b>	<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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note that work is not required as the Council does not exceed the threshold;</li> </ul>
Certification of the closure of the audit	We intend to delay the certification of the closure of the 2020/21 audit of Swale Borough Council in the audit report due to incomplete VFM work.

# 3. Value for Money arrangements

## Revised approach to Value for Money work for 2020/21

On 1 April 2020, the National Audit Office introduced a new Code of Audit Practice which comes into effect from audit year 2020/21. The Code introduced a revised approach to the audit of Value for Money. (VFM)

There are three main changes arising from the NAO's new approach:

**Page 36** A new set of key criteria, covering financial sustainability, governance and improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness

More extensive reporting, with a requirement on the auditor to produce a commentary on arrangements across all of the key criteria.

- Auditors undertaking sufficient analysis on the Council's VFM arrangements to arrive at far more sophisticated judgements on performance, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

The Code require auditors to consider whether the body has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under the three specified reporting criteria.



### Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the body delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



### Financial Sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the body can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years)



### Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the body makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the body makes decisions based on appropriate information

## Potential types of recommendations

A range of different recommendations could be made following the completion of work on the body's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, which are as follows:



### Statutory recommendation

Written recommendations to the body under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. A recommendation under schedule 7 requires the body to discuss and respond publicly to the report.



### Key recommendation

The Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses in arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the body. We have defined these recommendations as 'key recommendations'.



### Improvement recommendation

These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the body, but are not made as a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the body's arrangements

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## 3. VFM - our procedures and action plan

We have not yet completed all of our VFM work and so are not in a position to issue our Auditor's Annual Report. We expect to issue our Auditor's Annual Report by December 2021. This is in line with the National Audit Office's revised deadline, which requires the Auditor's Annual Report to be issued no more than three months after the date of the opinion on the financial statements.

As part of our work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We have not identified any significant weaknesses from our initial procedures.

# 4. 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 Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and confirm that we, as a firm, and each covered person, are independent and are able to express an objective opinion on the financial statements

Further, we have complied with the requirements of the National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note 01 issued in May 2020 which sets out supplementary guidance on ethical requirements for auditors of local public bodies.

Details of fees charged are shown in Appendix C.

## Transparency

Grant Thornton publishes an annual Transparency Report, which sets out details of the action we have taken over the past year to improve audit quality as well as the results of internal and external quality inspections. For more details see [Transparency report 2020 \(grantthornton.co.uk\)](https://www.grantthornton.co.uk/transparency-report-2020)

## Audit and non-audit services

For the purposes of our audit we have made enquiries of all Grant Thornton UK LLP teams providing services to the Council. The following non-audit services were identified:

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Service	Fees £	Threats identified	Safeguards
Audit related			
Certification of Housing Benefit Claim	TBC	Self-Interest because this is a recurring fee	The level of this recurring fee taken on its own is not considered a significant threat to independence as the fee for this work was £26,000 in the prior year in comparison to the total fee for the audit of £54,769 and in particular relative to Grant Thornton UK LLP's turnover overall. Further, it is a fixed fee and there is no contingent element to it. These factors all mitigate the perceived self-interest threat to an acceptable level.
		Self review because GT provides audit services	To mitigate against the self review threat , the timing of certification work is done after the audit has completed, materiality of the amounts involved to our opinion and unlikelihood of material errors arising and the Council has informed management who will decide whether to amend returns for our findings and agree the accuracy of our reports on grants.

# Appendices

# A. Follow up of prior year action plan – Audit of Financial Statements

In 19/20 we identified one recommendation for the Council as a result of issues identified during the course of our audit. We agreed the recommendation with management and report below on the progress made by management.

Assessment	Issue and risk	Follow up
	At 31 March 2020 the impairment allowance for debtors had not been adjusted to take into account the impact of the pandemic, as management considered that it was too early to assess the extent of any adverse impact on the collectability of the debt.	Management considered actual recovery rates during the year to make their provisions assessment for 2020/21. No issues were identified.

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## Controls

- High – Significant effect on financial statements
- Medium – Limited Effect on financial statements
- Low – Best practice



# B. Audit Adjustments

We are required to report all non trivial misstatements to those charged with governance, whether or not the accounts have been adjusted by management.

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There have been no items identified by the auditor that management have not adjusted for (there are no unadjusted items to report)

## Impact of adjusted misstatements

There were no audit identified, adjusted misstatements in the financial statements

## Misclassification 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.

Disclosure errors	Auditor recommendations	Adjusted?
Annual Governance Statement. Section 6 is not clear on whether there are any significant governance deficiencies in year	A new paragraph is to be added in section 6 to clarify that there were no significant governance issues in year.	✓
Note 29 narrative had not been updated	To update the Assets Held for Sale disclosure to accurately reflect the position as at 31/03/2021	✓
Note 41 – Leases – amount disclosed as ‘later and 1 year and note later than 5 years’ is disclosed as £600,000 but should be £620,000 to reconcile to workings	Figure to be updated	✓
Note 45 capital receipts reserve movement varies to the Movement in Reserves Statement by £14,000	Note 45 and Movement in Reserves statement to be reconciled	✓

# C. Fees

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

<b>Audit fees</b>	<b>Proposed fee</b>	<b>Final fee</b>
Council Audit	46,769	46,769
Raising the bar / regulatory factors	7,500	7,500
Revised ISA requirements	6,500	6,500
VFM Report review	9,000	9,000
Any final adjustments to be agreed with PSAA	-	TBC
<b>Total audit fees (excluding VAT)</b>	<b>£69,769</b>	<b>TBC</b>

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The audit fee disclosure in the accounts has been reconciled to the above.

<b>Non-audit fees for other services</b>	<b>Proposed fee</b>	<b>Final fee</b>
Audit Related Services: Certification of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claim	TBC	TBC
Non-Audit Related Services: None	Nil	Nil
<b>Total non-audit fees (excluding VAT)</b>	<b>TBC</b>	<b>TBC</b>

# D. Action plan – Audit of Financial Statements

We have identified one recommendation for the Council as a result of issues identified during the course of our audit. We have agreed our recommendations with management and we will report on progress on these recommendations during the course of the 2021/22 audit. The matters reported here are limited to those deficiencies that we have identified during the course of our audit and that we have concluded are of sufficient importance to merit being reported to you in accordance with auditing standards.

Assessment	Issue and risk	Recommendations
	Accrued annual leave figure has been agreed to be recalculated every 4 years. The last calculation was performed in 16/17. Movement in figure is estimated to have been £22k which is trivial and so no adjustment has been made however the figure will be out of date next year.	Full recalculation to be performed in 21/22 <b>Management response</b> Agreed – calculation will take place in 21/22

## Controls

- High – Significant effect on financial statements
- Medium – Limited Effect on financial statements
- Low – Best practice

# E. Audit letter in respect of delayed VFM work



The Audit Committee  
Swale Borough Council  
Swale House  
East Street  
Sittingbourne  
ME10 3HT

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Grant Thornton UK LLP  
30 Finsbury Square  
London  
EC2A 1AG  
T +44 (0)20 7383 5100  
F +44 (0)20 7383 4301

For the attention of those charged with governance (the Audit Committee, Swale Borough Council).

Under the 2020 Code of Audit Practice, for relevant authorities other than local NHA bodies we are required to issue our Auditor's Annual Report no later than 30 September or, where this is not possible, issue an audit letter setting out the reasons for delay.

As a result of the ongoing pandemic, and the impact it has had on both the preparers and auditors of the accounts to complete their work as quickly as would normally be expected, the National Audit Office has updated its guidance to auditors to allow us to postpone completion of our work on arrangements to secure value for money and focus our resources firstly on the delivery of our opinions on the financial statements. This is intended to help ensure as many as possible could be issued in line with national timetables and legislation.

As a result, we have therefore not issued our Auditor's Annual Report, including our commentary on arrangements to secure value for money. We now expect to publish our report no later than 31 December 2021.

For the purposes of compliance with the 2020 code, this letter constitutes the required audit letter explaining the reasons for delay.

Yours sincerely

Darren Wells  
Director



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Grant Thornton UK LLP  
30 Finsbury Square  
London  
EC2A 1AG

**Please ask for** Lisa Fillery  
**Direct** 01795 417270  
**email** lisafillery@swale.gov.uk  
**Our Ref**  
**Your Ref**  
**Date** October 2021

Dear Sir or Madam,

## Swale Borough Council

### Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

This representation letter is provided in connection with the audit of the financial statements of Swale Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 for the purpose of expressing an opinion as to whether the Council financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards, and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 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 Council's financial statements in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 ("the Code"); in particular the financial statements are fairly presented 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 any 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. We are satisfied that the methods, the data and the significant assumptions used by us in making accounting estimates and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in accordance with the Code and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
- vi. 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.
- 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. Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code.
- ix. All events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which International Financial Reporting Standards and the Code require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.
- x. We have considered the adjusted misstatements, and misclassification and disclosures changes schedules included in your Audit Findings Report. The Council's financial statements have been amended for these misstatements, misclassifications and disclosure changes and are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xi. The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions.
- xii. Actual or possible litigation and claims have been accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards.
- xiii. We have no plans or intentions that may materially alter the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities reflected in the financial statements.



- xiv. We have updated our going concern assessment and cashflow forecasts in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to believe that the Council's financial statements should be prepared on a going concern basis and have not identified any material uncertainties related to going concern on the grounds that:
- a. the nature of the Council means that, notwithstanding any intention to liquidate the Council or cease its operations in their current form, it will continue to be appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of accounting because, in such an event, services it performs can be expected to continue to be delivered by related public authorities and preparing the financial statements on a going concern basis will still provide a faithful representation of the items in the financial statements
  - b. the financial reporting framework permits the entry to prepare its financial statements on the basis of the presumption set out under a) above; and
  - c. the Council's system of internal control has not identified any events or conditions relevant to going concern.

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**

- xv. We have provided you with:
- a. access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the Council's 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. access to persons within the Council via remote arrangements, in compliance with the nationally specified social distancing requirements established by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
- xvi. We have communicated to you all deficiencies in internal control of which management is aware.
- xvii. All transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.
- xviii. 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.

- xix. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects the Council and involves:
  - 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.
- xx. We have disclosed to you all information in relation to allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.
- xxi. 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.
- xxii. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Council's related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware.
- xxiii. 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**

- xxiv. 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 Report**

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

#### **Approval**

The approval of this letter of representation was minuted by the Council's Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 October 2021.

Yours faithfully

Name: Lisa Fillery

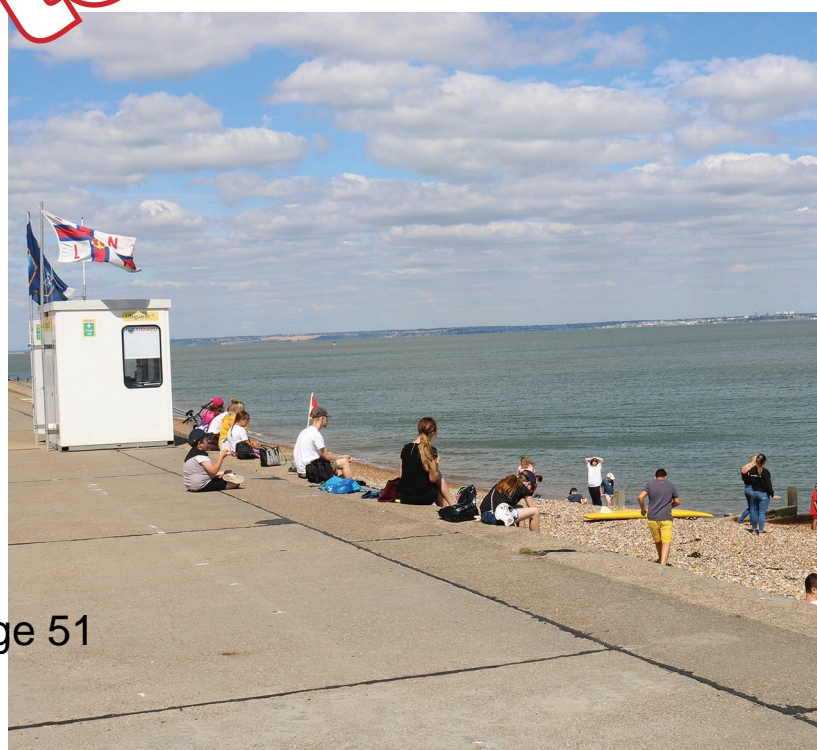
Position: Director of Resources

Date: October 2021

**Signed on behalf of the Council**

# Annual **Financial Report**

Including the Statement of Accounts for year ending 31 March 2021



**Subject to Audit**



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SUBJECT

### The Council

Swale Borough Council is located on Kent County's north coast between Medway, Maidstone and Canterbury, around 45 miles from London, but set in rolling Kentish countryside, and less than 30 miles from the Channel Tunnel. With an area of 373 square kilometres and a population of 150,100, Swale includes the towns of Sittingbourne and Faversham, the Isle of Sheppey, and an extensive rural hinterland.

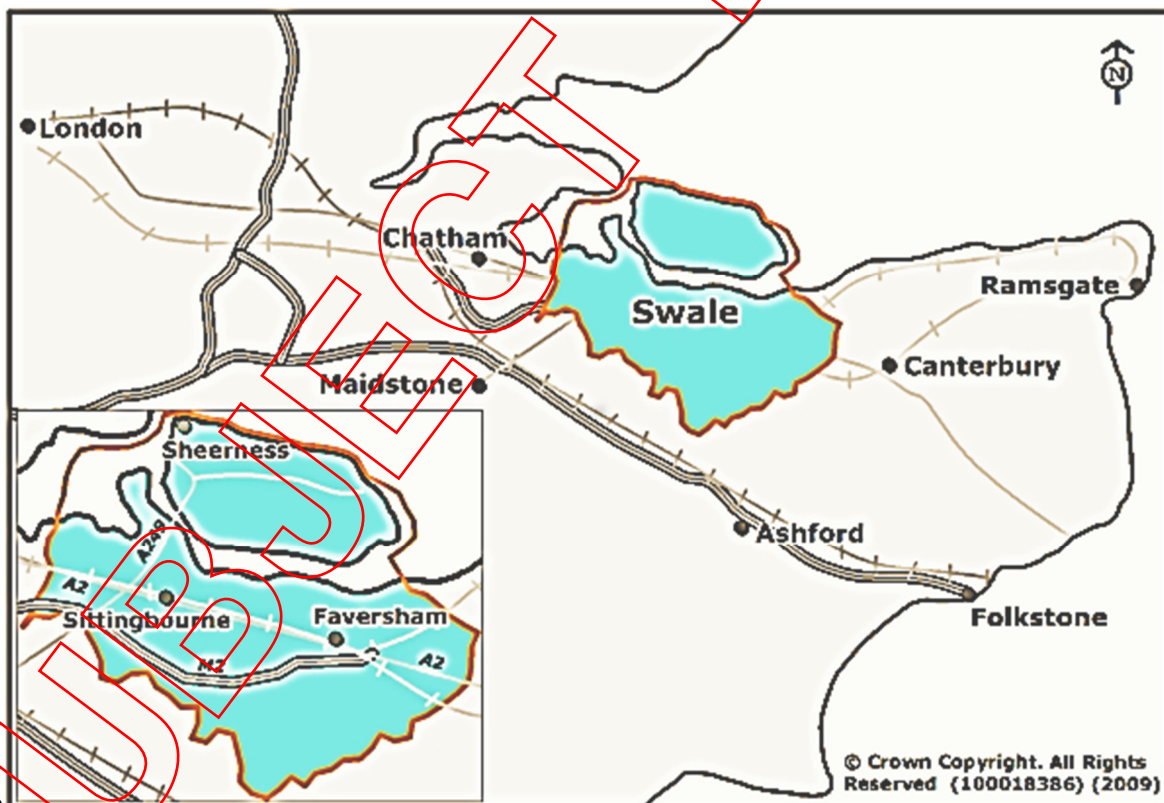
The Council provides a wide range of services, such as waste collection, recycling, street cleansing, parking, planning, leisure, homelessness support, housing benefit, public conveniences and environmental health.

The Council has 47 councillors (also known as 'Members') covering 24 wards. Each Councillor is elected for a term of four years, with the last election on 2 May 2019. Councillors are elected to represent their constituents and to take decisions upon Council services and policies. Swale is controlled by a Coalition under a Leader and a Cabinet. The Leader of the Council is Councillor Truelove. The Council's services are organised into Directorates and Departments.

The Council's Corporate Plan "Working Together for a Better Borough" can be found here: <https://swale.gov.uk/news-and-your-council/publications/council/corporate-plan>

The Council's priorities are:

- building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all;
- investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges;
- tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone;
- renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.



## Financial Performance

### The Council's Expenditure and Income for 2020/21

The table below shows spend against budget for the Council's service departments:

	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Actual Spending 2020/21 £'000	Over/ (Under) Spend 2020/21 £'000
Chief Executive Department	267	127	(140)
Policy, Communications & Customer Services	1,230	1,112	(118)
Democratic & Electoral Services	1,264	1,169	(95)
Director of Regeneration	161	161	0
Housing, Economy & Community Services	3,598	3,762	164
Planning	856	1,324	468
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	6,457	8,148	1,691
Finance	806	760	(46)
Revenues & Benefits	137	127	(10)
Property	650	467	(183)
Licensing & Resilience Planning	61	24	(37)
Environmental Health	609	603	(6)
Information Technology	1,359	1,241	(118)
Internal Audit	178	129	(49)
Human Resources	446	323	(123)
Legal	534	348	(186)
Corporate Items	492	2,193	1,701
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>19,105</b>	<b>22,018</b>	<b>2,913</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>			
Council Tax	(8,623)	(8,623)	0
Coronavirus (Covid-19) Support Grants	0	(4,234)	(4,234)
Business Rates	(8,750)	(8,750)	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	(1,633)	(1,633)	0
Revenue Support Grant	(115)	(115)	0
<b>(Surplus) in Year</b>	<b>(16)</b>	<b>(1,337)</b>	<b>(1,321)</b>

	Budget 2020/21 £'000	Actual Spending 2020/21 £'000	(Under) spend 2020/21 £'000
General Fund balance as at 1 April 2020	(2,343)	(3,338)	(995)
Surplus in year	(16)	(1,337)	(1,321)
2019/20 approved rollovers	191	191	0
Sub Total movement in 2020/21	175	(1,146)	(1,321)
<b>General Fund Balance as at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>(2,168)</b>	<b>(4,484)</b>	<b>(2,316)</b>



## Reviewing the Council's Performance

The local authority accounting year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Throughout the Accounts figures in brackets represent income or minus or negative figures.

There are regular reports to Cabinet and senior management on the monitoring of spend against budget. In 2020/21 there was an underspend of £1,321,000 against the budget. The major reasons for the underspend are salaries, service savings and additional income. There was a report to Cabinet on 14 July 2021 detailing how the Council spent its money against its budget and how this expenditure was financed, which can be found here:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=3489&Ver=4>

The above table shows that there was an increase in the General Fund of £1,146,000. The Council's policy is to maintain a balance of at least £1.5 million in the General Fund. The balance of £4.48 million at 31 March 2021 represents 20% of the Cost of Services for 2020/21 and is therefore deemed to be at an adequate level by the Head of Finance and Procurement.

In addition, the Council:

- collected £87m of Council Tax for Police, Fire, Kent County Council (KCC), Parish Councils and itself (£85m in 2019/20);
- collected £35m of Business Rates for the Government, Fire, KCC, and itself (£50m in 2019/20);
- paid out £37m on benefits and received £37m in grant (£37m paid, £37m received in 2019/20).

### Capital Spending for 2020/21

Where spending is on an asset which will benefit the Council over a number of years, it is called capital. It is funded mainly by Government grants, borrowing, reserves and capital receipts (money from selling land and other assets). The largest element of capital spend was on Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration.

The tables below show capital spending and how they were funded.

<b>Capital Spending</b>	<b>Revised Budget 2020/21 £'000</b>	<b>Actual Spending 2020/21 £'000</b>	<b>Over/ (Under) Spending £'000</b>
Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration	6,310	5,651	(659)
Disabled Facilities Grants	3,990	837	(3,153)
Leisure Centres	1,037	753	(284)
Faversham Recreation Ground Improvement	165	160	(5)
Public Toilets	503	244	(259)
Queenborough & Rushenden Klondyke Land Improvement	67	1,136	1,069
Car Park Electric Charging Points	62	139	77
Other Services	1,869	683	(1,186)
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,003</b>	<b>9,603</b>	<b>(4,400)</b>

## Reviewing the Council's Performance

<b>Capital Funding</b>	<b>2020/21</b>
	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Total Capital Spending</b>	<b>9,603</b>
<b>Source of Funding</b>	
Capital grants and other contributions	2,292
Capital receipts	24
Earmarked reserves	848
Direct Revenue Funding	27
Borrowing	6,412
<b>Total Capital Funding</b>	<b>9,603</b>

### Pensions

The Council is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which KCC administers on the Council's behalf. Every three years the value of this fund is valued by a firm of actuaries (professionally qualified independent consultants). This valuation estimates how much money will be needed to pay pensions in the future and compares this to the expected income. These forecasts are based on assumptions on factors such as future inflation, pay increases, pension growth, interest rate movements, investment returns, mortality estimates, retirement ages, etc. To arrive at the valuation, the actuary must convert the cost of future pension payments (liabilities) to a present day value (using a method called discounting). If the liabilities are more than the assets then the Pension Fund is in deficit. The higher the deficit of the Pension Fund valuation, the higher the contribution that will have to be made by the Council to make up the difference. A valuation is carried out every three years. The result of the latest valuation was that the Council's share of the overall Kent Pension Fund deficit fell from £20 million in 2016 to £15 million in 2019 and the level of funding of the scheme rose from 76% in 2016 to 84% in 2019 (100% is a fully funded scheme). It is this three year valuation that sets the amount that the Council has to pay to the Kent Pension Fund.

However, the Pensions Note in the accounts (Note 9) is based upon a different method of valuing the Pension Fund from the one described above. Instead, the value of pensions in the accounts is based on an International Accounting Standard (IAS 19). This enables the comparison of the pension assets and liabilities between different councils. This too calculates a liabilities figure for the cost of future pension payments which is offset against a value of the Pension Fund assets, but it does so using different assumptions from the approach described above. In the accounts, the pension deficit according to IAS 19 has increased from £59 million at 31 March 2020 to £67 million at 31 March 2021. However, this IAS 19 approach does not affect the amount that the Council has to pay to the Kent Pension Fund which is set by the results of the three year valuation described above.

The table below compares these two differing methods of valuation for the past few years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>IAS 19 Review Pension Deficit £'000</b>	<b>3 Year Review Pension Deficit £'000</b>
2018/19	57,367	20,067
2019/20	59,027	15,453
2020/21	66,646	15,453

The reasons for the contrast in the valuations between the two methods are the different methods and assumptions underlying their calculations.

Reports on the Kent Pension Fund are available from: KCC, Treasury and Investments, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ or by using the following link:

<https://www.kentpensionfund.co.uk/>

### **How the Council Manages its Surplus Funds**

The Council's total investment averaged £38 million during 2020/21 (£33 million for 2019/20) and closed at £23 million at 31 March 2021 (see Note 42, Table 4) (£24 million at 31 March 2020). The Council achieved a return of 0.08% for 2020/21 (0.95% for 2019/20), amounting to £166,000 (£314,000 in 2019/20). The reduction compared with the previous year is due to reduced rates paid on the Council's deposits as a result of coronavirus and its effect on the economy and financial markets.

The Council meets Government and accounting requirements on treasury management which emphasise the security of funds. The policy is to avoid unnecessary risk, so the Council only puts money with the safest and most secure financial institutions and a number of very large, wide-ranging money market funds (these are well rated, highly diversified pooled investment vehicles).

At 31 March 2021, the Council had three loans of £5 million each, from other local authorities. The rates ranged from 0.2% to 1.25%.

### **How the Council Collects Tax**

The Council collects Council Tax on behalf of KCC, Police, Fire, and Parishes, and Business Rates for the Government, KCC, and Fire, which is recorded in the Collection Fund which can be seen on page 82. At the year-end, this account had a deficit balance of £20.1 million (surplus balance of £0.593m at 31 March 2020).

### **Transparency of the Council's Spending**

By law, all Councillors must fill in a Declaration of Members' Interest form to register their financial or other interests. The Monitoring Officer maintains the full Register. The public can see it on the Council's website at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/register-of-interests/>.

The Government has promoted how local authorities make information on senior staff salaries and payments to the Council's suppliers available to the public. This information can be found on the Council's website at: <http://www.swale.gov.uk/transparency/>.

### **New Accounting Policies in 2020/21**

There were no new significant accounting changes or policies that were adopted for the 2020/21 Accounts.

### **Future Accounting Policies**

In 2022/23 International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 16 on Leases will be implemented which will require a review of the Council's existing lease arrangements to determine what effect the new standard will have on their value in future accounts.

### Accounting Estimates

In order to prepare the accounts, the Council makes accounting estimates for the value of pensions, property, plant and equipment, financial instruments and the impairment allowance for debtors. These are supported by professional advice from Barnett Waddingham (actuaries on pensions), Arlingclose (treasury advisers on financial instruments), Wilks, Head Eve (valuers for property plant and equipment). Their professional advice is reviewed and challenged by Council officers, including comments made by Grant Thornton, the external auditors, in previous audits. For these items, the accounts include a forecast of the financial impact of a change (typically 1%) in the accounting estimate made. Note 4 provides more details of the accounting estimates made due to the coronavirus and details of the basis of the accounting estimates were made in a report to the Audit Committee on 26 July 2021 which can be found here:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=3453&Ver=4>

### Future Financial Strategy

#### Medium Term Financial Plan

The Council is facing its most serious challenges since its creation arising from the Covid 19 pandemic. Huge calls have been made upon the resources and ingenuity of the Council to help residents deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

Against this very difficult background the Council has to be able to meet the challenges from the Covid pandemic. The 2021/22 budget supports the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan in this Covid environment which means maintaining and where possible enhancing services to residents to assist them through the recovery.

The fundamental changes planned by Government to the funding basis of councils have once again been deferred. Government has provided significant additional financial support in year to deal with Covid and has also allocated what is likely to be the last general allocation of Covid funding for 2021/22, as well as reinstating planned reductions in New Homes Bonus and introducing a new Lower Tier Services Grant. Even with the additional Government funding it has been necessary to draw down from Reserves to achieve a balanced position. Use of Reserves will be critical in managing the Council's finances moving forward.

The uncertainty about the future funding arrangements for councils makes any longer term financial planning than the year ahead extremely difficult. It is hoped that the key role councils have played in the Covid response will encourage Government to provide additional funding to enable services to residents to be enhanced after over a decade of funding reductions.

The Medium Term Financial Plan is detailed in the Council's Budget Book 2021/22 which can be found on the Council's website here: <https://services.swale.gov.uk/assets/Latest-Publications/Revenue-Budget-and-Capital-Programme/2021-22/Budget%20Book%202021-22%20-%20for%20online%20use%20only.pdf>

#### Capital Strategy

The Capital Strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services.

## Reviewing the Council's Performance

Councils are required to balance their revenue budget annually and cannot borrow to achieve a balanced position. However, they have very far reaching powers to borrow to fund capital expenditure. This has historically been funded from borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), which is part of the Debt Management Office which is part of the Treasury. Borrowing can be for up to 50 years at rates which can be below commercial rates.

Government and the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) have taken a pretty dim view of councils borrowing to acquire assets for income generation purposes only. There has been extensive media coverage of some of the most egregious examples of this behaviour, it is very widespread. This Council has had a clear policy of not borrowing for income purposes only and the Sittingbourne Town Centre (STC) development is classified as a Regeneration project in the Council's accounts. The Government has reformed the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) lending terms, ending the use of the PWLB for investment property bought primarily for yield, which the Government states is a risk for both national and local taxpayers. The Government has cut PWLB lending rates to gilts + 1% for Standard Rate and gilts + 0.8% for Certainty Rate. This is welcome as all Councils were being penalised for irresponsible behaviour by others. PWLB rates have come down and the 50-year maturity rate is 1.68% (Standard Rate, 6 January).

Council in February 2020 agreed the following principles:

- investing in sustainable, affordable and social housing to increase overall supply;
- using the ability to borrow at low rates of interest for the benefit of the physical and social infrastructure of the borough and for broader social value; and,
- ensuring that the costs of borrowing are manageable long term within the revenue budget.

Council also agreed that in future, rather than announcing a borrowing facility with no linkage to a particular project, the specific project agreed by Cabinet will have a borrowing limit associated with it. This limit can be varied by Cabinet.

The Council has not made and will not make any direct commercial investments outside of the Borough. Capital funds will be used for the benefit of local residents.

The Sittingbourne Town Centre retail and leisure developments are now complete. The opening of the cinema, bowling alley and Nandos has been delayed by Covid.

Looking ahead to 2021/22 there will be two major capital projects which are reflected in the capital budget:

- Housing company - in October 2020 Cabinet agreed to establish Swale Rainbow Homes Ltd. The outline business case envisaged the Council providing up to £23m of funding through loans to support the delivery of 139 new homes. The exact arrangements for the drawdown of this funding will follow the detailed planning and procurement phases. It is likely that it will be well into 2021/22 before there are any significant drawdowns. The cost of the borrowing will be wholly met by the company. Because the company is wholly owned by the Council its accounts will need to be incorporated into those of the Council requiring the company to have the same financial year as the Council.

## Reviewing the Council's Performance

- Swale House refurbishment - in December Cabinet received an update report on this project followed by a detailed report to Cabinet in March. The Capital budget allows for £3m, this is a prudent figure reflecting energy savings and additional rental income to meet borrowing costs. Cabinet may decide on a higher figure and this will then be reflected in following years' revenue budgets.

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). MRP is a charge to the revenue budget which then accrues on the Balance Sheet; it is not an external payment. Alternatively, capital receipts may be used to replace debt finance.

All organisations need to manage their cash flow. For most councils their cash flow level is much larger than their reserves as they take in funds through sources such as Business Rates and Council Tax which they hold before making payments to other bodies such as Kent County Council (KCC). With short-term deposit rates continuing to be very low, where a council is investing in a capital project, it can fund this capital investment from cash flow and this is known as internal borrowing. Internal borrowing defers the financial commitment to external borrowing. MRP still has to be made. The Finance Department closely monitors cash flow to ensure that there is no adverse impact.

For any significant investment the Council will supplement the expertise of Members and Officers with appropriate external specialist expertise to ensure that proposals are fully tested and risks considered.

The Head of Finance and Procurement believes that the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme proposed are sustainable.

### Reserves

The key principles for the management of reserves moving forward are:

- to maintain a prudent level of reserves to allow the Council to deal with unexpected one-off events;
- funding the Council's strategic priorities; and,
- to fund one-off items of expenditure to support service delivery.

When the Council is considering its budget requirement, it is the Head of Finance and Procurement's duty under S25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to report on the adequacy of reserves. These have been reviewed in line with guidance from CIPFA.

The Council seeks to maintain a minimum of £1.5m as its General Fund balance and there is no reason to change this – the balance at 31 March 2021 was £4.484m. The Council holds earmarked reserves for specific purposes. The Head of Finance and Procurement's view is that the level of reserves and balances held by the Council are at a reasonable level.

### **Coronavirus**

The Coronavirus pandemic has enormous implications for the residents of the Borough. It has also made huge demands on the Council to provide at very short notice new services through the community hubs and almost all Council staff are working from home. It has also transformed the operation of the democratic processes within the Council with members holding meetings remotely.

This pandemic is the most serious crisis for the country since World War 2. It therefore has a huge potential impact on the Council's finances. Overall the total impact in 2020/21 was £3.9m. A report detailing the impact of the coronavirus on the Council's finances went to Cabinet on 14 July 2021 and can be found here:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MId=3489&Ver=4>

As part of the coronavirus response, the Government announced a range of grant schemes to support businesses to be administered by local billing authorities e.g., the Small Business Grant Fund; Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund; multiple Local Restrictions grants i.e., open, closed, sector, additional. The Council was responsible for paying over the grants to the businesses and are then reimbursed by Government using a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 (S31).

Where the Council has acted as an agent of government neither the income nor the payments are recorded in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. Further information on the individual grants dealt with on an agency basis is included in the short-term creditors note 34.

In 2020/21 the Council paid local businesses a total of £47.047m under these schemes. However, for the purpose of meeting the accounting regulations, two of these schemes will be part of the Council's revenue income and expenditure in the Annual Accounts which are the "Discretionary Grants" and the "Additional Restrictions Grants", which together total £4.092m.

The Council was also responsible for making "Test and Trace" payments both mandatory and discretionary. In 2020/21 the Council made payments totalling £174,500 under these schemes. However, for the purpose of meeting the accounting regulations, the discretionary scheme will be part of the Council's revenue income and expenditure in the Annual Accounts, which had a total of £26,500 of payments.

The Council received £6.906 million of grants from Government due to coronavirus of which £4.234 million is shown on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (CIES) Account as it is treated as compensation to mitigate the net budget gap which irrecoverable service income losses have created in the Council's balanced budget set before the start of the year. £2.672 million of service specific grants from Government are included in the net service expenditure of the CIES Account. These are all detailed in the report to Cabinet on 14 July 2021 referred to above.

The coronavirus affected the Council's services and how it provided them in many different ways. The latest details can be found here: <https://swale.gov.uk/news-and-your-council/coronavirus>

The Annual Financial Report includes details of the impact of the coronavirus on their preparation.

### **Annual Financial Report**

Swale Borough Council's Annual Financial Report for 2020/21 provides a record of how the Council has used its financial resources during the year. The Council's accounts and all relevant documents are subject to review by Grant Thornton UK LLP – the Council's external auditors.

The Annual Financial Report has the following sections:

- this review of the Council's performance, which gives a background to its financial performance;
- an Annual Governance Statement showing how the Council meets set standards when carrying out its responsibilities;
- a report from Grant Thornton, after they have reviewed the Council's accounts;
- the Statement of Accounts – see below; and,
- a glossary to explain any technical terms used in the report.

### The Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts provides a record of the Council's financial position and performance for the year ended 31 March 2021. It has been prepared in line with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The format meets the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 (the Code), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The Statement of Accounts appears on pages 25 to 87 and includes changes where appropriate as required by 'the Code'. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis is not a core financial statement but has been included at this stage of the Statement of Accounts to assist readers with a logical path through the detailed financial reporting.

**Expenditure and Funding Analysis** page 25 – this shows the final net spend for each service for the year and their impact on the Council's resources and then converts these figures in accordance with accounting regulations so that they match those in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

The Council's core financial statements are listed below along with a brief explanation of their purpose.

**Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement** page 27 – shows all of the Council's spending, income and changes in value in providing its services during the year in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

**Movement in Reserves Statement** page 28 – shows the movement on all the Council's reserves (funds set aside) due to the increase or decrease in the Council's net worth as a result of its spending, the income it received, and changes in the value of its assets.

**Balance Sheet** page 29 – summarises the Council's financial position at 31 March each year. It shows the assets (what the Council owns) that the Council holds and its liabilities (what the Council owes) to other parties, and the Council's reserves, separated into those that can be used for future spending (usable reserves) and those created to reconcile the technical aspects of accounting (unusable reserves).

**Cash Flow Statement** page 31 – summarises the cash movements in and out of the Council's bank accounts over 2020/21.

**Accounting Policies** page 32 – sets out the policies the Council adopted for drawing up the various accounting statements.



### Further Information

You can get more information about the accounts by emailing the Finance Department at [finance@swale.gov.uk](mailto:finance@swale.gov.uk). This document is on the Council's website at: <https://www.swale.gov.uk/statement-of-accounts/>

Philip Wilson CPFA

Date: 29 July 2021

Head of Finance and Procurement



### Reviewing Performance

#### The Council's Performance

The Council continues to monitor its performance against a range of key performance indicators and, where possible, to benchmark its performance with those of other local authorities. In addition to numerous indicators in use within specialist teams, Cabinet, Scrutiny and the Strategic Management Team (SMT) monitor a set of 49 'corporate' indicators on a regular basis. This increased from 38 indicators in the previous year, reflecting changes of focus and balance across services, and taken as a whole is broadly representative of the Council's performance across the board. The combination of the new Chief Executive and the coronavirus crisis will mean that the Council will want to review these indicators once the crisis is over. The Council publishes a summary performance report each month on its website at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/managing-performance/>.

#### The Council's People

The Council has developed its values to describe clearly how the Council does things and all employees should be aware how the Council expects them to work. The Council has an engagement plan to ensure that staff know where they fit in and the importance of their role in delivering the priorities of the Council. An important part of the engagement plan is the approach to staff communications which are regular and made through a variety of communication channels.

The Workforce Strategy that was developed and implemented in 2019 includes four new key themes to reflect the Council's revised priorities and the possible opportunities and challenges in the future. This is available from the Council website at <https://www.swale.gov.uk/workforce-strategy-2019-to-2022/>.

SMT reviews the workforce information on a quarterly basis, which includes recruitment, retention, headcount, turnover, equalities profile, and sickness information. This attention to workforce data has prompted several strands of action, for example, the age profile of the Council meant that action was taken to broaden the number of apprenticeships and therefore open up access to jobs in an age group that was under-represented.

The monitoring of workforce information by SMT also ensures a focus on sickness absence. During 2020/21, the amount of time lost to sickness was an average of 6.2 days per employee, which is lower than the average for public sector organisations of 8.4 days. The Council has continued to provide a proactive approach to sickness management and has continually enhanced an active programme of well-being initiatives to encourage staff to take responsibility for their own health.

### How the Council Manages Data

The Council has a responsibility to securely keep the personal data it holds. In 2020/21 there were 40 reported incidents which amounted to breaches of the Data Protection Act and 13 near misses. Each case is investigated fully before the Council's Data Protection Officer decides on the appropriate response. In 2020/21 it was not necessary to report to the Information Commissioner. The decision in all cases was based on conclusions reached by the Information Commissioner in previous years and demonstrated that it had taken effective and efficient action in minimising the impact of the breaches reported.

### How the Council Manages Risk

The Council has a well-established Risk Management Framework which is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practice and changing processes. It was last updated in 2019. The framework details the Council's approach to the management of corporate and operational risks and is available to all officers and Members.

The risk management process is coordinated by Mid Kent Audit and leadership is provided through SMT and Informal Cabinet.

Corporate risks were updated with key officers and Members during 2020 to reflect the Council's changing priorities and to recognise the challenges faced during the Pandemic. This was followed by work in late 2020 to fully refresh and update the operational risk registers for all Council service areas. This exercise was undertaken with key officers including Heads of Service and unit managers. Corporate and operational risks continue to be routinely reviewed and updated.

The Council, like all authorities, has faced unprecedented challenges this year. The key challenges documented in the risk register include authority funding, housing and infrastructure pressures, IT security, service delivery and contract design or failure.

The Council works collectively to respond to risks. Existing controls are identified for each risk and are considered when determining the impact and likelihood of the risk. Where the overall risk score is high actions are identified to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Risk information is regularly reported to SMT and Informal Cabinet, and the Audit Committee receive an annual report on the Council's risk management arrangements. The last report was taken to Audit Committee on 10 March 2021 and can be found here <https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=2315&Ver=4>

Mid Kent Audit continues to provide guidance, advice and works across the Council to improve risk culture and understanding of effective risk management.

## **1. Scope of Responsibility**

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that:
  - (i) its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
  - (ii) public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and
  - (iii) public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.2 The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure 'Best Value' in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.3 In meeting this obligation, the Council has a responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.4 In June 2017 the Cabinet agreed an updated Local Code of Corporate Governance based upon the 2016 Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. There are no changes to the code for this year but the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) requires councils to comment on the impact on governance of Covid 19 and the position in respect of the CIPFA Financial Management Code.
- 1.5 This Statement explains how Swale Borough Council has complied with the principles of good governance and reviews the effectiveness of these arrangements. It also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Amended).
- 1.6 The May 2019 elections resulted in control of the Council passing to a five party coalition comprising the Labour, Swale Independent Alliance, Liberal Democrats, Green and Independent groups. The administration has a very well defined programme which they are implementing.
- 1.7 For much of the year the Chief Executive role was covered by the Director of Regeneration, the Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services and the Chief Financial Officer - whilst continuing with their core responsibilities. Larissa Reed took up the post of Chief Executive in January 2021.

## **2. Impact of Covid 19 on the Council**

- 2.1 Covid 19 was the most significant event this country has dealt with since the end of World War 2. Government looked to councils to take a major role in the response primarily in supporting the most vulnerable in the community, passing on financial support to businesses, enforcing lockdown measures and promoting vaccinations. This totally dominated the work of the Council for at least nine months with around 20% of the workforce reallocated to Covid related work.
- 2.2 In governance terms the weekly meetings of Informal Cabinet started by focussing on Covid related issues with all of the Strategic Management Team (SMT) and other key officers in attendance. SMT meetings also focussed on Covid and there was an additional meeting of SMT every week with other key officers.

- 2.3 The community leadership role was led by the Leader of the Council supported by the Director of Regeneration. Whilst this role was ongoing throughout the period it was most demanding in the pre- Christmas period when Swale had the largest number of cases in the country as the Kent variant became identified.
- 2.4 All staff left the building on 13 March and staff continue to work primarily from home. From the outset the IT technology of the Council supported this very well and the previous decision to move all staff to work on laptops was highly beneficial. All councillors were also allocated a Swale laptop. SMT undertook regular staff surveys which identified some specific issues in certain departments, but generally the survey responses were good. In general staff adapted very well to working from home.
- 2.5 After a short period when member meetings were suspended meetings were reinstated using Skype. Whilst the technology did have issues at times again members adapted well to remote meetings and there was good representation from the public on meetings.
- 2.6 Cabinet has received a number of reports from the Director of Regeneration on the Council's plans for recovery. These have re-emphasised that recovery should be based around the core priorities already agreed, and on which substantial progress has been made this year notwithstanding the additional demands of Covid
- 2.7 Financially the initial estimate of the additional costs and loss of income was £4.1m or around 20% of the Council's total budget. This presented a huge threat to the financial standing of the Council. The first allocation of Government support was totally inadequate and District Councils lobbied very effectively for a greater share of the funding being made available. Major funding allocations were also made on a needs basis and this has made a major difference for this Council. The scale of Government support has meant that the Covid related costs and loss of income have been fully covered in 2020/21. There has also been a significant funding contribution for 2021/22 which meant that services could be maintained for another year. Either directly or via Kent County Council (KCC) very significant amount of specific grants have also been received for test and trace and contain outbreak management. Overall whilst the Council faces a very difficult financial environment it has weathered Covid well.
- 2.8 The summary of Covid issues above does not in any way do justice to the huge impact that Covid has had. An already under resourced staffing structure has been stretched well beyond its limits, individual members of staff have responded incredibly well but the long-term impact of these demands and in general of Covid cannot be overestimated. Much the same applies to councillors. The impact of Covid on the Council will last long beyond the lifting of lockdown.

### **3. The Purpose of the Governance Framework**

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

3.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives, and therefore can only provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to:

- (i) identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Council's policies, aims and objectives;
- (ii) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and,
- (iii) manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3.3 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2021, and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

#### **4. The Council's Governance Framework**

4.1 A brief description of the key elements of the Council's governance framework is described below.

##### ***Communicating the Council's Vision***

4.2 In October 2020 Council agreed a new Corporate Plan "Working together for a better borough". The plan is structured around four high level priorities, each containing a number of specific objectives. The four priorities are:

- (i) Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all.
- (ii) Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges.
- (iv) Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone.
- (v) Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future.

4.3 In September 2020 the first round of Area Committee meetings took place. These are intended to have a local focus and to more widely engage councillors and the community, with four committees meeting quarterly.

##### ***Management of Resources***

4.4 The Council seeks to use its resources efficiently and obtains value for money via a number of arrangements. These include:

- (i) A medium term financial plan and annual budget process that ensures that financial resources are directed to the Council's priorities.
- (ii) A financial monitoring process which closely monitors expenditure and income with detailed monthly reporting to SMT and quarterly reporting to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee.
- (iii) The Special Project Fund created by the new administration to fund public realm projects and support the delivery of other administration priorities. This is now supplemented by the Improvement & Resilience Fund linked to the delivery of administration priorities.

- (iv) A capital strategy again directed at administration priorities in particular increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- (v) An annual review of fees and charges.

### **Member and Officer Working Arrangements**

- 4.5 Roles and responsibilities for governance are defined and allocated so that accountability for decisions made and actions taken are clear. The administration has maintained the Cabinet system and the Cabinet consists of seven members who have responsibility for particular portfolios. The Cabinet members are supported by Deputy roles.
- 4.6 The Council also appoints a number of committees to discharge the Council's regulatory and scrutiny responsibilities. These arrangements, and the delegated responsibilities of officers, are fully set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 4.7 The Constitution also includes both a Member and an Officer Code of Conduct, which describe and regulate the way in which members and officers should interact to work effectively together.
- 4.8 The Scrutiny Committee scrutinises decision-making and performance, and holds Cabinet to account for these; and a Policy Development and Review Committee, which does not have formal scrutiny powers but which provides a mechanism for non-Cabinet members to consider and feed into policy proposals before formal decisions are taken. Under the corporate plan aim of renewing local democracy, Council recently agreed to replace the Policy Development and Review Committee with three new, more specialised Cabinet Advisory Committees in the new civic year.
- 4.9 The Council's Audit Committee has a remit consistent with those identified in the CIPFA publication 'Audit Committees – Practical Guidance for Local Authorities'. It provides assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of its governance arrangements, risk management framework, and internal control environment. The Committee regularly reviews the internal audit work programme, the results of internal audit work, and management's implementation of audit recommendations.
- 4.10 A central role on governance issues is undertaken by the Council's three statutory officers; the Head of Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer.
- 4.11 The Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) is accountable for the delivery of the Council's services, the work of the Council's employees, and the work undertaken for the Council by a variety of partners and contractors who deliver a wide range of services to the community. The role of Chief Executive is a permanent appointment, which requires the approval of the full Council. Larissa Reed was appointed by Council in October 2020. Prior to then, the Head of Paid Service role was performed by Emma Wiggins, the Director of Regeneration.
- 4.12 Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by paragraph 24 of schedule 5 to the Local Government Act 2000, requires the Council to designate one of its senior officers as the Monitoring Officer. The Head of Policy, Communications and Customer Services Mr Clifford is responsible for:

## Annual Governance Statement

- (i) Ensuring that the Council acts and operates within the law. He has a duty to report to the whole Council if he believes any action or proposal has been or is likely to be contrary to the rule of law.
- (ii) Maintaining arrangements to support the Council's functions and activities, including regular reviews of the Council's Constitution.
- (iii) Dealing with complaints against members under the Code of Conduct, supporting the Council's Standards Committee, and helping to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Council members, officers, partners and contractors.
- (iv) Establishing and maintaining registers of interests, gifts and hospitality for members and officers.
- (v) Receiving reports and taking action under the Council's Confidential Reporting Code, which supports whistleblowing by staff.

4.13 The Chief Financial Officer (CFO), as the Section 151 Officer appointed under the 1972 Local Government Act, carried overall responsibility for the financial administration of the Council. As a result of a reorganisation in 2021/22, the new role of Director of Resources assumed these responsibilities. The Council's governance arrangements relating to this role comply with those arrangements set out in the CIPFA statement on the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).

4.14 The role of Head of Internal Audit is assigned to the post of the Head of Audit Partnership - Mr Clarke, an arrangement covering the three Mid Kent Services Councils and Ashford Borough Council. This role is responsible for the Council's internal audit service, including drawing up the Internal Audit Strategy and related annual plan, and giving the annual Audit Opinion. The Council's arrangements conform to Public Sector International Audit Standards, as independently assessed by the Institute of Internal Audit. The Standards are the "proper practices in relation to internal control" referenced in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (Amended). The Head of Audit Partnership's operational responsibilities are set out in the Internal Audit Charter and are consistent with the independence requirements set out in the Standards. The Head of Audit Partnership role also conforms to the principles set out in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of Head of Internal Audit (2019).

4.15 The Council has clearly set out terms and conditions for the remuneration of members and officers, and there is an effective structure for managing the process of review. A Scheme of Members' Allowances has been set by the Council, having regard to a report of an Independent Panel made up of non-Councillors. The Council sets and publishes a 'Pay Policy Statement' which provides transparency with regard to the Council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. The 'Pay Policy Statement' is reviewed annually.

4.16 All employees should have clear conditions of employment, and job descriptions which set out their roles and responsibilities.

***Promoting Values and Upholding High Standards of Conduct and Behaviour***

- 4.17 The Council has a Standards Committee to promote high standards of member conduct. Elected members have to agree to follow a Code of Conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties.
- 4.18 Officer behaviour is governed by the Officer Code of Conduct. The Code has been formulated to provide a set of standards of conduct expected of employees at work and the link between that work and their private lives.
- 4.19 The Council takes fraud, corruption and maladministration seriously, and as such has established policies and processes which aim to prevent or deal with such occurrences. These include:
- (i) An Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy.
  - (ii) A Whistleblowing Policy.
  - (iii) Various HR policies regarding discipline of staff involved in such incidents.
  - (iv) Various procurement policies.
  - (v) A corporate complaints procedure exists to receive and respond to any complaints received.
- 4.20 Arrangements exist to ensure that members and employees are not influenced in their decision-making by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. These include:
- (i) Registers of disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests;
  - (ii) Declarations of disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests at the start of each meeting in which discussions involve a matter in which a member has an interest;
  - (iii) Register of interests for officers;
  - (iv) Registers of gifts and hospitality for members and officers;
  - (v) An Equalities Scheme and Equal Opportunities Policies; and
  - (vi) Member induction and ongoing member training.

***Taking Informed and Transparent Decisions and Managing Risk***

- 4.21 The Council's decision-making processes are clear, open and transparent. The Council's Constitution sets out how the Council operates and the processes for policy and decision-making. Key as well as non-key executive decisions are published in the Council's Forward Plan. Agendas and minutes of all meetings are published on the Council's website.
- 4.22 The Council provides decision-makers with full and timely access to relevant information. The Cabinet report template requires information to be provided explaining the legal, financial and risk implications of decisions, as well as inter alia implications for the corporate priorities, and any equality and diversity implications.



4.23 The Council has a well embedded approach to the management of risk and this has been fully updated to reflect the priorities of the new administration. The Audit Committee maintains an oversight of the process.

***Developing the Capacity and Capability of Officers and Members***

4.24 The Council recognises that the success of its business is built upon the knowledge, expertise, and commitment of its workforce. Development and retention of staff therefore remains a priority for the Council. There are well-established performance appraisal and development processes for all staff.

4.25 The new Chief Executive launched an immediate review of the senior management structure. A new structure with two Directors and an additional Head of Service (time limited for two years) has been through a consultation process and the posts are now being recruited.

4.26 The cross-party Member Development Working Group takes an overview of the approach to member development. It continues to operate to the principles which underpin the Member Development Charter.

***Engagement with Local People and Other Stakeholders to Ensure Robust Public Accountability***

4.27 The Council engages with partners and stakeholders through various partnerships to ensure collaboration on strategic issues and joint responsibility for working together for the benefit of the residents of Swale.

4.28 The Council also engages with the voluntary, community and business sectors, working closely with Swale CVS and communicating through the Swale Community Empowerment Network. It also disseminates and incorporates information about the Council within various e-bulletins and newsletters that go to these groups.

4.29 In addition, the Council uses a variety of corporate communications channels to engage with and inform local people about the work of the Council and its decisions including:

- (i) Ensuring the Council provides an accessible website for delivering online services, providing a comprehensive information source and easy access to transparency data.
- (ii) Transparent processes for undertaking consultations, public meetings, Council and Committee meetings with free public access to consultation documents and responses, meeting agendas, reports and minutes via the Council website.
- (iii) Publishing and distributing 'Inside Swale' magazine to 60,000 households every quarter to provide a trusted source of Council news and information.
- (iv) Comprehensive use of official social media and email bulletins to promote the Council services and engage with stakeholders, responding to local peoples' comments, questions and concerns online.

- (v) Providing an 'Ask the leader' channel to enable any stakeholder the opportunity to engage directly with the leadership, with all questions and responses openly published on the Council website.

4.30 To date the requirements for social distancing has meant that the early rounds of Area Committee meetings have been conducted remotely. This will change as soon as social distancing rules allow.

***Outcomes and value for money***

4.31 Much of this document is concerned with processes for governance and promoting internal control. But it is essential to consider to what extent do the organisation's governance arrangements support the achievement of outcomes and delivery of value for money.

4.32 From a financial perspective the 2020/21 outturn is a significant underspend. This largely reflects the substantial Covid related funding received from Government in the year. The elimination of Revenue Support Grant is highly disadvantageous to a Council such as Swale with both a low absolute level of Council tax, a relatively low Council tax base and high levels of need. The use by Government of deprivation as a major factor in allocating Covid funding has been hugely important for Swale. Given the highly constrained revenue budget the administration has continued to use one off funds to pump prime the achievement of their priorities.

4.33 Despite Covid dominating the Council's work in the year once again good progress has been made across a range of administration priorities:

- (i) Constitutional reform - Area Committees established and Cabinet Advisory Committees agreed. Work will now take place on a move away from the Cabinet system.
- (ii) New Local Plan - consultation has been undertaken on a new Local Plan which reflects both the Government's increased housing targets and a radically different approach to achieving these.
- (iii) Local housing company - Rainbow Homes has been established to initially build out 119 affordable homes on three sites owned by the Council but now transferred to the company.
- (iv) Homelessness and rough sleeping - more resources for prevention of homelessness and rough sleeping.
- (v) Climate change emergency action plan.
- (vi) Improvements to town centres, coastal amenities, open spaces, visitor attractions and heritage public realm in the borough.
- (vii) Support to community projects across the borough.
- (viii) Spirit of Sittingbourne project for Sittingbourne delivered.
- (ix) An agreed way forward for the refurbishment of Swale House and the Masters House.

4.34 The 2021/22 budget position had looked extremely difficult and given the demands on the Council from Covid there was no question of making significant savings. In the end a combination of additional Government funding for Covid in 2021/22 and some use of Reserves meant that a good balanced budget was achieved. It is however questionable given the fiscal constraints on Government that they can continue to support councils to the level they have to date. This means that reduced income from areas such as off street car parking are unlikely to be funded by Government beyond the first quarter on 2021/22. The Council faces a very significant funding gap for 2022/23 and is unlikely to benefit from significant extra Government financial support- this threatens both the delivery of core business and administration priorities.

### ***CIPFA Financial Management Code***

4.35 In October 2019 CIPFA published their Financial Management (FM) Code which “is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. For the first time the FM Code sets out the standards of financial management for local authorities”. This could be seen as CIPFA belatedly responding to the financial crisis at Northamptonshire County Council which after the issuing of S114 notices led to the abolition of the Council.

4.36 For the 2020/21 accounts the Council is required only to note the Code’s requirements. Given the financial crisis all councils have faced due to Covid there has been relatively little attention paid to the Code. Swale compares well against the Code and there will be a full report to the Audit Committee in 2021/22.

## **5. Review of Effectiveness**

5.1 The Council annually reviews the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, through the work of internal audit, and by comments made by the external auditors and other inspection agencies.

5.2 The processes applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system of governance include:

- (i) The work of the Audit Committee.
- (ii) The work of the Standards Committee.
- (iii) The role of the Scrutiny Committee in holding the Cabinet to account.
- (iv) The operation of the Council’s performance management frameworks, including an Annual Report and the wider approach to risk management.
- (v) The work of Internal Audit as an assurance function that provides an independent and objective opinion to the Council on its control environment.
- (vi) The external auditor’s opinion report on the Council’s financial statements, and his conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (the Value for Money conclusion).
- (vii) The roles of the Council’s Statutory Officers.

## Annual Governance Statement

- (viii) The corporate complaints procedure.
- (ix) The anti-fraud and corruption and whistleblowing framework.

5.3 In the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement three main areas for attention moving forward were identified. The latest position on these is as follows:

Issue	Updated position
Delivery of the administration priorities.	As set out in paragraph 4.33 above good progress has been made. The pace of progress over the remaining two years of the administration is a major challenge.
Moving from the response phase to Coronavirus into the recovery phase. This links very strongly with the delivery of administration priorities.	Again very much linked to progress against priorities.
Ensuring the financial viability of the Council in light of the increased costs and reduced income due to the Coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown period.	A well managed response by members and officers, plus extensive additional financial support from Government, has meant that to date the financial impact of Covid has been manageable.

## 6. Significant Governance Issues

6.1 The main areas for member and senior management attention in the coming year are:

- (i) Delivery of a new senior management structure.
- (ii) Wholesale review of the constitution, possibly with a view to moving to a committee system but certainly including a significant stock-take of how well the constitution currently works to support robust decision-making and meaningful public engagement.
- (iii) More emphasis on prioritising delivery of administration ambitions better reflecting the capacity of the organisation.
- (iv) Delivering our core and discretionary services with a balanced sustainable budget.

**Agreed:**

**Leader of the Council**

**Chief Executive**

**29 July 2021**

**Independent auditor's report to the members of Swale Borough Council**

Grant Thornton will be carrying out an audit on these accounts and reporting to the Audit Committee.

SUBJECT TO AUDIT

## **The Council's Responsibilities**

The Council is required to:

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

## **The Head of Finance and Procurement's Responsibilities**

As the Head of Finance and Procurement, I am the s151 officer as at time of writing and am responsible for the preparation of the Council's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy/Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, I have:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the local authority Code;
- kept proper accounting records which were up to date; and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I confirm that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the reporting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

**Philip Wilson CPFA**  
**Head of Finance and Procurement**

**Date: 29 July 2021**

## **Certification of the Chairman of the Audit Committee**

I confirm that the adoption process for the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts has been formally completed and that the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 was approved by Swale Borough Council in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 at the meeting of the Audit Committee on 2021.

**Councillor Simon Clark**  
**Chair of the Audit Committee**

**Date:**

**Explanatory Note to the Accounts: Expenditure and Funding Analysis –  
Change in Spend Per Department from Reported Basis to Accounting Basis**

Service Departments	2020/21					Net Expenditure Accounting Basis £'000
	Net Expenditure Reported to Cabinet £'000	Capital £'000	Pension £'000	Budget Respon- sibility £'000	Other £'000	
Chief Executive	127	0	20	0	0	147
Policy, Communications & Customer Services	1,112	1	211	60	0	1,384
Democratic & Electoral Services	1,169	3	66	38	0	1,276
Director of Regeneration	161	0	24	0	7	192
Housing, Economy & Community Services	3,762	240	480	54	(27)	4,509
Planning	1,324	0	314	97	0	1,735
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	8,148	(647)	316	76	(3)	7,890
Finance	760	86	140	59	730	1,775
Revenues & Benefits	127	0	257	124	0	508
Property	467	333	94	(44)	308	1,158
Licensing & Resilience Planning	24	2	39	2	0	67
Environmental Health	603	9	0	1	0	613
Information Technology	1,241	41	0	(399)	0	883
Internal Audit	129	0	0	0	0	129
Human Resources	323	0	0	21	0	344
Legal	348	0	266	(50)	0	564
Corporate Items	2,193	15,767	2	(39)	(17,752)	171
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>22,018</b>	<b>15,835</b>	<b>2,229</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(16,737)</b>	<b>23,345</b>
Financed by Council Tax, Business Rates & Grants	(23,355)					
<b>(Surplus) in Year</b>	<b>(1,337)</b>					
General Fund Balance at 1 April 2020	(3,338)					
(Surplus) in Year	(1,337)					
2019/20 Approved Rollovers	191					
<b>General Fund Balance at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>(4,484)</b>					

The local authority accounting year runs from 1 April to 31 March. Throughout the Accounts figures in brackets represent income or minus or negative figures.

The left hand column shows the final spend for the year as reported to Cabinet. The middle columns show changes that have to be made in order to report the Council's expenditure on an accounting basis, which is shown in the column on the right, which then appears in the next statement – the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as the Cost of Services. The figures for 2019/20 can be seen in Note 46.

**Column Explanation:** **Capital** – includes the accounting cost of depreciation of assets or the change in valuation of assets as these are not charged to the taxpayer; **Pension** – shows the cost of pensions based on the accounting standard IAS 19 rather than the actual payments made to the Kent Pension Fund; **Budget Responsibility** – the Council reports the expenditure that services are directly responsible for, but this allocates them out to the services they were spent against; **Other** – taking out Corporate Items which are not in Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement Cost of Services, e.g. movement to/from reserves.

**Explanatory Note to the Accounts: Expenditure and Funding Analysis –  
Change in Spend Per Department from Reported Basis to Accounting Basis**

The table below reconciles the Cost of Services to the Deficit on the Provision of Services on the 2020/21 Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:

2020/21	Net Expenditure Reported to			Budget Responsibility £'000	Other £'000	Net Expenditure Accounting Basis £'000
	Cabinet £'000	Capital £'000	Pension £'000			
<b>Cost of Services</b>	22,018	15,835	2,229	0	(16,737)	23,345
Other (Income) and Expenditure	(8,223)	(250)	1,297	0	(162)	(7,338)
<b>Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>13,795</b>	<b>15,585</b>	<b>3,526</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(16,899)</b>	<b>16,007</b>
Adjustments from Accounting Basis	(15,132)	(15,585)	(3,526)	0	16,899	(17,344)
<b>Surplus in Year</b>	<b>(1,337)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,337)</b>



**Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement –  
Why the Council's Resources Changed**

	2020/21 Gross Expenditure £'000	2020/21 Gross Income £'000	2020/21 Net Expenditure £'000	2019/20 Net Expenditure £'000
Chief Executive	147	0	147	322
Policy, Communications & Customer Services	1,409	(25)	1,384	1,405
Democratic Services	1,283	(7)	1,276	1,124
Director of Regeneration	328	(136)	192	223
Housing, Economy & Community Services	14,483	(9,974)	4,509	4,106
Planning	2,951	(1,216)	1,735	1,841
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	11,762	(3,872)	7,890	12,253
Finance	1,790	(15)	1,775	1,905
Revenues & Benefits	40,277	(39,769)	508	211
Property	1,211	(53)	1,158	1,106
Licensing & Resilience Planning	339	(272)	67	47
Environmental Health	663	(50)	613	520
Information Technology	885	(2)	883	797
Internal Audit	129	0	129	175
Human Resources	350	(6)	344	426
Legal	1,953	(1,389)	564	720
Corporate Items	171	0	171	164
<b>Sub Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>80,131</b>	<b>(56,786)</b>	<b>23,345</b>	<b>27,345</b>
<b>Other Operating Expenditure</b>				
Drainage Board levy	847	0	847	817
Parish and Town Council precepts	1,574	0	1,574	1,367
Revaluation of Held for Sale assets	0	0	0	(11)
Disposal of assets (gains)/losses (Note 15)	541	(503)	38	(236)
Write down of long-term leasing liability	0	0	0	(43)
<b>Sub Total Other Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>2,962</b>	<b>(503)</b>	<b>2,459</b>	<b>1,894</b>
<b>Financing &amp; Investment (Note 11)</b>	<b>17,617</b>	<b>(1,719)</b>	<b>15,898</b>	<b>371</b>
<b>Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure</b>				
Council Tax	0	(9,991)	(9,991)	(9,594)
Business Rates income	0	(15,170)	(15,170)	(23,118)
S31 Retail Relief Grant	0	(6,822)	(6,822)	0
Tariff & levy Business Rates	12,365	0	12,365	12,161
Contribution paid to Business Rates pool	2,494	0	2,494	2,587
Income received from Business Rates pool	0	(1,525)	(1,525)	(1,616)
Tax Income Guarantee (S31)	0	(750)	(750)	0
Revenue Support Grant	0	(115)	(115)	(113)
Coronavirus LA Support Grants	0	(4,234)	(4,234)	0
New Homes Bonus	0	(1,633)	(1,633)	(1,875)
Other grants and contributions	0	(314)	(314)	(1,819)
<b>Sub Total Taxation and Non-Specific Grant</b>	<b>14,859</b>	<b>(40,554)</b>	<b>(25,695)</b>	<b>(23,387)</b>
<b>Sub Total Movement from Cost of Services</b>			<b>(7,338)</b>	<b>(21,122)</b>
<b>Deficit on Provision of Services</b>			<b>16,007</b>	<b>6,223</b>
Net (surplus)/deficit on revaluation of non-current assets (Note 19)			(7,858)	1,876
Re-measurement of net defined pension liability (Note 9)			5,580	(671)
Receipts from long-term debtors (Note 20)			66	98
<b>Sub Total Other Comprehensive Income &amp; Expenditure</b>			<b>(2,212)</b>	<b>1,303</b>
<b>Total Deficit Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>			<b>13,795</b>	<b>7,526</b>

This shows the cost of providing services on an accounting basis. There is a reduction of £13.795 million in the value of the Council's assets and this is the total of the movement on the Balance Sheet.

## Movement in Reserves Statement – The Change in the Council's Resources

	General Fund Balance £'000	Revenue Earmarked Reserves £'000 (Note 18)	Total General Fund £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000 (Note 16)	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000 (Note 17)	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Council Reserves £'000
<b>2019/20</b>								
<b>Balance as at 31 March 2019</b>	(4,358)	(17,831)	(22,189)	(1,365)	(329)	(23,883)	3,297	(20,586)
<b>Total Comprehensive Expenditure and (Income) 2019/20</b>	6,223	0	6,223	0	0	6,223	1,303	7,526
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis (Note 45) 2019/20	(5,719)	0	(5,719)	6	(80)	(5,793)	5,793	0
Transfers (to)/from earmarked reserves 2019/20 (Note 18)	516	(516)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>(Increase)/Decrease in 2019/20</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>(516)</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>7,096</b>	<b>7,526</b>
<b>Balance as at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>(3,338)</b>	<b>(18,347)</b>	<b>(21,685)</b>	<b>(1,359)</b>	<b>(409)</b>	<b>(23,453)</b>	<b>10,393</b>	<b>(13,060)</b>
<b>2020/21</b>								
<b>Balance as at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>(3,338)</b>	<b>(18,347)</b>	<b>(21,685)</b>	<b>(1,359)</b>	<b>(409)</b>	<b>(23,453)</b>	<b>10,393</b>	<b>(13,060)</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Expenditure and (Income) 2020/21</b>	<b>16,007</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,007</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,007</b>	<b>(2,212)</b>	<b>13,795</b>
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis (Note 45) 2020/21	(23,816)	0	(23,816)	(1,525)	(49)	(25,390)	25,390	0
Transfers (to)/from earmarked reserves 2020/21 (Note 18)	6,663	(6,663)	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>(Increase)/Decrease in 2020/21</b>	<b>(1,146)</b>	<b>(6,663)</b>	<b>(7,809)</b>	<b>(1,525)</b>	<b>(49)</b>	<b>(9,383)</b>	<b>23,178</b>	<b>13,795</b>
<b>Balance as at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>(4,484)</b>	<b>(25,010)</b>	<b>(29,494)</b>	<b>(2,884)</b>	<b>(458)</b>	<b>(32,836)</b>	<b>33,571</b>	<b>735</b>

The Movement in Reserves Statement (MIRS) shows the movements in the year for the Council's usable reserves, (those that can be used for future funding of services), and unusable reserves (there to deal with accounting entries only). It begins by showing the effect of the previous statement – the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, and then reverses out accounting entries to show the balance on each of the reserves at the end of the financial year. In summary, there was an increase in the Council's usable reserves of £9,383 million resulting in a balance of £32.8 million. However this balance includes £6.5 million on the Collection Fund Deficit Reserve and £0.8 million on the Collection Fund Tax Income Guarantee Reserve both of which are already committed to fund the Council's share of the deficit of the Collection Fund.

## Balance Sheet – The Council’s Resources

	Note	31 March 2021		31 March 2020	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Total Property, Plant and Equipment</b>	24		80,874		84,421
Assets Held for Sale	29	100		100	
Heritage Assets	27	2,087		579	
Investment Properties	28	3,599		3,568	
Intangible Assets		87		111	
Long-Term Investments	42	2,916		2,938	
Long-Term Debtors	38	3,469		2,441	
			<b>12,258</b>	<b>9,737</b>	
<b>Total Long-Term Assets</b>			<b>93,132</b>	<b>94,158</b>	
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Inventories		1		1	
Short-Term Debtors	39	17,206		10,936	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	40	17,686		17,999	
			<b>34,893</b>	<b>28,936</b>	
<b>Total Current Assets</b>			<b>34,893</b>	<b>28,936</b>	
<b>Total Assets</b>			<b>128,025</b>	<b>123,094</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>					
Short-Term Creditors	34	(24,231)		(16,485)	
Short-Term Loans	42	(15,000)		(20,000)	
S106 Deferred Revenue Receipts	35	(95)		(92)	
Revenue Grant Receipts in Advance	13	(2,827)		(577)	
Provisions	37	(1,064)		(1,212)	
			<b>(43,217)</b>	<b>(38,366)</b>	
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>			<b>(43,217)</b>	<b>(38,366)</b>	
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>			<b>84,808</b>	<b>84,728</b>	
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>					
Long-Term Creditors	33	(60)		(60)	
Long-Term Loans	42	0		(5,000)	
Liability Related to Defined Benefit Pension Scheme	9(f)	(66,646)		(59,027)	
Capital Grants and Contributions	36	(14,896)		(4,384)	
S106 Deferred Revenue Receipts	35	(202)		(297)	
Provisions	37	(3,739)		(2,900)	
			<b>(85,543)</b>	<b>(71,668)</b>	
<b>Total Long-Term Liabilities</b>			<b>(85,543)</b>	<b>(71,668)</b>	
<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>(735)</b>	<b>13,060</b>	

## Balance Sheet – The Council’s Resources

	Note	31 March 2021		31 March 2020	
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Financing:</b>					
<b>Unusable Reserves</b>					
Revaluation Reserve	19	(24,394)		(17,096)	
Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve		(6)		(7)	
Capital Adjustment Account	20	(16,180)		(31,196)	
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	21	7,422		(397)	
Pensions Reserve	23	66,646		59,027	
Pooled Fund Adjustment Account	22	83		62	
<b>Total Unusable Reserves</b>			<b>33,571</b>		<b>10,393</b>
<b>Total Usable Reserves</b>	MIRS page 28		<b>(32,836)</b>		<b>(23,453)</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>			<b>735</b>		<b>(13,060)</b>

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council.

There was a significant reduction in the value of the Council’s net assets in 2020/21 which was mainly due to the reduction in value of non-current assets and an increase in pension liability.

The usable reserves are detailed on the Movement in Reserves Statement and can be used to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation.

The movement in cash that has resulted in the Cash and Cash Equivalents balance of £17.686m shown above is detailed in the Cash Flow Statement.

As the Responsible Financial Officer for Swale Borough Council, I hereby certify that these accounts give a true and fair view of the Council’s financial position and financial performance in advance of approval.

**Philip Wilson CPFA**  
**Head of Finance and Procurement**

**Date: 29 July 2021**

## Cash Flow Statement – Movement in Council’s Resources in Cash

	2020/21		2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Net (Deficit on the Provision of Services (see Comprehensive Income &amp; Expenditure Statement))</b>		(16,007)	(6,223)
Depreciation	1,402		1,366
Impairment & downward valuations	14,065		5,038
Movement in market value of investment property and upward revaluation	(125)		(109)
Increase in creditors	9,282		2,666
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(4,883)		656
Increase in debt impairment	(16)		2
Movement in provisions	713		68
Movement in pension liability	2,039		2,331
Carrying amount of non-current assets and current assets held for sale, sold or derecognised	1,582		19
Other movements	27.		108
<b>Adjustment to Net Surplus on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements</b>		<b>24,086</b>	<b>12,145</b>
Adjustment for items included in the net surplus on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities		138,111	73,904
<b>Net Cash Inflows from Operating Activities</b>		<b>146,190</b>	<b>79,826</b>
Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(7,618)		(18,281)
Movements of short-term investments	(142,010)		(77,360)
Other payments for investing activities	(1,284)		(330)
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	1,467		175
Other receipts from investing activities	13,151		3,260
<b>Net Cash (Outflows) from Investing Activities</b>		<b>(136,294)</b>	<b>(92,536)</b>
Short and long-term borrowing	30,000		20,000
Council tax and business rates adjustments	(209)		(934)
Repayment of short-term borrowing	(40,000)		(5,000)
Reduction of outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases	0		(140)
<b>Net Cash (Outflows)/Inflows from Financing Activities</b>		<b>(10,209)</b>	<b>13,926</b>
<b>Net (Decrease)/Increase in Cash or Cash Equivalents</b>		<b>(313)</b>	<b>1,216</b>
Cash and cash equivalents as at 1 April (Note 40)		17,999	16,783
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March (Note 40)		17,686	17,999
<b>Net (Decrease)/Increase in Cash or Cash Equivalents During Year</b>		<b>(313)</b>	<b>1,216</b>

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents during the reporting period and how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities.

The cash flow for operating activities includes £167,000 for interest received (£317,000 in 2019/20) and £204,000 for interest paid (£214,000 in 2019/20).

## Accounting Policies

### 1. Accounting Policies – General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which those regulations require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code supported by IFRS and other guidance. Following the UK withdrawal from the remit of the EU-endorsement framework, the Code will be based on standards adopted for UK application under the terms of the International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (SI 2019/685). The appropriate note details the critical judgements and estimation about the future made when applying the Accounting Policies.

#### (a) Accounting Convention

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

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis reflecting the economic and statutory environment in which local authorities operate. These provisions confirm that as authorities cannot be created or dissolved without statutory prescription it is only appropriate for their financial statements to be prepared on a going concern basis. The going concern assumption under the Code is therefore drawn up to assume that a local authority's services will continue to operate for the foreseeable future. This is despite the impact of the coronavirus on local authority financial sustainability, because the going concern basis of reporting in the Code and the rationale behind it remains unchanged.

The accounting concepts are supported by the fundamental qualitative characteristics of relevance, faithful representation and materiality and four enhancing qualitative characteristics of comparability, verifiability, timeliness and understandability. Where a particular accounting treatment is prescribed by legislation, then the treatment prevails even if it conflicts with one or other of the above accounting concepts. In the unlikely event of this arising, a note to that effect will be included in the accounts. This Code only requires local authority financial statements to disclose information which is material.

#### (b) Accruals and Revenue Recognition

In accordance with IFRS 15, activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received and relates to activity on all of the Council's functions including non-exchange transactions e.g. Council Tax and Business Rates. In particular:

- the Council recognises income when or as control over the goods or services is transferred to the customer or service recipient and the income reflects the consideration expected for those goods or services;
- 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 the

economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council;

- supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed;
- expenses in relation to services received, including those from employees, are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made;
- revenue relating to such things as council tax, business rates, etc. are measured at the full amount receivable (net of any impairment losses) as they are non-contractual, non-exchange transactions and there can be no difference between the delivery and payment dates;
- interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract;
- accruals are recognised where the value exceeds £1,000;
- 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 Cost of Services for the income that might not be collected;
- exceptions are utility bills, insurance premiums and income from car parking, which are, in the main, charged or credited to the year in which billed, rather than be apportioned between years as the effect of adjusting for opening and closing balances would not be material to the total of transactions for the year. This policy also covers larger payments credited to the year in which they were billed and not apportioned between years; and,
- the annual review of the impairment allowance for non-payment of debt will take into account the prevailing economic climate.

In 2020/21 £6.1m of income was recognised under IFRS 15 revenue contracts with customers (£5.8m, 2019/20).

## 2. Accounting Policies

### (a) Capital Receipts

When an asset is disposed of or de-commissioned, the receipt from the sale is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The receipt is required to be credited to the usable capital receipts reserve and can only be used to finance capital expenditure or set aside to reduce the Council's borrowing requirement.

### (b) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash Equivalents are highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash, which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value and are shown on the Balance Sheet at their nominal value. The Council has defined cash equivalents as investments that do not require notice for withdrawal.

**(c) Employee Benefits – Costs**

Termination benefits are amounts payable due to a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date, or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy. They are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service or, where applicable, to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring. Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require that the General Fund is charged with the amount payable by the Council to the Kent Pension Fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Kent Pension Fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

**(d) Employee Benefits – Post-Employment Benefits**

The liabilities of the Kent Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, and projections of projected earnings for current employees. The value of the Kent Pension Fund liabilities has been assessed by Barnett Waddingham, an independent firm of actuaries.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 2%. The discount rate is the annualised yield at the 18-year point on the Merrill Lynch AA-rated corporate bond curve, chosen to meet the requirements of IAS 19 and with consideration of the estimated duration of employer's liabilities.

The assets of the Kent Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price;
- unquoted securities – professional estimate of fair value;
- unitised securities – current bid price; and
- property – market value.

The change in the net pension's liability is analysed into the following components:

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated to the revenue accounts of services for whom the employees worked;
- past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years;
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability – this is made up of two elements: (1) the value of the liabilities increases as a year's worth of interest is added on; and (2) the increase in assets used to fund pensions in line with the discount rate. This is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement;



## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

- return on plan assets – the funds that are built up to finance the pension payments are the plan assets and this shows the return on them excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability. This is charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
- changes in financial/demographic assumptions, (gain)/loss of defined benefit obligation, other losses and return on assets less interest – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions. These are charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
- contributions by scheme participants – cash paid by staff as employee contributions to the Kent Pension Fund;
- employer contributions – cash paid by the Council to the Kent Pension Fund; and
- benefits paid – payments made directly to pensioners from the Kent Pension Fund.

The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve 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.

The Fund's Actuary determines employers' contributions to the Pension Fund on a triennial basis. The latest actuarial valuation took place on 31 March 2019 and the change in contribution rates as a result of that valuation took effect from 1 April 2020.

### (e) Estimation Techniques

Estimation techniques are the methods adopted by the Council to arrive at estimated monetary amounts, corresponding to the measurement bases selected for assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes in reserves. Details of where these have been used are contained in the relevant note to the Accounts. Where a change in an estimation technique is material, an explanation is also provided of the change and its effect on the results for the current period. For 2020/21 there is a separate note on the estimation uncertainty as a result of the coronavirus.

### (f) Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument. However, "other debtors" are an exception as they are not recognised when the Council becomes committed to supply the goods or service but when the ordered goods or services have been delivered or rendered. Similarly, "other creditors" are recognised when the ordered goods or services have been received.

Financial assets are classified as one of:

- fair value through profit and loss – this category includes:
  - Money Market Funds (MMFs) and are initially measured and carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value; and
  - Investment in Church, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Property Fund carried at fair value at 31 March 2021.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

- amortised cost – this category includes fixed term deposits, call accounts and other debtors and are initially measured at fair value and carried in the Balance Sheet at their amortised cost.

The fair value of a financial instrument on initial recognition is generally the market price. Financial liabilities are measured in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. No impairment is calculated for assets which are classified as fair value through profit and loss as the risk is reflected in the movement in their fair value.

The reconciliation of amounts based on accounting regulations charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement to the net charge required by statute against the General Fund balance, is accounted for by a transfer to or from the Pooled Fund Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### (g) Government Grants and Other External Contributions

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

Receipts defined as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are included on the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, grants specific to a service will be credited against that service expenditure line. General grants, e.g. Revenue Support Grant and the Council's share of business rates from the Collection Fund are credited and disclosed separately in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement under Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income. Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

### (h) Heritage Assets

A Heritage Asset is a tangible or intangible asset that is intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of its historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities and is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture. Heritage assets are carried at valuation (the majority are based on insurance valuations) rather than fair value, reflecting the fact that exchanges of heritage assets are uncommon.

**(i) Intangible Assets**

These are non-current assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled through custody or legal rights. An intangible asset is initially measured at cost and is not subject to revaluation. It is, however, subject to amortisation over its 'useful' life, which for computer software has been assessed as up to a maximum of seven years.

**(j) Investment Property**

Investment properties are those that are used primarily to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation. They are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between parties at arm's length (i.e. market value, the amount that would be paid for the asset in its highest and best use). Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end and any gains or losses on revaluation or disposal are taken to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and are reversed out of the General Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

**(k) Leases**

Rentals payable are charged to the relevant service revenue account on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease on an accruals basis, generally meaning that rentals are charged when they become payable.

**(l) Long-Term Liabilities**

Long-Term Liabilities are those due beyond the next 12 months. The current portion of any long-term liabilities due to be settled within 12 months after the Balance Sheet date are included within current liabilities.

**(m) Material Items of Income and Expense**

Material items of income and expense are required by the Code to be shown separately on the face of the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The Council has decided that for this purpose an item is judged to be material if it is in excess of £0.5m.

**(n) Non-Current Assets – Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

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 PPE. Assets which are not being used to deliver services, but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either Investment Assets or Assets Held for Sale, are recorded as Surplus Assets.

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of PPE is capitalised on an accruals basis. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

The Council operates a de-minimus level of £10,000 for non-current assets. Any expenditure below this level is charged to revenue in the year of acquisition.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Each of the PPE asset classifications are revalued periodically in stages on the basis recommended by CIPFA and in accordance with the Statements of Asset Valuation Principles and Guidance Notes issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), as follows:

- infrastructure, assets under construction and community assets are valued at historic cost, net of depreciation (where applicable), and
- other land and buildings, vehicles, plant, furniture, equipment and surplus assets are valued at current value.

For assets that are carried in the Balance Sheet at current value, the measurements reflect the economic environment prevailing for the service or function the asset is supporting at the reporting date. The current value measurement bases include:

- Existing Use Value defined in accordance with RICS Valuation – Professional Standards for assets providing service potential to the Council where an active market exists;
- Depreciated Replacement Cost, for assets where there is no market and/or the asset is specialised; and
- Fair Value, for surplus assets that are not being used to deliver services, but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either Investment Assets or Assets Held for Sale.

The value of any surplus property is measured at its fair value with the purpose being to return the highest possible valuation, the estimated use of the property being taken as that which best supports this highest value. Surplus property valuations are based on using pricing information derived from an accessible market with the highest volume and level of activity for property transactions available. The valuer will use one or several measurements and/or factors to determine the value of the property, some of which may be more significant in assessing the valuation than others. Many of these inputs are observable, e.g. they can be seen, measured or found from existing data and records. Other inputs however may not be observable, e.g. an input based solely on the judgement of the valuer or where data is not available and assumptions are made. The inputs used in valuations are classified into separate hierarchies, which are a guide in assessing the risk of the valuation being more based on subjective interpretation than fact. For building and land valuations, observable inputs are classed as Level 2 and unobservable inputs are classed as Level 3.

The Council's approach to revaluation is to have a rolling programme of revaluations over five years. Assets that have a significant value are revalued annually, even if they are not scheduled to be so according to the five-year programme.

The Council's principal assets are revalued regularly and any gains arising from revaluations are reflected in the Revaluation Reserve or, where previous losses have occurred, are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement to the limit of the previous loss. A loss on valuation is charged to the Revaluation Reserve to the limit of that fund and thereafter is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The programme of revaluations is continuing on this cyclical basis although material changes to asset valuations will be adjusted in the interim periods, as they occur. Where assets are valued at depreciated replacement cost, this has only been undertaken where there is no active market for that asset.

The Council applies the principles of component accounting where an asset has a gross book value in excess of £1m and a residual life of over 25 years.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Impairment – assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where impairment losses are identified, they are charged against the Revaluation Reserve up to the amount attributable to each specific asset held in that reserve. Any excess of this amount is then chargeable to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. Any charges to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement are reversed out to the Capital Adjustment Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Depreciation – depreciation is provided for on all PPE with a finite useful life (which can be determined at the time of acquisition or revaluation) according to the following policy:

- newly acquired assets are not depreciated in the year of acquisition where this does not have a material effect upon the accounts, and
- depreciation is calculated using the straight-line method.

The standard useful lives for each category of asset are as follows:

Asset	Depreciation Methodology
Land	Depreciation is not normally provided for freehold land
Infrastructure assets	20 to 50 years
IT equipment	3 to 7 years depending on the nature of the asset
Non-IT furniture and equipment	10 to 20 years
Non-operational buildings	40 to 60 years depending on the individual asset
Operational buildings	Usually 50, although this can vary according to the individual asset
Operational land	30 to 50 years (usually relating to car parks)
Vehicles	Up to 10 years depending on the type of vehicle
Community assets	According to whether it is land, building or equipment as above

Provision for depreciation is made by allocating the cost (or revalued amount) less estimated residual value of the assets, as fairly as possible over their useful lives.

Where an asset has major components with different estimated useful lives, the components are depreciated separately. If there is a change in the depreciation charge because of an impairment which is material, full year depreciation is charged in the year of impairment.

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 historic cost. The value of the depreciated revaluation gain is transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Disposals – when an asset is disposed of, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet is written off to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Revaluation gains in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account from the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The costs of disposal up to 4% of the capital receipts are met from the sale proceeds.

The concept of materiality is fundamental to the preparation of the financial statements. In the public sector, as entities tend to be primarily 'spending' to provide public services rather than profit making or asset holding, it is common practice to use gross revenue expenditure as the appropriate financial reporting metric to apply materiality. However, for the purposes of disclosure requirements and adherence to relevant accounting principles and statutory requirements for non-current assets it is more appropriate to apply a materiality level of 2% of net non-current asset value which for 2020/21 is £1.6 million.

### (o) Non-Current Assets – Charges to Revenue

Service revenue accounts and trading accounts are charged with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- depreciation attributable to the non-current assets used by the relevant service;
- revaluation and impairment losses, where they are in excess of the sum available in the Revaluation Reserve; and,
- amortisation of intangible non-current assets attributable to the service.

These charges are reversed out of the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account.

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover depreciation, impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (normally equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance) and approved each year by Council.

### (p) 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 charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties. When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet.

### (q) Reserves

Expenditure is not charged directly to a reserve, but to the service revenue account within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. This is then offset by a reserve appropriation within the Movement in Reserves Statement.

(r) Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but which does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. If the Council has decided to finance this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, then the cost is reversed out of the General Fund so there is no impact on the level of Council Tax, by a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

(s) Shared Services

The Council maintains 'shared service' operations for a number of services. The shared service arrangements have been assessed against the definitions within the Code and the Council has decided that the Mid Kent Services (MKS) Board is a non-decision making body (decisions to enter into a shared service and the level of involvement and consequent cost lie with each council via its own decision making mechanism) and there is then a collaboration agreement in place for each shared service. Accordingly, all expenditure and income of these services is included within the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

(t) Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT is accounted for separately and is included in income and expenditure accounts to the extent that it is not recoverable. The Council's partial exemption status is reviewed on an annual basis.

### **3. Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued But Have Not Yet Been Adopted**

Accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted are:

- definition of a business: amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations;
- interest rate benchmark reform: amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7; and,
- interest rate benchmark reform – phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16.

None of the above are expected to have a material effect on the Council's finances in 2021/22. The CIPFA/LASAAC Local Authority Accounting Code Board has agreed to defer the implementation of IFRS 16 Leases so the effective date for implementation is now 1 April 2022.

### **4. Accounting Estimates – Coronavirus Assumptions**

The outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared by the World Health Organisation as a "global pandemic" on 11 March 2020 and the effects on the estimation uncertainty in the Statement of Accounts are as follows:

(a) Pension Scheme

Pension assets are valued at fair value, principally market value for investments. As a result of the volatility in the markets the values may be subject to change and, in turn, affect the net pension liability. 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. Kent Pension Fund have engaged a firm of consulting actuaries

(Barnett Waddingham) who provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied, however, the interaction of these assumptions is complex. The report and assumptions received from the actuary have adjusted for the increased rate of deaths surrounding the coronavirus and its impact on overall mortality rates.

#### **(b) Financial Instruments**

The fair values used in the preparation of the Council accounts have not been affected by any material uncertainty.

#### **(c) Impairment Allowance for Non-Payment of Debt**

It is prudent to establish a provision (impairment allowance) for non-payment of debt. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic could potentially have an adverse impact on collectability of debt and will be the subject of ongoing review. Therefore, due to the uncertainty about collecting any outstanding monies from taxpayers, a prudent approach has been taken when setting the rates for bad debt provisions, which are reflected in these financial statements.

#### **(d) Non-Current Assets**

The pandemic and the measures taken to tackle coronavirus continued to affect economies and real estate markets globally. Nevertheless, property markets were mostly functioning again, with transaction volumes and other relevant evidence at levels where an adequate quantum of market evidence existed upon which to base opinions of value. Accordingly, the valuation of Council assets and the impairment review as reported in these accounts is not reported as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty' as defined by Valuation Technical and Performance Standards (VPS) 3 and Valuation Practice Guidance Applications (VPGA) 10 of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Red Book Global, except in respect of retail and specific trading related assets/sectors such as car parks, as there continues to be an unprecedented set of circumstances caused by coronavirus and an absence of relevant/sufficient market evidence on which to base these judgements. Therefore, those assets are reported as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty' as set out in VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation Global Standards. Consequently, in respect of any outlined movements less certainty and a higher degree of caution should be attached to the valuations for these assets than would normally be the case.

Furthermore, to reduce estimation uncertainty, the valuation date for investment and high value assets of the Council was moved from 1 January to 31 March 2021.

### **5. Events after the Reporting Period**

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Head of Finance and Procurement on 29 July 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date have provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted if material to reflect the impact of this information.

### **6. Authorisation of Accounts for Issue**

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by Mr Philip Wilson, the Head of Finance and Procurement, on 29 July 2021.



**Pay and Pensions****7. Officers' Remuneration and Termination Benefits**

The number of employees whose remuneration, excluding employer's pension contributions, was £50,000 or more, in bands of £5,000, was:

Remuneration Band	2020/21	2019/20
	Number of Employees	Number of Employees
£50,000 - £54,999	10	9
£55,000 - £59,999	12	9
£60,000 - £64,999	4	1
£70,000 - £74,999	0	1
£75,000 - £79,999	1	1
£80,000 - £84,999	4	4
£85,000 - £89,999	1	1
£95,000 - £99,999	0	1
£100,000 - £104,999	1	0
£105,000 - £109,999	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28</b>

This has been applied consistently to both years. Remuneration comprises:

- all sums paid to or receivable by an employee including non-taxable termination payments, redundancy pay and pay in lieu of notice;
- the monetary value of any other benefits.

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

Exit Package Cost Band (Including Special Payments)	Number of Compulsory Redundancies		Number of Other Departures Agreed		Total Number of Exit Packages by Cost Band		Total Cost of Exit Packages in Each Band £	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
	£0 - £20,000	1	0	1	1	2	1	16,594
£20,001 - £40,000	2	0	0	0	2	0	50,451	0
£100,001 - £150,000	1	0	0	0	1	0	103,112	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>170,157</b>	<b>6,689</b>
Total paid to employees							93,057	6,689
Total paid to KCC for contracted payments for pension scheme							77,100	0
<b>Total</b>							<b>170,157</b>	<b>6,689</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Senior Officers whose emoluments/salary is between £50,000 and £150,000 per year.

Post holder Information (Post title)	Point	2020/21 Salary, Fees & Allowances £'000	2020/21 Pension Contributions £'000	2020/21 Total Remuneration £'000	2019/20 Total Remuneration £'000
Chief Executive	1	27	9	36	0
Chief Executive	2	20	8	28	142
Director of Regeneration		103	33	136	130
Policy & Performance Manager	3	81	26	107	106
Head of Legal Services	4	88	27	115	112
Chief Financial Officer	5	59	0	59	14
Head of Development Services		84	27	111	108
Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services		84	27	111	105
Head of Commissioning, Environment & Leisure		82	26	108	101
Chief Executive Thames Gateway Kent Partnership	6	50	0	50	83
<b>Total</b>		<b>678</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>901</b>

**Point 1:** Post holder was appointed in January 2021.

**Point 2:** Post holder was on sick leave for 2019/20 and sadly passed away in May 2020. The 'Salary, Fees & Allowances' relates to outstanding holiday pay.

**Point 3:** 'Salary, Fees & Allowances' includes honorarium.

**Point 4:** Includes market supplement and mileage allowance;

**Point 5:** Post holder was appointed January 2020. Previously the Chief Financial Officer worked across both Swale and KCC and was directly employed by the latter.

**Point 6:** Post holder left mid 2020. Includes mileage allowance, outstanding holiday pay and honorarium. The salary for this post is paid by the Council and recharged to the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership. This partnership ceased on 31 March 2021.

### 8. Members' Allowances

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Basic allowance	255	242
Special responsibility allowance	163	145
Members' travel, subsistence and IT allowance	9	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>402</b>

The Members' Allowances Scheme can be inspected on the Council website  
<http://www.swale.gov.uk/members-allowances/>.

## 9. Defined Benefit Pension Scheme

### a) Nature of Benefits of Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

The Council is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which is a national scheme that is administered locally on its behalf by KCC – all employees have the right to join the scheme. This is a funded defined benefit career average salary scheme, so that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions' liabilities with investment assets. The fund provides index linked pensions and other retirement benefits based upon employees' pay and length of service and these benefits are determined independently from investments of the scheme. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement. Employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5%. The fund actuary, Barnett Waddingham, sets the employer contribution rate, currently 18.5%, plus an annual fixed sum.

### b) Regulatory Framework of Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

The Kent Pension Fund is operated under the regulatory framework for the LGPS and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Superannuation Committee of KCC. This committee is responsible for setting investment strategy, appointing professional fund managers, carrying out regular reviews, monitoring of investments, monitoring the administration of the Pension Fund and determining Pension Fund policy with regard to employer admission arrangements. The committee consists of 12 members with voting rights (nine from KCC and three from district councils) and five other members without voting rights. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pensions Fund Regulations.

### c) Risks of Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

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

### d) Other Factors Affecting Pension Payments

The Council has arrangements for the award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement – this is an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

### e) Revenue Transactions Relating to Post-Employment Benefits

The costs of retirement benefits are recognised in the 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 accounting based cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and the General Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement:

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Comprehensive Income &amp; Expenditure Statement</b>		
Cost of Services comprising:		
Current service cost	3,726	3,792
Administration expenses	61	48
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	1,297	1,341
<b>Total Post-Employment Benefits Charged to the Deficit on the Provision of Services</b>	<b>5,084</b>	<b>5,181</b>
Post-Employment Benefits Charged to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:		
Return on plan assets in excess of interest	(20,726)	8,148
Change in demographic assumptions	(1,552)	(1,849)
Experience loss on defined benefit obligation	(1,888)	1,169
Change in financial assumptions	29,746	(10,237)
Other actuarial losses	0	2,098
<b>Total Re-Measurements Recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>5,580</b>	<b>(671)</b>
<b>Total Post-Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income &amp; Expenditure Statement</b>	<b>10,664</b>	<b>4,510</b>

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Movement in Reserves Statement</b>		
Reduction of charges made to the deficit on the Provision of Services for post-employment benefits to equal actual payments in accordance with the Code	(2,039)	(2,331)
<b>Employers' Contributions Payable to the Scheme</b>	<b>3,045</b>	<b>2,850</b>
<b>Actual Return on Scheme Assets less Interest</b>	<b>20,726</b>	<b>(8,148)</b>

f) Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amounts included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Council's obligation in respect of its defined benefits plans are as follows:

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	158,586	130,433
Fair value of plan assets	(94,577)	(74,045)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>64,009</b>	<b>56,388</b>
Present value of unfunded obligation	2,637	2,639
<b>Net Liability in Balance Sheet</b>	<b>66,646</b>	<b>59,027</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

### g) Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets and Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)

The Pensions Reserve figure in the Balance Sheet consists of the total assets plus liabilities detailed below:

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Opening balance as at 1 April – defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>(133,072)</b>	<b>(140,565)</b>
Current service cost	(3,596)	(2,931)
Past service cost including McCloud / Sargeant judgements (see Note I)	(130)	(861)
Interest cost	(2,607)	(3,329)
Contributions by scheme participants	(588)	(561)
Changes in financial assumptions	(29,746)	10,237
Experience loss on defined benefit obligation	1,888	(1,169)
Changes in demographic assumptions	1,552	1,849
Benefits paid including unfunded pension payments	5,076	4,258
<b>Closing balance as at 31 March – defined benefit obligation</b>	<b>(161,223)</b>	<b>(133,072)</b>

Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Opening balance as at 1 April – fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>74,045</b>	<b>83,198</b>
Interest on assets	1,310	1,988
Return on assets less interest	20,726	(8,148)
Other actuarial losses	0	(2,098)
Administration expenses	(61)	(48)
Employer contributions	3,045	2,850
Contributions by scheme participants	588	561
Benefits paid including unfunded pension payments	(5,076)	(4,258)
<b>Closing balance as at 31 March – fair value of scheme assets</b>	<b>94,577</b>	<b>74,045</b>

### h) Pension Fund Assets

The Pension Fund's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total assets held:

	31 March 2021 £'000	31 March 2021 %	31 March 2020 £'000	31 March 2020 %
Equity investments	60,941	64	45,588	62
Gilts	562	1	576	1
Bonds	11,819	13	9,659	13
Property	9,795	10	10,083	14
Cash	4,631	5	1,880	2
Absolute return fund	6,829	7	6,259	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>94,577</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>74,045</b>	<b>100</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

### i) Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Estimates of the liability are based on the rolled forward value of the employer's liabilities calculated for the triennial valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2019, allowing for the different assumptions required under IAS 19.

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 if retiring today:		
Men	21.6 years	21.8 years
Women	23.6 years	23.7 years
Longevity at 65 if retiring in 20 years:		
Men	22.9 years	23.2 years
Women	25.1 years	25.2 years
Rate of inflation (Retail Price Index (RPI) increases)	3.15%	2.65%
Rate of inflation (Consumer Price Index (CPI) Increases)	2.85%	1.85%
Rate of increase in salaries	3.80%	3.00%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.80%	2.00%
Rate of discounting scheme liabilities	2.00%	2.35%
Take-up option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum	50%	50%

The return on the Fund (on a bid value to bid value basis) for the year to 31 March 2021 is estimated to be 30.01% (-7% for the year 31 March 2020).

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis below has 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 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.

Uncertainty	Sensitivity Analysis		
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adjustment to discount rate	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	158,248	161,223	164,256
Projected service cost	4,026	4,160	4,298
Adjustment to long-term salary increase	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	161,567	161,223	160,881
Projected service cost	4,162	4,160	4,158
Adjustment to pension increases and deferred revaluation	+0.1%	0.0%	-0.1%
Present value of total obligation	163,885	161,223	158,610
Projected service cost	4,296	4,160	4,027
Adjustment to life expectancy assumptions	+1 Year	None	-1 Year
Present value of total obligation	168,907	161,223	153,912
Projected service cost	4,336	4,160	3,990

j) Funding and Investment Strategy

KCC as administering authority for the Kent Pension Fund maintains a Funding and Investment Strategy as required by the pensions and (where relevant) investment regulations. The funding objectives are to ensure the long-term solvency of the Fund, ensure that sufficient funds are available to meet all benefits as they fall due for payment and enable employer contribution rates to be kept as nearly constant as possible and at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. The aim of its investment strategy is to minimise the risk of an overall reduction in the Fund's value and to maximise the opportunity for gains across the whole portfolio. The Fund achieves this through asset diversification to reduce exposure to market risk (price risk, currency risk and interest rate risk) and credit risk to an acceptable level. In addition, the Fund manages its liquidity risk to ensure there is sufficient liquidity to meet the Fund's forecast cash flows. The Funding and Investment Strategy is reviewed annually or more frequently if necessary.

k) Impact of Pension Fund on Council's Cash Flows

An objective of the scheme is to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible and funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The Fund is valued once every three years and the latest valuation was at 31 March 2019 which disclosed a net deficit of £15.5m on Swale Borough Council's share of the fund, a reduction from the 2016 valuation deficit of £20.1m.

The movement in financial assumptions is due to the change in the discount rate and inflation forecasts.

The total contributions (not including unfunded) expected to be made to the Kent Pension Fund by the Council in 2021/22 is £2.8m (£2.688m, 2020/21).

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 19 years for 2020/21 (2019/20, 19 years).

l) Accounting for the McCloud and Sargeant Judgements in 2020/21

An allowance was made in the 2019/20 Annual Accounts shown as a past service cost. On 16 July 2020, the Government published a consultation on the proposed remedy to be applied to LGPS benefits in response to the McCloud and Sargeant cases. The consultation closed on 8 October 2020. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is due to publish a response to the LGPS consultation later in 2021.

m) Accounting for the Impact of Covid in 2020/21

There has not been a full valuation of updated membership data mortality experience over 2020/21. There has been a roll forward approach in calculating the liabilities, rather than carry out a full valuation of member data. This means that mortality experience is estimated through the benefits paid out to members. The difference between this estimate and the employer's actual mortality experience will then be incorporated once the next actuarial valuation of the Fund is complete. The actuaries were not aware of any other events relating to COVID-19 that are to be allowed for in the Council's accounting results.

**Day to Day Spending – Revenue****10. Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature**

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

	2020/21 Net Expenditure £'000	2019/20 Net Expenditure £'000
Benefit payments	37,107	37,164
Employee costs	15,975	15,486
Business rates paid to Government and pool	14,859	14,748
Other service expenses	20,658	19,195
Major contracts	7,688	7,210
Parish precepts	1,574	1,367
Drainage board levy	847	817
Trading undertakings (losses)	16,009	123
Investment properties	86	34
Other items	766	626
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>115,569</b>	<b>96,770</b>
Benefit income (Note 13)	(36,510)	(36,663)
Business rates income	(16,695)	(24,734)
S13 Retail relief grant	(6,822)	0
Tax income guarantee (S13)	(750)	0
Fees, charges and other service income	(8,735)	(10,482)
Council tax	(9,991)	(9,594)
New homes bonus	(1,633)	(1,875)
Trading undertakings (gains)	(1,178)	(777)
Revenue support grant	(115)	(113)
Coronavirus LA support grant	(4,234)	0
Grant income credited to cost of services (Note 13)	(11,541)	(3,519)
Other grants and contributions	(314)	(1,819)
Other items	(1,044)	(971)
<b>Total (Income)</b>	<b>(99,562)</b>	<b>(90,547)</b>
<b>Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>16,007</b>	<b>6,223</b>

The loss on trading undertakings is as a result of a change in the valuation of an asset.

**11. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure**

	2020/21 Net Expenditure £'000	2019/20 Net Expenditure £'000
Interest payable & similar charges	204	214
Net interest on the net defined pension liability (Note 9)	1,297	1,341
Interest receivable & similar income	(167)	(317)
Losses/(Gains) on trading undertakings	14,831	(656)
(Income) & expenditure – investment properties (Note 28)	(163)	(211)
Revaluation (gains) to investment properties and changes in fair value (Note 28)	(125)	(109)
Net losses on financial assets through profit and loss (Note 42)	21	109
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,898</b>	<b>371</b>

The loss on trading undertakings is as a result of a change in the valuation of an asset.



## 12. Shared Services

The Council participates in a number of shared service arrangements which are included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and which are detailed below:

	2020/21 Expenditure on Partners £'000	2020/21 Income from Partners £'000	2020/21 Expenditure Other £'000	2020/21 Income Other £'000	2020/21 Net Expenditure £'000	2019/20 Net Expenditure £'000
Environmental Health	531	0	133	(50)	614	523
Information Technology	550	0	735	(2)	1,282	1,184
Human Resources	222	0	94	(2)	314	329
Planning Support	169	0	27	0	196	191
Internal Audit	129	0	0	0	129	170
Parking	152	(21)	1,128	(1,288)	(29)	(1,532)
Building Control	63	0	3	0	66	65
Local Land Charges	42	0	6	(168)	(120)	(102)
Fraud Investigation	16	0	0	0	16	18
Legal	0	(1,234)	1,953	(155)	564	720
Debt Recovery	0	0	0	(23)	(23)	(142)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,874</b>	<b>(1,255)</b>	<b>4,079</b>	<b>(1,688)</b>	<b>3,010</b>	<b>1,424</b>

In 2020/21 the Council contributed £53,696.05 towards shared IT capital expenditure (£52,869, 2019/20). The Council has accrued its funding share to Maidstone Borough Council as revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute. The Coronavirus pandemic has resulted a significant loss in the parking net income and expenditure.

## 13. Grant Income

### Grants Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

These are detailed in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

### Revenue Grants – Receipts in Advance

The revenue grants receipts in advance for 2020/21 were £2,827,314.86 (£576,687 in 2019/20).

The reason for the increase is due to £2,285,559.05 Coronavirus Grants received in 2020/21 treated as Receipts in Advance.

### Capital Grants and Contributions

Please see Note 36 for a breakdown of Capital Grants and Contributions.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

### Grants Credited to Services

Grant Area	Provider	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Housing benefit grant	Department for Work & Pensions	(36,510)	(36,663)
Coronavirus Additional Restrictions Business Grants	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	(2,591)	0
Coronavirus Business Support Grants	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	(1,501)	0
Coronavirus S13A Council Tax Hardship Grant	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	(1,173)	0
Coronavirus - supporting public sector leisure centres	National Leisure Recovery Fund	(365)	0
Coronavirus - emergency assistance and winter scheme grants	Kent County Council	(260)	0
Coronavirus Revenue Grants - other	Various Contributors	(545)	0
Queenborough & Rushenden Klondyke land improvement funded by Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)	Homes and Communities Agency	(1,136)	0
Housing repair grants – disabled facilities	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	(839)	(1,530)
Homelessness grant	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	(678)	(276)
Discretionary housing payment	Department for Work & Pensions	(480)	(334)
Housing benefit admin subsidy	Department for Work & Pensions	(406)	(400)
Rough Sleeper Initiative	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	(351)	(151)
Localising council tax support administration subsidy grant	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government	(215)	(163)
Sittingbourne Town Centre road works	Kent County Council	(130)	(64)
Implementing welfare reform changes	Department for Work & Pensions	(114)	(151)
Open spaces and play areas – commuted sums	Various Contributors	(101)	(11)
Sittingbourne High Street Footpath	Private Developer	(13)	(40)
Other grants	Various Contributors	(643)	(399)
<b>Total Grant Income Credited to Cost of Services</b>		<b>(48,051)</b>	<b>(40,182)</b>

### 14. External Audit Costs

The Council's auditors are Grant Thornton UK LLP.

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Fees payable for external audit service	70	58
Fees payable for the certification of grant claims and returns	31	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>86</b>

## **15. Gains and Losses on Disposal of Non-Current Assets**

Property valued at £1,582,350 was disposed of in 2020/21. A total net loss of £37,880 was incurred for 2020/21 for all disposed assets (net gain of £235,980 in 2019/20). No investment assets were disposed of in 2020/21 (with no disposals of investment assets in 2019/20). The largest gain in the year was £215,400 from the sale of land at Minster Cliffs and the largest loss in the year was £240,000 from the transfer to a long lease as part of a Community Asset Transfer, of the Skate Park in Sittingbourne. Gains and losses on investment properties are shown within Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

## **Council Resources – Reserves**

### **16. Usable Capital Receipts Reserve**

This reserve holds the income from the disposal of land and other assets, which can only be used to fund new capital expenditure or to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied at year-end.

In 2020/21 the Council received £1.424m from the sale of land and property. This included £1.045m from the sale of land for housing development at Minster Cliffs, Minster, and £0.378m from the sale of property in Sittingbourne, further to the town centre regeneration.

	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance as at 1 April</b>	<b>(1,359)</b>	<b>(1,365)</b>
Capital receipts in year from sale of assets	(1,466)	(278)
Capital receipts in year from repayment of grants and mortgages	(83)	(14)
Capital receipts applied during the year – financing long-term assets	24	298
<b>Balance as at 31 March</b>	<b>(2,884)</b>	<b>(1,359)</b>

### **17. Capital Grants Unapplied Account**

This reserve holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Council has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The balance at 31 March 2021 of £458,270 is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

### **18. Revenue Earmarked Reserves**

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund to earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2020/21 and 2019/20.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	Balance 31 March 2019 £'000	Transfers out 2019/20 £'000	Transfers in 2019/20 £'000	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000	Transfers out 2020/21 £'000	Transfers in 2020/21 £'000	Balance 31 March 2021 £'000
Business Rates Volatility	(4,935)	1,438	(446)	(3,943)	1,446	(330)	(2,827)
North Kent Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates	(846)	0	(860)	(1,706)	33	0	(1,673)
Revenue and Benefits	(630)	0	(179)	(809)	52	(658)	(1,415)
Preceptors Council Tax Support	(817)	0	(254)	(1,071)	47	(134)	(1,158)
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates	(2,065)	1,515	(776)	(1,326)	1000	(768)	(1,094)
Special Project Fund	0	171	(1,135)	(964)	909	(1,000)	(1,055)
Improvement and Resilience Fund	0	0	0	0	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
Town Centres / High Streets Fund	0	0	(800)	(800)	42	0	(758)
Building Maintenance	(897)	233	(42)	(706)	166	(23)	(563)
Repairs & Renewals	(274)	73	(175)	(376)	82	(161)	(455)
Communities Fund	(122)	67	(501)	(556)	145	0	(411)
STC Retail Park	(439)	22	0	(417)	38	0	(379)
Parking	(379)	73	(67)	(373)	94	0	(279)
Wheeled Bins	(181)	98	(35)	(118)	0	(161)	(279)
Performance	(494)	62	0	(432)	161	0	(271)
Commuted Sums	(266)	0	0	(266)	0	0	(266)
Stay Put Fund	(232)	0	(51)	(283)	45	0	(238)
Heritage Strategy	0	0	(250)	(250)	24	0	(226)
Visitor Economic Framework	0	26	(215)	(189)	10	0	(179)
Financial Services	(184)	4	0	(180)	1	0	(179)
Local Loan Fund	(175)	0	0	(175)	0	0	(175)
Refuse and Recycling	(132)	4	(44)	(172)	0	0	(172)
Local Development Framework	(208)	0	(12)	(220)	53	0	(167)
STC Bourne Place Regeneration	0	0	0	0	0	(165)	(165)
Housing	(437)	285	0	(152)	0	0	(152)
Environmental Initiatives	(137)	14	(30)	(153)	12	(5)	(146)
Electoral Registration	(77)	0	(24)	(101)	0	(25)	(126)
Coronavirus - S13A Council Tax Hardship Fund	(89)	44	(62)	(107)	58	(52)	(101)
Insurance Funds	0	0	0	0	0	(94)	(94)
Disabled Facilities Grants (Revenue)	(88)	5	0	(83)	0	0	(83)
	(85)	0	0	(85)	6	0	(79)

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	Balance 31 March 2019 £'000	Transfers out 2019/20 £'000	Transfers in 2019/20 £'000	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000	Transfers out 2020/21 £'000	Transfers in 2020/21 £'000	Balance 31 March 2021 £'000
Milton Creek Access Road	(75)	0	0	(75)	0	0	(75)
HR Shared Services	(42)	3	(35)	(74)	0	0	(74)
General Democratic	0	0	(37)	(37)	0	(30)	(67)
Tree Survey and Works in Closed Churchyards	(63)	0	0	(63)	0	0	(63)
Cemeteries	(60)	0	0	(60)	0	0	(60)
Faversham Creek Footpath	(60)	0	0	(60)	0	0	(60)
Food and Health Safety	(12)	0	(48)	(60)	0	0	(60)
ICT Reserve	(55)	0	0	(55)	0	0	(55)
Licensing	(21)	10	(43)	(54)	0	0	(54)
Pension & Redundancy	(86)	7	(15)	(94)	170	(128)	(52)
Closed Churchyards and War Memorials	(48)	0	(4)	(52)	0	0	(52)
Sheppey Lower Road Improvements	0	200	(250)	(50)	0	0	(50)
CCTV Monitoring	0	0	0	0	0	(50)	(50)
Control Centre Reserve							
General Reserve	(2,186)	1,520	0	(666)	844	0	178
Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	(6,546)	(6,546)
Collection Fund Tax	0	0	0	0	0	(750)	(750)
Income Guarantee (TIG)							
Miscellaneous	(854)	261	(341)	(934)	155	(176)	(955)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(17,751)</b>	<b>6,135</b>	<b>(6,731)</b>	<b>(18,347)</b>	<b>5,593</b>	<b>(12,256)</b>	<b>(25,010)</b>

Business Rates Volatility	To assist the Council in managing the volatility of business rate income as a result of business rate localisation.
North Kent Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates	Under the Kent Business Rates 2018/19 Pilot there was to be an allocation of funds called the Housing & Commercial Growth Business Rates which was allocated among "clusters" of authorities for each cluster to determine the final allocation. SBC is in the "North Kent" cluster. Cabinet on 16/12/2020 agreed that this fund was to be used to fund the Local Housing Company, for set up costs and future investment, including possible investment in Sheppey. Minute 350/12/2020.
Revenues and Benefits	Savings made in the Revenues and Benefits section, including unspent grants were transferred to this reserve. This is used to cover the shortfall in Government grant.
Preceptors Council Tax Support	Paid by KCC, Police and Fire to reflect the costs of Council Tax support localisation.
Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates	This fund has been established as a result of the Council joining the Kent Business Rates Pool. It is to fund economic development as agreed by the Council and KCC. As agreed by Cabinet on 16/12/2020 the balance on this reserve is to be retained for potential top ups and for new initiatives or pressures. Minute 350/12/2020.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Special Project Fund	The Cabinet meeting 10 July 2019 proposal to set up a Special Projects Fund was agreed. The commitment is to allocate £1m per annum from accumulated business rate reserves to the funds. The fund is being used to deliver tangible projects for the residents of the borough making the public spaces cleaner and better presented. Minute 122/07/2019.
Improvement and Resilience Fund	The Cabinet meeting on 16 Dec 2020 agreed the transfer of £1m from the Kent Pool Economic Development Business Rates Fund to the "Improvement and Resilience Fund". Minute 350/12/2020.
Town Centres/ High Street Fund.	The Cabinet meeting 16 December 2020 agreed that £800k of shared business rates will be now allocated to Town Centres. Minute 350/12/2020.
Building Maintenance	To meet items of backlog building maintenance as identified in the Council's medium-term maintenance plan as well as urgent or unexpected items. Each year the reserve is topped up by any underspend on the building maintenance revenue budget.
Repairs & Renewals	Regular contributions are made to this fund from the General Fund for a number of services to fund the future cost of significant items of expenditure.
Communities Fund	This is to support the Council's Localism Agenda.
STC Retail Park	This reserve is for the accounting adjustment between the value of income received and the value included in the accounts.
Parking	Any surplus from on-street parking is transferred to the ring fenced on-street parking account under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Act 1984.
Wheeled Bins	To fund the new wheeled bins purchases and replacements.
Performance	To improve overall performance. Officers can submit a bidding list of proposals.
Commuted Sums	To fund play area and open space maintenance in future years.
Stay Put Fund	To support the Council's Stay Put service which offers advice, support and help to the elderly and disabled, who are owner occupiers or private tenants and who need practical assistance to repair, adapt or improve their homes.
Heritage Strategy	The Cabinet meeting 18 December 2019 agreed to the transfer of £250,000 from the Kent Pool Economic Development Reserve to the Heritage Strategy. Minute 402/12/2019.
Visitor Economic Framework	The Cabinet meeting 7 Feb 2018 agreed that the Visitor Economy Framework 2018-2023 be adopted and that funding of £250,000 from the shared business rates pool with Kent County Council be used to contribute to the delivery of the framework. Minute 475/02/2018.
Financial Services	To fund continuous system developments for the financial systems, and meeting the costs of the professional advice and staff development on accounting, taxation, payments, etc.
Local Loan Fund	To support voluntary, community or not-for-profit organisations and town and parish councils in Swale to enable management and delivery of local services and facilities.
Refuse and Recycling	To fund on-going review of additional roads from new developments to be added on to Biffa contract and services including clinical, bulky and weekly collections.
Local Development Framework	Any underspend or overspend on this service on the General Fund will be transferred to this fund and used solely to fund Local Development Framework associated work.
STC Bourne Place	This reserve is for the accounting adjustment between the value of income received and the value included in the accounts.
Regeneration	To fund regeneration projects in the Borough. Officers can submit bids to this reserve.
Housing	To fund the homelessness service in future years.
Environmental Initiatives	Income from Fixed Penalty notices used to support various environmental initiatives. It is a requirement of the legislation that any money generated is used to create a cleaner and greener environment.
Electoral Registration	To fund one-off costs of Local Authority elections in future years.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Coronavirus - S13A Council Tax Hardship Fund	This represents the balance remaining on the S13A Council Tax Hardship Fund. According to MHCLG and CIPFA guidance, the Council must spend this in the provision of support to vulnerable households.
Insurance Funds	The purpose of the reserve is to fund Insurance claims.
Disabled Facilities Grants (Revenue)	This reserve is related to the Better Care Fund (BCF) incorporating Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Funding is from the Government and administered via KCC. The balance of the BCF to carry over as agreed by Strategic Management Team and used for new or committed work to support the DFG service.
Milton Creek Access Road	Reserve will be used for new access road to Milton Country Park and increased security around the car park to stop unauthorised encampments.
HR Shared Services	This reserve is funded from an underspend on the MKS HR service.
General Democratic	This reserve is funded from an underspend on members' allowances.
Tree Survey and Works in Closed Churchyards	Funding required to appoint consultants to undertake a tree condition survey across the Council's Green Spaces and to fund a rolling programme of tree works.
Cemeteries	Used to cover the costs of purchasing an electronic burial records system as part of the transformation review recommendations and further expected costs at the new Iwade burial site.
Faversham Creek Footpath	Footpath in Faversham - part of the regeneration of the Faversham Creek.
Food and Health Safety	To meet Council Key Performance Indicators as well as statutory duties.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Reserve	This will be used to fund IT related expenditure in future years. Any surplus or deficit on ICT expenditure on software and equipment is transferred to this fund.
Licensing	Any surplus or deficit from Licensing is transferred to the ring-fenced Licensing account under Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.
Pension & Redundancy	To meet the cost of releasing the Pension Fund benefits to staff who have taken early retirement and to fund all other redundancy costs.
Closed Churchyards and War Memorials	This reserve is to fund continuing substantial works at St Marys closed churchyard.
Sheppey Lower Road Improvements	The Cabinet meeting 18 December 2019 agreed to £250k of the shared Kent Pool Economic Development Reserve being allocated to the Sheppey Lower Road improvements. Minute 402/12/2019.
CCTV Monitoring Control Centre Reserve	The capital cost of the new CCTV system (£250k) was going to be funded from 5 years of £50k per year revenue savings on running costs. This funding was approved as part of the 2020/21 capital budget.
General Reserve	The use of this reserve is subject to the approval of Members.
Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	This reserve is funded by Government grants to be fully used to offset the business rate collection fund deficit as a result of increased business rate reliefs announced by Government in response to the coronavirus pandemic.
Collection Fund Tax Income Guarantee (TIG)	The Government announced, as part of a consultative policy paper a scheme to fund 75% of irrecoverable losses in council tax and business rates. This is known as the Tax Guarantee Scheme Grant. The methodology differs between council tax and business rates. These will be used to help fund the Council's share of the deficit on the collection fund for 2020/21 in future years and therefore they have been transferred to a reserve.
Miscellaneous	This is made up of the earmarked reserves that are less than £50,000. A full list of these reserves is available upon request.

## 19. Revaluation Reserve

This reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its property, plant and equipment assets, heritage assets and frozen gains re investment assets (incurred prior to the assets being classified as investment assets).

This year the gains also include £1,464,300 arising from the addition of the Civic Clocks, heritage assets which were not previously recognised on the Balance Sheet. £1,250,000 of this total is relative to the Sheerness Clock and Clock Tower, a grade II listed structure built in 1902 of cast iron construction.

The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

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

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

	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance as at 1 April</b>	<b>(17,096)</b>	<b>(19,280)</b>
(Upward) revaluation of assets	(9,779)	(2,952)
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,921	4,829
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>(7,858)</b>	<b>1,877</b>
Write down re gains derived from depreciation differences, between historic costs and current value	316	307
Write down of accumulated gains on disposed assets	244	0
<b>Balance as at 31 March</b>	<b>(24,394)</b>	<b>(17,096)</b>

## 20. Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. It is debited with the cost of acquisition/enhancement as depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. It is credited with the amounts set aside to finance the costs of acquisition/enhancement. The account also contains accumulated gains/losses on assets pre-dating 1 April 2007.



## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
<b>Balance as at 1 April</b>	<b>(31,196)</b>	<b>(34,421)</b>
<b>Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income &amp; Expenditure Statement:</b>		
Depreciation of tangible non-current assets	1,402	1,339
Amortisation of intangible assets	27	27
Write down Revenue Expenditure Funded by Capital under Statute (REFCUS) (Note 30)	2,528	2,023
Revaluation losses taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – other assets	15,960	3,760
Revaluation losses taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – investment assets	5	14
Revaluation gains and reversal of prior losses taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – other assets	(230)	(376)
Revaluation gains taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – investment assets	(130)	(123)
Revaluation gains taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – held for sale assets	0	(11)
Impairment losses / reversal of prior impairment losses taken to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement – other assets	(1,665)	1,665
Disposal & derecognition of assets – write out of notional net book value	1,582	19
<b>Write down of Revaluation Reserve:</b>		
Write down of Revaluation Reserve depreciation (gains) (Note 19)	(316)	(307)
Write down of Revaluation Reserve accumulated gains on disposed assets (Note 19)	(244)	0
<b>Capital financing applied in the year:</b>		
Capital financing – capital receipts (Note 32 and Note 16)	(24)	(298)
Capital financing – Government grants and external contributions (Note 32)	(2,308)	(3,098)
Capital financing – capital reserves (Note 32)	(832)	(873)
Capital financing – direct revenue funding (Note 32)	(27)	0
Minimum revenue provision (Note 32)	(778)	(634)
Write down of financing long-term debtors	66	98
<b>Balance as at 31 March</b>	<b>(16,180)</b>	<b>(31,196)</b>

### 21. Collection Fund Adjustment Account

This manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax and business rates income in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as it falls due from council taxpayers and business ratepayers, compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund. The balance effectively shows the Council's share of the overall Collection Fund deficit and the surplus for renewable energy income retained by the Council. The total movement in 2020/21 was a movement from surplus to deficit of £7,820,034 (£82,314 increase in surplus in 2019/20).

The increase in deficit in 2020/21 is mainly relating to the increase in business rates reliefs announced by government as a direct response to the coronavirus pandemic. The deficit will be offset in 2021/22 from government grants received which are currently being held in the Collection Fund Deficit Reserve.

## 22. Pooled Fund Adjustment Account

The movement in year of £20,884 represents the loss in value of the CCLA Property Fund. The fair value is based on public price quotations in an active market for this financial instrument and without this investment counting as capital expenditure.

## 23. Pensions Reserve

This Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for these benefits in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to the Kent Pension Fund or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve of £66,646,000 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 under accounting regulations. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid. Details on the movement in 2020/21 are shown on Note 9 (f).

**Long-Term Spending – Capital****24. Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) Assets**

Movements in 2020/21:

Classification	Operational Assets					Non-Operational Assets		Total Property, Plant & Equipment Assets £'000
	Land & Buildings £'000	Vehicles & Equipment £'000	Infra- structure £'000	Comm- unity £'000	Leased £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Surplus Land & Buildings £'000	
<b>Cost or Valuation</b>								
<b>At 1 April 2020</b>	<b>60,318</b>	<b>6,936</b>	<b>2,679</b>	<b>7,169</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>17,991</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>97,938</b>
Additions	4,752	146	0	162	0	1,999	0	7,059
Revaluations	(13,314)	(93)	0	0	0	0	(171)	(13,578)
Disposals	(495)	(1,487)	0	0	(12)	0	(1,060)	(3,054)
Reclassified	16,962	0	(430)	430	0	(16,962)	94	94
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>68,223</b>	<b>5,502</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>7,761</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>3,028</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>88,459</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment</b>								
<b>At 1 April 2020</b>	<b>(6,019)</b>	<b>(5,239)</b>	<b>(835)</b>	<b>(758)</b>	<b>(661)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(13,517)</b>
Depreciation charge	(1,024)	(246)	(40)	(92)	0	0	0	(1,402)
Depreciation written out on revaluations	795	94	0	0	0	0	2	891
Reversal of Impairments written out on loss	4,972	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,972
Disposals	3	1,453	0	0	12	0	3	1,471
Reclassified	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<b>(1,273)</b>	<b>(3,938)</b>	<b>(875)</b>	<b>(850)</b>	<b>(649)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(7,585)</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>66,950</b>	<b>1,564</b>	<b>1,374</b>	<b>6,911</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,028</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>80,874</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>54,299</b>	<b>1,697</b>	<b>1,844</b>	<b>6,411</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,991</b>	<b>2,179</b>	<b>84,421</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Comparative movements in 2019/20:

Classification	Operational Assets					Non-Operational Assets		Total Property, Plant & Equipment Assets £'000
	Land & Buildings £'000	Vehicles & Equipment £'000	Infra-structure £'000	Comm-unity £'000	Leased £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Surplus Land & Buildings £'000	
<b>Cost or Valuation</b>								
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	<b>49,366</b>	<b>6,434</b>	<b>2,674</b>	<b>5,690</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>16,839</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>83,083</b>
Additions	1,764	718	5	1,479	0	13,372	503	17,841
Revaluations	(2,703)	(95)	0	0	0	0	(67)	(2,865)
Disposals	0	(121)	0	0	0	0	0	(121)
Reclassified	11,891	0	0	0	0	(12,220)	329	0
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>60,318</b>	<b>6,936</b>	<b>2,679</b>	<b>7,169</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>17,991</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>97,938</b>
<b>Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments</b>								
<b>At 31 March 2019</b>	<b>(1,006)</b>	<b>(5,110)</b>	<b>(796)</b>	<b>(646)</b>	<b>(661)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(8,219)</b>
Depreciation charge	(857)	(326)	(39)	(112)	0	0	(5)	(1,339)
Depreciation written out on revaluations	810	95	0	0	0	0	6	911
Impairment written out on loss	(4,972)	0	0	0	0	0	0	(4,972)
Disposals	0	102	0	0	0	0	0	102
Reclassified	6	0	0	0	0	0	(6)	0
<b>At 31 March 2020</b>	<b>(6,019)</b>	<b>(5,239)</b>	<b>(835)</b>	<b>(758)</b>	<b>(661)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(13,517)</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>54,299</b>	<b>1,697</b>	<b>1,844</b>	<b>6,411</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,991</b>	<b>2,179</b>	<b>84,421</b>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2019</b>	<b>48,360</b>	<b>1,324</b>	<b>1,878</b>	<b>5,044</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,839</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>74,864</b>

The movement from 'Assets Under Construction' to 'Land and Buildings' as a result of reclassification is due to the new cinema, part of the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration project, becoming operational in 2020/21. The revaluation movements are described further in the Losses and Impairments Note 26 and Revaluation Reserve Note 19.

The impairment losses of £4,972,480 incurred by the Swallows Leisure Centre in 2019/20, further to the major storm damage sustained in February 2020, have been reversed following reinstatement of the full service potential of the building in 2020/21.

The economic climate makes it uncertain that the Council will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets. If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets fall. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for operational buildings would increase by £26,950 should the useful life of each property be reduced by one year.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

### Surplus Land & Buildings

The Council's surplus assets have been revalued this year and the inputs used to measure their fair value have been assessed as being within hierarchy Level 2 for valuation purposes (see accounting policies note for explanation of fair value valuation input levels).

This confirms that no significant unobservable inputs have been used in the valuation of the Council's surplus assets and that they are all valued to their highest and best value.

Significant changes in any of the judgements made on fair values could result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for these assets. If the value of the Council's surplus assets were to reduce by 10% this would result in £104,670 being charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

### 25. Non-Current Asset Valuation

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all property, plant and equipment which is required to be measured at current value is revalued at least every five years. The freehold and leasehold properties which comprise the Council's property portfolio have, for this and past years, been valued by Wilks, Head and Eve Chartered Surveyors.

In 2020/21 Wilks, Head and Eve valued property assets (which do not include vehicles & equipment) to a total value of £66,364,120, including investment and held for sale properties. This total value comprises of valuations carried out on the following dates: 1 January 2021 totalling £8,506,200 and 31 March 2021 totalling £57,857,920.

An impairment review was also carried out by Wilks, Head and Eve as part of the valuation contract. The impairment review considered if there were material differences to the valuations performed at 1 January 2021 which would require these to be updated at 31 March 2021, but the result was that there were no material changes to the valuations advised. Mr K Parker, a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and an employee of the Council, reviewed both tasks.

The table below shows the progress of the rolling programme of revaluation of the Council's non-current PPE assets:

	Land & Buildings £'000	Vehicles & Equipment £'000	Infra-structure £'000	Comm-unity £'000	Leased £'000	Assets Under Construc-tion £'000	Surplus Land & Buildings £'000	Total Property, Plant & Equipment Assets £'000
Carried at historical cost	0	0	2,249	7,761	0	3,028	0	13,038
Carried at cost model (depreciated historical cost)		5,502	0	0	649	0	0	6,151
Valued at current value as at								
Previous years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016/17	1,888	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,888
2017/18	1,468	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,468
2018/19	1,308	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,308
2019/20	2,051	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,051
2020/21	61,508	0	0	0	0	0	1,047	62,555
<b>Total Cost/Valuation at 31 March 2021</b>	<b>68,223</b>	<b>5,502</b>	<b>2,249</b>	<b>7,761</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>3,028</b>	<b>1,047</b>	<b>88,459</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

The Council has undertaken a review of all assets that were valued before 2020/21 to ensure that their carrying value does not differ materially from current value.

As previously advised, each of the PPE asset classifications are revalued periodically in stages on the basis recommended by CIPFA and in accordance with the Statements of Asset Valuation Principles and Guidance Notes issued by RICS. In order to ensure consistency in the valuation of the varying types of property within the different asset classifications, all assets of the same type are valued at the same time, using the same valuation technique.

### 26. Losses and Impairments on Non-Current Assets

The Code requires disclosure by class of assets of the amounts for losses and impairments, and subsequent reversals, charged to the deficit on the Provision of Services and to Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure (net total reversals being credited to the deficit). These disclosures are consolidated in Notes 24 and 28, reconciling the movement over the year in the asset balances for property, plant and equipment and investment properties.

During 2020/21 the Council has recognised a net total loss/impairment of £13,939,710 in respect of its non-current assets (£4,930,130 recognition of losses in 2019/20).

	PPE Assets £'000	Investment Assets £'000	Heritage Assets £'000	2020/21 Total £'000	2019/20 Total £'000
Revaluation – increase recognised in deficit on Provision of Services (gain – reversal prior loss)	(159)	0	0	(159)	338
Depreciation written out to the deficit on Provision of Services (gain – reversal prior loss)	389	0	0	389	38
<b>Total Reversal Prior Loss (credit to deficit) (Note 20)</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>376</b>
Revaluation – increase recognised in deficit on Provision of Services (gain) (Note 20)	0	130	0	130	133
<b>Total Gain (credit to deficit)</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>509</b>
Revaluation – decrease recognised in the deficit on Provision of Services (loss)	(16,273)	0	(5)	(16,278)	(4,383)
Depreciation written out to the deficit on Provision of Services (loss)	318	0	0	318	623
Revaluation – decrease recognised in deficit on Provision of Services (loss)	0	(5)	0	(5)	(14)
<b>Total Losses (debit to deficit) (Note 20)</b>	<b>(15,955)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(15,965)</b>	<b>(3,774)</b>
Revaluation – increase recognised in the deficit on Provision of Services (impairment reversal)	1,898	0	0	1,898	(1,898)
Depreciation written out to the deficit on Provision of Services (impairment reversal)	(233)	0	0	(233)	233
<b>Total Impairment reversal (debit to deficit) (Note 20)</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,665</b>	<b>(1,665)</b>
<b>Net Total (Loss)/Reversal-Gain Debited/Credited to Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>(14,060)</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>(5)</b>	<b>(13,940)</b>	<b>(4,930)</b>

The greatest revaluation gains, reversals of previous losses, on PPE assets (£20,000 and over) were incurred on three properties (6 assets including component assets), the gains being the Sheerness Swimming Pool £102,040 (structure and roof components), Trinity Road car park in Sheerness £41,560 (land and building components) and Albion Place car park in Sheerness £35,820 (land and building components). Seven other properties (13 assets) incurred reversed losses, averaging £7,240 per property.

Three investment properties (4 assets) incurred gains totalling £129,700. These were the Trading Estate, West Lane, Sittingbourne £71,400, Lappel Bank, West Minster £57,900 and Kent Auto Salvage, Gas Road, Milton Regis £400 (land and building assets).

The greatest revaluation losses on PPE assets (£20,000 and over) were incurred on seven properties (24 assets including component assets), the losses being the Cinema and Hotel buildings, Bourne Place, Sittingbourne (£15,049,000) (including the land and structure components), Princes St. Retail Park, Sittingbourne (£488,650) (structure and external components), Swale House council offices, Sittingbourne (£156,160) (structure, roof, heating, electrical, lift and external components), the Multi-Storey car park, Sittingbourne (£133,440) (structure, heating, electrical, lift and external components), vacant land at Colegates Close, Oare (£72,800) and Faversham Swimming Pool (£24,390) (roof component). Four other properties (4 assets) incurred losses, averaging £7,570 per property.

It should be noted that this is the first year the Cinema building has been valued, previously being held on the Asset Register as an 'Asset under Construction' where all costs required to bring the asset into existence and to its intended use were recorded in the 'value' of the asset. This figure will have included costs not directly related to the building's construction but without which the property could not have been developed. The manner of valuing it now, construction having been completed, does not allow for consideration of such non-construction costs and reflects mainly the value to the Council in operating this property, as in current and future projected rental income. The Council's external valuer's have commented that it is not unusual for buildings to cost more than the final valuations, and accordingly this required change in valuation assessment has resulted in a reduction in the nominal book value of the property which must be described as a revaluation loss. However, the prime consideration of the Council in developing this property was the regeneration of Sittingbourne town centre and improved community facilities.

Revaluation losses were incurred on two Investment properties (3 assets), the Old Fire Station House, Court Street, Faversham (£5,100) (land and building assets) and land at Kwik Fit, St. Michael's Road, Sittingbourne (£100).

A revaluation loss of £5,460 was also incurred by the Rushenden Hill stone structure heritage asset further to reassessment of the insurance valuation.

Works to the Swallows Leisure Centre in 2020/21 resulted in the reinstatement of the full service potential of the building and reversal of the Impairment losses of £1,665,870 recorded against the property in 2019/20.

## 27. Heritage Assets

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

	War Memorials & Public Statues £'000	Civic Regalia £'000	Historical Items of Cultural Interest £'000	Civic Clocks £'000	Total Heritage Assets £'000
<b>Cost or Valuation</b>					
<b>At 1 April 2020</b>	112	356	111	0	579
Recognised	0	0	0	1,464	1,464
Revaluations	(5)	45	4	0	44
<b>At 31 March 2021</b>	<u>107</u>	<u>401</u>	<u>115</u>	<u>1,464</u>	<u>2,087</u>
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2021</b>	107	401	115	1,464	2,087
<b>Net Book Value at 31 March 2020</b>	112	356	111	0	579

The six civic clocks, located at Faversham, Sittingbourne (2), Milton, Queenborough and Sheerness, have now been recognised as heritage assets. The largest of these valuations is £1.25 million, being the clock and tower in Sheerness High Street, a grade II listed structure of cast iron construction, built in 1902 to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII.

## 28. Investment Properties

The following items of income and expense have been included within Financing and Investment in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (Note 11):

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Rental income from investment properties	(249)	(245)
Direct operating expenses arising from investment properties	86	34
<b>Net (Gain)/Loss</b>	<u>(163)</u>	<u>(211)</u>

The net gain on revaluation for investment properties in the year was £124,500 (£108,500 gain in 2019/20) from reversed prior losses of £129,700 and losses of £5,200. The Council's investment property portfolio has been assessed as input hierarchy Level 2 for valuation purposes (see accounting policies note for explanation of fair value valuation input levels).

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Balance as at 1 April</b>	3,568	3,460
Gains from revaluation	125	108
Reclassification of asset	(94)	0
<b>Balance as at 31 March</b>	<u>3,599</u>	<u>3,568</u>

The fair value of investment properties has been based on the market approach using current market conditions and recent sales prices and other relevant information for similar assets in the Council area. Market conditions for these assets are such that the level of observable inputs are significant with no significant Level 3 inputs used, leading to the properties being categorised as Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy. In estimating the fair value of the Council's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties has been applied.



## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Significant changes in any of the judgements made on fair values could result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for these assets. If the value of the Council's investment assets were to reduce by 10% this would result in £359,870 being charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

### 29. Assets Held for Sale

The sole asset classed as Held for Sale was revalued in the year and the current net book value is £99,600. The value of the property was assessed to its highest and best use, input hierarchy Level 2 for valuation purposes (see accounting policies note for explanation of fair value valuation input levels); however, the value is restricted to no greater than its original net book value as an asset Held for Sale in accordance with accounting requirements (any higher assessed value may only be recognised when actual gain is achieved upon its disposal).

The disposal of the asset has been delayed such that it could not be disposed of within the year and accordingly it has been re-classed as a non-current asset; however it is still assessed to meet the 'available for immediate sale' requirements and is treated as a Held for Sale asset.

### 30. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

REFCUS relates to capital expenditure for which the Council does not hold any non-current assets (for example, grants paid to external organisations). As there is no continuing benefit derived from this expenditure, it is treated as revenue expenditure and allocated in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in the same year that it was incurred.

Grant Area	Funding Provider	2020/21	2019/20
		£'000	£'000
Queenborough & Rushenden Klondyke Land	Homes and Communities Agency	1,136	0
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Mandatory Grants	Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government	824	1,530
Highways works Sittingbourne Town Centre	Kent County Council	130	64
Murston Old Church	Swale Borough Council	100	0
Milton High Street Clock & Clocktower	Swale Borough Council	53	0
Land Regeneration/Improvement Works at Dolphin Barge Museum and Sittingbourne Skate Park	Swale Borough Council	52	0
Coastal monitoring	Environment Agency	47	40
Shared Information Technology service	Swale Borough Council	42	53
Sheppey Hall Improvements	Swale Borough Council	40	0
West Faversham Community Association New Building & Facilities	Swale Borough Council	25	0
Allotment Improvements at St. Nicholas Road, Faversham	Private Developer	21	0
Footpath Improvements Newington Recreation Ground	Swale Borough Council	20	0
Sittingbourne High Street footpath	Spirit of Sittingbourne	13	40
Winter Warmth Grants	Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government	13	0
Leaky Lucy Minibus Replacement	Swale Borough Council	10	0
Housing repair grants	Swale Borough Council	1	3

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Grant Area	Funding Provider	2020/21	2019/20
		£'000	£'000
The Mill Project, Sittingbourne Skate Park	Private Developer	1	0
Sheppey Lower Road improvement	Swale Borough Council	0	200
Faversham Pool refurbishment	Swale Borough Council	0	93
		2,528	2,023

### 31. Commitments under Capital Contracts

The contractual commitments and commitment to spend at 31 March 2021 totalled £1,754,300 (£7,299,710 at 31 March 2020). The major commitments were:

- £439,210 Sittingbourne town centre regeneration works,
- £371,050 Housing repair grants,
- £293,850 Leisure centres refurbishment,
- £148,410 Replacement footbridge, Barton's Point Coastal Park, Isle of Sheppey,
- £100,000 Public Toilets and showers, Barton's Point, Isle of Sheppey,
- £84,280 Public Toilets, Milton Creek Country Park,
- £77,630 Corporate IT systems, hardware and software,
- £71,580 Redevelopment of Master's House, Sheerness,
- £60,000 Beach huts,
- £39,510 Lighting, St Ann's Footbridge, Faversham,
- £24,360 Public toilets, Minster Leas, Isle of Sheppey,
- £44,420 Other schemes (commitments less than £20k).

The reduced level of capital commitments reflects the general lower value of pre-committed capital works but also the completion of most of the Sittingbourne town centre regeneration works.

### 32. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

The table below shows the total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year, together with the resources that have been used to finance it. The Capital Financing Requirement is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Council that has yet to be financed.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
<b>Opening Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>42,739</b>	<b>27,765</b>
Total capital investment	9,588	19,869
Add long-term debtors – loans	15	8
<b>Sources of Finance:</b>		
Capital receipts (Note 16)	(24)	(298)
Government grants & external contributions (Note 20)	(2,308)	(3,098)
Sums set aside from revenue:		
Capital reserves (Note 20)	(832)	(873)
Direct revenue funding (Note 20)	(27)	0
Minimum revenue provision (MRP) (Note 20)	(778)	(634)
<b>Total Sources of Finance</b>	<b>(3,969)</b>	<b>(4,903)</b>
<b>Closing Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>48,373</b>	<b>42,739</b>
<b>Explanation of Movements in Capital Financing Requirement in Year:</b>		
Capital expenditure to be funded from future MRP when assets are operational	6,412	15,608
(Reduction) in underlying need to borrow (MRP)	(778)	(634)
<b>Total Increase in Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>5,634</b>	<b>14,974</b>

## Creditors and Debtors

### 33. Long-Term Creditors

As consideration for the extension of a current lease of 99 years, tenants have paid the Council a premium of £60,000.

### 34. Short-Term Creditors

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
	£'000	£'000
Business rate relief grant funding (MHCLG)	(9,291)	0
Business rates – pool share	(2,722)	(2,812)
Coronavirus business support grants:		
Closed business lockdown 3	(2,306)	0
Local restrictions grant (closed) addendum lockdown 3 tier 3	(2,138)	0
Local restrictions grant (closed) November lockdown 2	(764)	0
Local Restrictions Grant (Open) Tier 4	(641)	0
Business rates and council taxpayers	(970)	(330)
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) – VAT	(568)	0
Capital grants – Receipts in advance	(547)	0
Waste and cleansing contracts	(446)	(338)
Sittingbourne regeneration	(105)	(778)
Receipts in advance	(42)	(2,646)
Business rates – central Government share	0	(5,465)
Business rates – KCC and Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service shares	0	(1,093)
Other	(3,691)	(3,023)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(24,231)</b>	<b>(16,485)</b>

Additional business rate relief grant funding was received from central Government to aid council cash flows during 2020/21.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

During the year the Council acted as an agent for the government in several areas, where grant was received and then distributed externally to support businesses, or individuals. To reflect that the Council acted as agent for the government, amounts outstanding are shown in the Balance Sheet as a net creditor. The most significant grants provided additional support to small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors and those subsequently required to close due to local or national lockdown. These grants are shown separately on the table above. None of the income or expenditure has been included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The reduction in major precepting authorities and central Government shares for business rates, is due to the increase in business rate reliefs awarded to businesses as a direct response to the coronavirus pandemic which resulted in a deficit on the Collection Fund for 2020/21 (surplus in 2019/20).

### 35. S106 Deferred Revenue Receipts

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 278 of The Highways Act 1980 permits local planning authorities to enter into enforceable 'planning obligations' with landowners and/or developers. Each agreement has a deed setting out its purpose. Each agreement has been examined to determine when assets and liabilities need to be recognised on the Balance Sheet or income should be recognised. These sums represent monies received from developers as part of an agreement to maintain a designated piece of land, typically for leisure/recreation purposes, split between short and long-term use.

### 36. Capital Grants and Contributions

The Capital Grants and Contributions account is a creditor account used for grants and contributions where conditions are outstanding. It is used for the funding of future capital expenditure. This includes monies received for S106 purposes (see Note 35) to fund new facilities provided as part of an agreement with developers.

	1 April 2020	Expenditure	Income	31 March 2021
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Disabled facilities grants	(2,018)	1,061	(2,473)	(3,430)
Sittingbourne Town Centre grant	(101)	130	(29)	0
Faversham Recreation Ground grant	(74)	86	(45)	(33)
Klondyke land at Queenborough & Rushenden Home of England grant	0	1,136	(1,136)	0
Redevelopment of Master's House	0	53	(293)	(240)
Sheerness Decarbonisation grant				
Other	(269)	47	(77)	(299)
S106 held for third parties	(1,040)	574	(7,334)	(7,800)
<b>S106 Capital Funding:</b>				
Housing	(324)	0	(320)	(644)
Play areas	(170)	12	(174)	(332)
The Meads Community Centre	(31)	0	0	(31)
Open spaces	(321)	13	0	(308)
Town centre improvements	(134)	13	(24)	(145)
Other	(197)	23	(2,015)	(2,189)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(4,679)</b>	<b>3,148</b>	<b>(13,920)</b>	<b>(15,451)</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
	£'000	£'000
Due to spend within one year (short-term creditors)	(555)	(295)
Due to spend in more than one year (long-term liabilities)	(14,896)	(4,384)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(15,451)</b>	<b>(4,679)</b>

In 2020/21 nothing was repaid. (£30,000 was repaid to Optivo as requested in relation to the Hugh Price Close play area improvement in 2019/20). The increase in S106 monies held for third parties is largely due to four developments (£5.4m) where the S106 monies being held are to fund services such as education, social care, health care and highways to be provided by other public bodies and not Swale Borough Council.

### 37. Provisions

In 1992 the Council's previous insurer, Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) declared that it would be going into "run off" which is similar to a company going into administration. Control of MMI has passed to a Scheme Administrator who has implemented a "Scheme of Arrangement". The provision for future claims has been calculated as £59,105 as at 31 March 2021. This sum will be revised as further information becomes available.

The Council has made a provision of £4,744,000 for business rate appeals based on its best estimates of the actual liability as at 31 March 2021. £3,680,000 has been identified as a long-term provision. See Note 51 for further details.

### 38. Long-Term Debtors – Other

Long-term debtors are those that fall due after a period of at least one year.

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
	£'000	£'000
Housing repair loans	2,002	2,047
Council tax – KCC, Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service and Kent	994	0
Police & Crime Commissioner shares		
Business rates – central Government share	92	0
Business rates – KCC and Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service shares	19	0
Rent deposit scheme – gross debt	61	69
Rent deposit scheme – allowance for impairment of debts	(46)	(55)
Assisted car purchase loans	138	165
Opportunities for Sittingbourne Limited	118	118
Faversham Town Football Club Limited	39	42
Queenborough Harbour Trust Community Interest Company (CIC)	24	27
Borden Sport Limited	12	12
Other long-term loans	16	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,469</b>	<b>2,441</b>

## 39. Short-Term Debtors

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
	£'000	£'000
<b>Debtors</b>		
Council tax – KCC, Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service and Kent Police & Crime Commissioner shares	4,502	2,576
Business rates and council taxpayers	2,926	2,430
Business rates – central Government share	2,511	0
Housing benefits overpayments	2,257	2,390
Sundry debtors	1,659	641
Business rates – pool share	1,574	1,617
Additional coronavirus funding (MHCLG)	1,394	0
Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) – VAT	651	482
Business rates – KCC and Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service shares	592	0
Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) – housing benefits	414	1,765
Heritage Lottery Fund – Faversham Recreation Ground	66	632
Payments in advance	54	234
Other	2,091	1,212
<b>Total Debtors</b>	<b>20,601</b>	<b>13,979</b>
<b>Impairment for Doubtful Debt</b>		
Housing benefit overpayments	(1,462)	(1,429)
Other	(1,933)	(1,614)
<b>Total Impairment for Doubtful Debt</b>	<b>(3,395)</b>	<b>(3,043)</b>
<b>Net Short-Term Debtors</b>	<b>17,206</b>	<b>10,936</b>

There are no non-financial assets (e.g. housing benefit overpayments, council tax or business rate payers) that are outstanding debt as at the reporting date that have not been impaired. Housing benefit overpayments provision for debt impairment is based on the recovery action, the percentage of debt paid to date and the age of the debt. Further details for council tax and business rate payers can be found within the Collection Fund Note 50.

There has been no impairment for debt outstanding from other local authorities or from central Government departments and all debt is less than 12 months old.

As at 31 March 2021 the Council has a gross balance for sundry debtors of £4.6m. A review of significant balances suggested that an impairment for doubtful debts of 41% (£1.9m) was appropriate. However, if collection rates were to fall, the cost of covering the impairment of doubtful debts would require an additional £19,000 to be set aside for every 1% reduction in collection rates.

The increase in major precepting authorities shares for council tax, is due to the reduction in council tax income receivable because of the coronavirus pandemic which resulted in an increase in the deficit on the Collection Fund for 2020/21.

The increase in major precepting authorities and central Government shares for business rates, is due to the increase in business rate reliefs awarded to businesses as a direct response to the coronavirus pandemic which resulted in a deficit on the Collection Fund for 2020/21 (surplus in 2019/20).

## 40. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	31 March 2021	31 March 2020
	£'000	£'000
Cash (overdrawn) by the Council	(2,429)	(3,239)
Money market funds (see Note 42 Table 4)	20,115	21,238
<b>Total Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	<b>17,686</b>	<b>17,999</b>

The Council's bank balance had a surplus of £22,189.04 at 31 March 2021, but cash is shown as overdrawn in the above note because it includes payments which had been put through as expenditure in the Council's accounts, but which had not yet been cleared as payments to the bank account.

## Leases

### 41. Leases

#### Disclosures in Relation to Operating Leases – Council as Lessee

Plant and equipment – as at 31 March 2021 the Council had 21 vehicles on a contract hire-operating lease basis (9 service vehicles, 11 electric cars and 1 Mayor's electric car). The Council is committed to making payments of £51,562.23 in 2021/22.

The expenditure charged to the Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement during 2020/21 in relation to these leases was £67,847 (£42,501 in 2019/20).

#### Disclosures in Relation to Operating Leases – Council as Lessor

The Council holds a number of operating leases with third parties.

Main Classifications of Usage of Operating Leases with Third Parties	Rentals Payable	Rentals Payable
	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
Business premises	1,405	1,170
Industrial units	112	112
Other	117	117
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,634</b>	<b>1,399</b>

Future Minimum Lease Payments Under Non-Cancellable Leases Expiring in Future Years	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000
Not later than 1 year	83	81
Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	600	376
Later than 5 years	30,231	31,820
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,934</b>	<b>32,277</b>

## Financial Instruments

### 42. Financial Instruments

The use of these notes are primarily for those with whom the Council invests and from whom the Council borrows, rather than the lay reader and therefore if you require further details please contact the Finance Department directly on [finance@swale.gov.uk](mailto:finance@swale.gov.uk)

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

### a) Financial Instruments – Classifications

A financial instrument is: “Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity”.

### b) Financial Instruments – Balances

Financial instruments have a specific definition and exclude some items which are included on the Balance Sheet and therefore the figures below differ from those shown on the Balance Sheet. For reconciliation to cash and cash equivalents please see Table 4 below and Note 40. A reconciliation is available on request to the Finance Department on [finance@swale.gov.uk](mailto:finance@swale.gov.uk).

**Table 1**

Financial Liabilities	Long-Term		Current	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cash and cash equivalents	0	0	(2,428)	(3,239)
Loans from other local authorities	0	(5,000)	(15,000)	(20,000)
Other creditors	0	0	(3,936)	(2,820)
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,000)</b>	<b>(21,364)</b>	<b>(26,059)</b>

**Table 2**

Financial Assets	Long-Term		Current	
	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Amortised Cost</b>				
Housing interest free loans	2,002	2,047	0	0
Employee car loans	138	165	0	0
Mortgages	0	5	0	0
Other debtors	224	224	2,522	1,541
<b>Fair Value Through Profit and Loss</b>				
Money market funds	0	0	20,115	21,238
CCLA property fund (long-term investment)	2,916	2,938	0	0
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>	<b>5,280</b>	<b>5,379</b>	<b>22,637</b>	<b>22,779</b>

The amortised cost assets are shown net of a loss allowance reflecting the statistical likelihood that the borrower or debtor will be unable to meet their contractual commitments to the Council of £0.2m (£0.2m, 2019/20). The loss allowance has been calculated by reference to the Council's historic experience of default and to adjust for current and forecast economic conditions. Amortised cost assets that have not been impaired are £4m (£3.2m, 2019/20).

### c) Employee Car Loans

The Council had loans for car purchases to 30 employees in 2020/21 (28 in 2019/20). The interest charged on new loans is 1.10% and an unsubsidised rate for such loans would have been 2.10%.

### d) Gains and Losses on Financial Instruments

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement under Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure are as follows:



**Table 3**

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>		
Interest costs on leases	0	15
Interest costs on loans	204	196
<b>Financial Assets – Interest Income:</b>		
Amortised cost: fixed term deposits and call accounts	(7)	(16)
Fair value through profit and loss: money market funds and CCLA	(159)	(298)
Losses from change in fair value (Note 11)	21	109
<b>Net Loss for the Year</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>6</b>

e) Fair Value of Assets and Liabilities

Financial instruments assets which are classified at amortised cost and financial instruments liabilities are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Financial instruments which are not classified at amortised cost, are carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value. For money market funds and the CCLA property fund, their fair value is taken from the market price. The Council has invested £3m in the CCLA Property Fund which is carried in the Balance Sheet at its fair value as at 31 March 2021 of £2.916m, the difference being posted to the Pooled Fund Adjustment Account. When comparing the Balance Sheet value of financial instruments valued at amortised cost to what their value would be at fair value, the only difference is for the five external loans whose fair value at 31 March 2021 is £15.103m (£25.205m, 31 March 2020).

f) Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

The Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The Council's overall risk management programme takes account of the unpredictability of financial markets and seeks to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. Risk management is carried out under policies approved by the Council in the annual Treasury Management Strategy.

The Treasury Management Strategy requires frequent review of interest rate exposure that feeds into the setting and monitoring of the annual budget. This allows any adverse changes to be accommodated. The analysis will also advise as to whether new borrowing taken out should be at fixed or variable rates. It is the aim of the Council to minimise interest paid on borrowing and maximise the interest earned on investments but, in the case of investments, protection of the capital sum must take precedence over the rate of return.

The 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy was approved by Council on 26 February 2020 and can be obtained from the Council's website using the following link:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=128&MId=2162&Ver=4>

The Council provides written principles for overall risk management as well as written policies within its Treasury Management Strategy covering the following risks and the investment of surplus cash balances:

- 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 the funds available to meet its payment commitments; and,

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

- Market Risk – the possibility that a financial gain or loss might arise for the Council due to movements in interest rates, market prices, foreign currency exchange rates, etc. The Council's investment in the CCLA is subject to the risk of falling commercial property prices. This risk is limited by the Council's maximum exposure to property investments of £3m. A 5% fall in commercial property prices would result in a £150,000 charge to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services which is then transferred to the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account.

### Credit Risk

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

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions (counterparties), as well as credit exposure to the Council's customers. The Council protects the security of the cash it deposits with counterparties using a number of risk management techniques. Principal among these is the evaluation of counterparty risk, which uses a combination of credit ratings and limits on the term and maximum value of any deposits.

The Council seeks to reduce counterparty risk by adjusting the maximum amounts that may be invested with institutions. The details can be found in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

The CCLA Property Fund is a long term investment and is not likely to be surrendered in the near future and where the expectation is that values will return to or exceed pre coronavirus values over the medium to long-term.

The table below summarises the Council's investment and borrowing portfolio at 31 March 2021. All investments made were in line with the Council's approved credit rating criteria at the time of placing the investment, and still met those criteria at 31 March 2021.

**Table 4**

Counterparty (MMF = Money Market Funds)	Long-Term Rating	Fair Value Level	Balance Invested at 31 March 2021 £'000			Balance Invested at 31 March 2020 £'000
			Up to 1 month	Greater than 3 months	Total	
Invesco MMF	AAAmmf	1	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
JPM Liquidity MMF	AAAmmf	1	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
SSgA MMF	AAAmmf	1	2,275	0	2,275	2,180
Goldman Sachs MMF	AAAmmf	1	0	0	0	2,538
Morgan Stanley MMF	AAAmmf	1	2,840	0	2,840	3,000
Black Rock MMF	AAAmmf	1	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
Aberdeen MMF	AAAmmf	1	3,000	0	3,000	3,000
Amundi MMF	AAAmmf	1	0	0	0	1,520
Deutsche MMF	AAAmmf	1	3,000	0	3,000	0
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents</b>			<b>20,115</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,115</b>	<b>21,238</b>
CCLA Property Fund		1	0	2,916	2,916	2,938
<b>Total Long-Term Investments</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>2,938</b>
<b>Total Investments</b>			<b>20,115</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>23,031</b>	<b>24,176</b>

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Counterparty (MMF = Money Market Funds)	Long-Term Rating	Fair Value Level	Up to 1 month	Greater than 3 months	Total	Balance Invested at 31 March 2020 £'000
London Borough of Havering		2	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	0
Wycombe District Council Loan		2	0	0	0	(5,000)
London Borough of Camden Loan		2	0	0	0	(5,000)
London Borough of Islington Loan		2	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Brighton and Hove City Council Loan		2	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Greater London Authority Loan		2	0	0	0	(5,000)
<b>Total External Borrowing</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>(25,000)</b>

The long-term rating is the benchmark measure of probability of default. The default based on the experience gathered over the last five financial years is nil and the default adjusted for current market conditions is nil. Therefore, the estimated maximum exposure to default is nil as at 31 March 2021 (nil as at 31 March 2020).

The rating above is from the Fitch credit rating agency. A description of the grading is provided below:

- **AAAmmf** Funds have very strong ability to meet the dual objectives of providing liquidity and preserving capital.

Descriptions of the fair value level ratings are given below:

- Level 1 inputs – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets that the Council can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 inputs – measurements other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable (e.g. they can be measured or found from existing data and records) for the asset, either directly or indirectly.

## The Council's Relationship with Other Organisations

### 43. Related Parties

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

#### Central Government

Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, providing 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, business rates, housing benefits). Un-ringfenced grants received from Government departments are set out in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement and ring-fenced grants credited to services are shown in Note 13.

### Members and Officers

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The total of Members' allowances paid in 2020/21 is shown on Note 8. The Council maintains a 'Register of Members' Interests' which can be found on the Council website at: <https://swale.gov.uk/news-and-your-council/performance-and-transparency/councillors-and-elected-members/register-of-interests>

There has been an approach to elected Members and senior management seeking from them a declaration that neither they, nor their close family, nor anyone in the same household, have been involved in any material transactions with the Council. Returns were received in respect of the 2020/21 financial year from Members and senior officers and there were no transactions considered of material significance to warrant separate disclosure in the Annual Accounts. During 2020/21, no officers declared a pecuniary interest in accordance with section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### Thames Gateway Kent Partnership

On 31 March 2021 the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership closed down. From 1 April a new partnership, Greater North Kent, is leading collaboration between the North Kent authorities.

### 44. Group Accounts

The Code contains detailed requirements for the production of group accounts and a review was undertaken to identify any subsidiaries, associates, or joint ventures, which would establish whether a group relationship exists for the purposes of the Council's Statement of Accounts. Four interests were identified and details of these are set out below:

- Opportunities for Sittingbourne Limited (Company Number 09400214) – This company was incorporated in 2015 and is a joint venture between the Council and U&I, the lead partner in the Spirit of Sittingbourne consortium. The only transaction undertaken has been the purchase of 34 High Street Sittingbourne which is currently being re-let. The Council's interest in the entity has been assessed to be non-controlling but having a significant influence and so needs to be accounted for as an Associate.
- PSP Swale LLP (Company Number OC416830) – This partnership was registered on 8 April 2017 and Swale Borough Council is in partnership with PSP Facilitating Limited, who act as the administrators for the partnership. The Partnership did not carry out any transactions throughout the 2020/21 financial year other than the required administrative returns etc. This company was closed in 2020/21 and a payment of £11,687 was made for the Council's share of the operating costs of the partnership since inception.
- SBC Holding Company 1 Limited (Company Number 12417065) – This company was registered on 21 January 2020. It is wholly owned by the Council. The company leases the land occupied by the hotel from the Council which is part of the Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration. This company received £211 rental income in 2020/21.
- Swale Rainbow Homes Ltd (Company Number 13338973) – This company was registered on 15 April 2021. The company is to deliver affordable homes. It is wholly owned by the Council.

Further information on all the above companies is available from the Companies House website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>. As at 31 March 2021 the total investment in these entities has been assessed as immaterial and the Council has decided that group accounts are not required.

## Further Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis

### 45. Adjustments Between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement recognised by the Council in the year in accordance with proper accounting practices, to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

	2020/21 Usable Reserves			2020/21 Unusable Reserves £'000	2019/20 Unusable Reserves £'000
	General Fund Balance £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000		
<b>Adjustments to Revenue Resources</b>					
Pension costs	(2,039)	0	0	2,039	2,331
Pooled Fund Adjustment Account	(21)	0	0	21	110
Council tax and business rates	(7,820)	0	0	7,820	(82)
Capital grants moved to Capital Grants Unapplied	64	0	(64)	0	0
Reversal of entries for capital expenditure	(17,984)	0	0	17,984	8,337
<b>Total Adjustment to Revenue Resources</b>	<b>(27,800)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(64)</b>	<b>27,864</b>	<b>10,696</b>
<b>Adjustments Between Revenue &amp; Capital Resources</b>					
Transfer of cash sale proceeds from non-current assets to Capital Receipts Reserve (CRR)	54	(1,549)	0	1,495	0
Statutory provision for financing of capital investment (MRP)	778	0	0	(778)	(634)
Capital expenditure charged to the General Fund	860	0	0	(860)	(873)
<b>Total Adjustments Between Revenue &amp; Capital</b>	<b>1,692</b>	<b>(1,549)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(143)</b>	<b>(1,507)</b>
<b>Adjustments to Capital Resources</b>					
Use of the CRR to finance capital expenditure	0	24	0	(10)	(298)
Capital Grants used to finance capital expenditure	2,292	0	15	(2,321)	(3,098)
<b>Total Adjustment to Capital Resources</b>	<b>2,292</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>(2,331)</b>	<b>(3,396)</b>
<b>Total Adjustments</b>	<b>(23,816)</b>	<b>(1,525)</b>	<b>(49)</b>	<b>25,390</b>	<b>5,793</b>

## 46. Expenditure and Funding Analysis 2019/20

Service Departments	2019/20					Net Expenditure Accounting Basis £'000
	Net Expenditure Reported to Cabinet	Capital	Pension	Budget Responsibility	Other	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Chief Executive	251	14	55	2	0	322
Policy, Communications & Customer Services	1,093	0	244	68	0	1,405
Democratic Services	1,007	14	82	21	0	1,124
Director of Regeneration	181	0	42	0	0	223
Housing, Economy & Community Services	3,502	53	495	26	30	4,106
Planning	1,305	0	403	133	0	1,841
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	5,612	6,072	365	204	0	12,253
Finance	737	452	160	58	498	1,905
Revenues & Benefits	(355)	0	288	119	159	211
Property	677	70	116	(182)	425	1,106
Licensing & Resilience Planning	(2)	3	46	0	0	47
Environmental Health	510	9	0	1	0	520
Information Technology	1,101	57	0	(361)	0	797
Internal Audit	175	0	0	0	0	175
Human Resources	403	0	9	5	9	426
Legal	468	0	353	(101)	0	720
Corporate Items	2,211	23	4	7	(2,081)	164
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>18,876</b>	<b>6,767</b>	<b>2,662</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(960)</b>	<b>27,345</b>
Financed by Council Tax, Business Rates & Grants	(18,579)					
<b>Deficit in Year</b>	<b>297</b>					
General Fund Balance at 1 April 2019	(4,358)					
Deficit in Year	297					
2018/19 Approved Rollovers	723					
<b>General Fund Balance at 31 March 2020</b>	<b>(3,338)</b>					

The left hand column shows the final spend for the year as reported to Cabinet. The middle columns show changes that have to be made to the figures reported to Cabinet in order to report the Council's expenditure on an accounting basis which is shown in the column on the right.

The table below reconciles the Cost of Services to the Surplus on the Provision of Services on the 2019/20 Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:

2019/20	Net Expenditure Reported to Cabinet			Budget Responsibility £'000	Other £'000	Net Expenditure Accounting Basis £'000
	£'000	£'000	£'000			
<b>Cost of Services</b>	18,876	6,767	2,662	0	(960)	27,345
Other Income and Expenditure	(11,017)	(1,826)	1,341	0	(9,620)	(21,122)
<b>Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>7,859</b>	<b>4,941</b>	<b>4,003</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(10,580)</b>	<b>6,223</b>
Adjustments from Accounting Basis	(7,562)	(4,941)	(4,003)	0	10,580	(5,926)
<b>Deficit in Year</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>297</b>

## **Collection Fund**

As a billing authority, Swale Borough Council collects council tax and business rates from taxpayers and redistributes them to other local authorities and the Government. Because the Council is collecting these taxes on behalf of others, under statute, it has to hold these transactions in a separate account known as the Collection Fund.

The amount credited to the General Fund under statute is the Council's precept or demand for the year, plus or minus the Council's share of the surplus/deficit on the Collection Fund for the previous year.

Surpluses and deficits declared by the Council as the billing authority in relation to the Collection Fund are apportioned to the Government and other local authorities as appropriate in the subsequent financial year in their respective proportions.

The council tax and business rate income included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of the Collection Fund's accrued income for the year. The difference between this value and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Council collects council tax on behalf of the major precepting authorities – KCC, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service, and collects business rates on behalf of the Government, KCC and Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service. Parish precepts are paid from the Council's General Fund and are disclosed on the face of the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Collection Fund 2020/21	Note	Business Rates £'000	Council Tax £'000	Total £'000
<b>Income</b>				
Council tax receivable	48	0	(87,142)	(87,142)
Transfer for S13A(1)(C) Reliefs		0	(1,079)	(1,079)
Business rates receivable	49	(34,716)	0	(34,716)
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>(34,716)</b>	<b>(88,221)</b>	<b>(122,937)</b>
<b>Contribution towards previous year's Collection Fund forecast deficit</b>				
Central Government		(355)	0	(355)
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>(355)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(355)</b>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>(35,071)</b>	<b>(88,221)</b>	<b>(123,292)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Precepts, demands and shares:				
Central Government		24,689	0	24,689
Swale Borough Council		19,752	10,196	29,948
Kent County Council		4,444	64,959	69,403
Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service		494	3,812	4,306
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner		0	9,766	9,766
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>49,379</b>	<b>88,733</b>	<b>138,112</b>
Cost of collection		187	0	187
Disregard amounts – renewable energy		1,026	0	1,026
Transitional protection payments		223	0	223
Allowance for debt impairment	50	707	1,281	1,988
Appeals charged to the collection fund		(1,725)	0	(1,725)
Change in provision for check, challenge and appeals	51	3,453	0	3,453
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>3,871</b>	<b>1,281</b>	<b>5,152</b>
<b>Contribution towards previous year's Collection Fund forecast surplus</b>				
Swale Borough Council		149	3	152
Kent County Council		575	21	596
Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service		4	1	5
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner		0	3	3
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>728</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>756</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>53,978</b>	<b>90,042</b>	<b>144,020</b>
<b>Deficit Movement for the Year</b>		<b>18,907</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>20,728</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit at 1 April 2020</b>		<b>(985)</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>(593)</b>
<b>Deficit at 31 March 2021</b>	47	<b>17,922</b>	<b>2,213</b>	<b>20,135</b>



## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

Collection Fund 2019/20	Note	Business Rates £'000	Council Tax £'000	Total £'000
<b>Income</b>				
Council tax receivable	48	0	(84,603)	(84,603)
Business rates receivable	49	(49,562)	0	(49,562)
Transitional protection payments		(310)	0	(310)
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>(49,872)</b>	<b>(84,603)</b>	<b>(134,475)</b>
<b>Contribution towards previous year's Collection Fund forecast deficit</b>				
Central Government		(27)	0	(27)
Swale Borough Council		(145)	0	(145)
Kent County Council		(187)	0	(187)
Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service		(3)	0	(3)
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>(362)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(362)</b>
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>(50,234)</b>	<b>(84,603)</b>	<b>(134,837)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Precepts, demands and shares:				
Central Government		23,971	0	23,971
Swale Borough Council		19,177	9,625	28,802
Kent County Council		4,315	61,520	65,835
Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service		480	3,681	4,161
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner		0	9,145	9,145
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>47,943</b>	<b>83,971</b>	<b>131,914</b>
Cost of collection		186	0	186
Disregard amounts – renewable energy		1,286	0	1,286
Allowance for debt impairment	50	387	904	1,291
Appeals charged to the collection fund		(3,770)	0	(3,770)
Change in provision for check, challenge and appeals	51	3,939	0	3,939
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>2,028</b>	<b>904</b>	<b>2,932</b>
<b>Contribution towards previous year's Collection Fund forecast surplus</b>				
Swale Borough Council		0	40	40
Kent County Council		0	253	253
Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service		0	15	15
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner		0	35	35
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>343</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>49,971</b>	<b>85,218</b>	<b>135,189</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit Movement for the Year</b>		<b>(263)</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>352</b>
<b>(Surplus) at 1 April 2019</b>		<b>(722)</b>	<b>(223)</b>	<b>(945)</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit at 31 March 2020</b>	47	<b>(985)</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>(593)</b>

The 2019/20 figures have been restated to show disregard amounts for renewable energy, and appeals charged to the collection fund separately.

### 47. Collection Fund Surplus/Agency Arrangements

Swale Borough Council's element of the Collection Fund deficit is £7,423,000 as at 31 March 2021 (£349,000 surplus in 2019/20) and is shown in the Balance Sheet within the Collection Fund Adjustment Account (Note 21). Amounts relating to precepting authorities and Government are shown in the Balance Sheet as a net debtor or creditor. This reflects that billing authorities are acting as agents of the precepting authorities and Government.

The collection fund balance at 31 March 2021 split into its attributable parts is shown below:

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

	2020/21 Business Rates £'000	2020/21 Council Tax £'000	2020/21 Total £'000	2019/20 Total £'000
Central Government	8,961	0	8,961	49
Swale Borough Council	7,169	254	7,423	(349)
Kent County Council	1,613	1,620	3,233	(343)
Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Service	179	95	274	7
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner	0	244	244	43
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>17,922</b>	<b>2,213</b>	<b>20,135</b>	<b>(593)</b>

The 2019/20 figures have been restated to include the correct business rate split between central Government and Kent County Council following the end of the Business Rate Pilot scheme.

The increase in total deficit in 2020/21 is mainly relating to the increase in business rates reliefs announced by government as a direct response to the coronavirus pandemic. The deficit will be offset in 2021/22 from government grants received.

### 48. The Calculation of the Council Tax Base

The Council Tax is primarily a property based tax and is calculated for an average Band D property by dividing the net expenditure (to be met by the tax) of KCC, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service and Swale Borough Council by the tax base for Swale which is 48,072.67 (47,344.08 in 2019/20). This figure is the equivalent number of Band D properties in the area after allowing for the relative proportions payable by all other bands and the fact that some of those properties may pay a reduced amount because of discounts.

The basic Council Tax payable for each band in 2020/21 is listed below:

Band	Basic Tax £	Proportion of Band D Charge	Number of Band D Equivalent Dwellings
A	1,208.71	6/9	4,159.83
B	1,410.17	7/9	9,533.37
C	1,611.62	8/9	12,600.27
D	1,813.07	9/9	9,949.90
E	2,215.97	11/9	6,307.84
F	2,618.88	13/9	3,408.56
G	3,021.78	15/9	1,920.90
H	3,626.14	18/9	192.00
<b>Total</b>			<b>48,072.67</b>

The detail to the calculation of the Council Tax base can be found in the 'Calculation of Council Tax Base 2020-21' Officer Decision on 30 January 2020 by using the following link:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=221&MId=2291>

Additional amounts are payable for precepts levied by the Parish and Town Councils within the Borough.

The level of non-payment provided for in the calculation of the tax base for 2020/21 was 0.76% (0.86% in 2019/20). The original anticipated income from the tax base of 48,072.67 at £1,845.80 (Band D £1,813.07 plus average parish precept of £32.73) was £88,732,534. The actual income was £87,141,800.

## Notes to the Core Financial Statements

The main reason for the decrease in actual council tax income receivable was due to the Council using discretionary powers under S13A(1)(C) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the council tax liability of individuals in the borough in response to the coronavirus pandemic. £1,079,072 was fully funded by the Council by way of a transfer from the general fund to the collection fund. The Council was reimbursed in full via S31 grant funding from the Governments hardship fund which was created as a direct response to the coronavirus pandemic in the 2020 spring budget.

### 49. Income Collectable from Business Ratepayers

The Council retains 40% of business rates collected during the year, after deductions for mandatory and discretionary reliefs, the cost of income collections including losses, disregard amounts, and the cost of changes to rateable values. The remaining amount for 2020/21 is paid to the Government (50%), KCC (9%), and Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service (1%). The business rate income after reliefs and deductions for 2020/21 was £30,844,316 (£47,844,049 in 2019/20 (restated to exclude deductions in line with 2020/21)).

The rateable value for the Council's area at the end of the financial year 2020/21 was £130,699,135 (£131,429,735 for 2019/20).

The business rate multiplier set for 2020/21 was 51.2p (2019/20 was 50.4p). Small businesses have a lower rate multiplier of 49.9p (2019/20 was 49.1p).

### 50. Debt Impairment

It is the policy of the Council that impairment for debt provisions for council tax and business rates are charged to the Collection Fund. The following provisions have been made against the possible non-collection of Collection Fund debt:

	2020/21 Business Rates £'000	2019/20 Business Rates £'000	2020/21 Council Tax £'000	2019/20 Council Tax £'000
Balance brought forward 1 April	(1,981)	(1,635)	(2,364)	(1,909)
Less amounts written off	0	41	461	449
(Increase) in provision	(707)	(387)	(1,281)	(904)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(2,688)</b>	<b>(1,981)</b>	<b>(3,184)</b>	<b>(2,364)</b>
Swale Borough Council's proportion	(1,075)	(792)	(357)	(272)

Amounts written off are charged directly to the provision for debt impairment. Any amounts written off in excess of the provision will be a charge to the Collection Fund. Council tax provision for debt impairment is based on an analysis of the age of the debt and their recovery stage. At 31 March 2021, the total council tax outstanding debt was £8.4m (£6.2m in 2019/20) of which debt one year old was £3.9m, debt between two to five years old was £3.9m and debt over five years old was £0.6m.

The provision for business rate debt impairment is based on an assessment of the likelihood of recovery of each debt in respect of each financial year since 2004/05. The provision takes into account the recovery action to date, the legal status of the debtor and potential absconders. At 31 March 2021, the total business rates outstanding debt was £3.7m (£2.6m in 2019/20) of which debt one year old was £1.4m, debt between two to five years old was £1.9m and debt over five years old was £0.4m.

**51. Provision for Check, Challenge and Appeals for Business Rates**

	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Balance brought forward 1 April	(10,131)	(9,962)
Less amounts charged to appeals	1,725	3,770
(Increase) in provision	(3,453)	(3,939)
<b>Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(11,859)</b>	<b>(10,131)</b>
Swale Borough Council's proportion	(4,744)	(4,052)

Amounts refunded as a result of appeals against the 2010 Rateable Valuations (RV) and the Check, Challenge Appeal (CCA) against the 2017 RV are charged directly to the provision for alteration of lists and appeals. Any amounts refunded in excess of the provision will be a charge to the Collection Fund.

There is a regular reassessment of the RV of businesses, carried out in 2010 and 2017. The provision for appeals for the 2010 RV list is based on outstanding and forecast future appeals for businesses. For the 2017 RV list, the provision is based on the assumption made at national level of potential appeals amended to reflect local circumstances and the likelihood of appeals.

Business rates appeals are particularly difficult to forecast and the outcome of appeals and their financial impact on the Council are monitored regularly. If the number of properties under appeal changes, the provision for appeals would require an additional £118,600 for every 1% increase in total rateable value, under appeal.

## Glossary

Accruals	The inclusion of outstanding debtors and creditors in the year's income, expenditure and capital expenditure.
Amortised Cost	Amortised cost (in relation to financial instruments) is the amount on initial recognition plus the interest taken to income and expenditure less cash paid or received for both interest and principal.
Asset	An item having value measurable in monetary terms. A non-current asset has use and value for more than one year; a current asset is expected to be converted into cash within a year.
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.
Capital Financing	The raising of money to pay for capital expenditure, including borrowing, revenue financing, usable capital receipts, capital grants and capital contributions.
Capital Receipts	The proceeds of the sale of capital assets.
Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2020/21 (The Code)	This specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare a Statement of Accounts which presents "a true and fair view" of the financial position and transactions of the Council.
Collection Fund	A separate fund maintained by a billing council which records the expenditure and income relating to council tax and business rates.
Community Assets	Non-current assets that the local council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life and that may have restrictions on their disposal.
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	This records all the income the Council has received to fund the day-to-day expenditure on the services it has provided during the financial year.
Creditor	Amounts owed by the Council for works done, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been made by the end of that accounting period.
Current Value	The value of a non-current asset which reflects the economic environment prevailing for the service or function the asset is supporting at the reporting date.
Debtor	Amounts due to the Council for works done, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period but for which payments have not been received by the end of that accounting period.

## Glossary

Depreciation	The measure of the cost or revalued amount of the benefits of the non-current assets that have been consumed during the period.
Fair Value	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.
Impairment	A reduction in the value of an asset below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet.
Infrastructure Assets	Non-current assets whose life is of indefinite length and which are not usually capable of being sold, such as highways and footpaths.
Intangible Assets	These are non-financial assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and controlled by the Council through custom legal rights (e.g. software).
Internal Borrowing	If capital expenditure is spent which is not immediately financed through capital receipts or grants, the Council's underlying need to borrow (its Capital Financing Requirement) increases, resulting in a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). When the Council reduces its cash balances to cover this expenditure then this is called 'internal borrowing'.
International Financial Reporting Standards	Guidelines and rules set by the International Accounting Standards Board that companies and organisations can follow when compiling financial statements.
Investment Properties	Investment properties are those that are used primarily to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation.
Liabilities	Amounts which will become payable by the Council in the short or long-term.
Materiality	Information is material if omitting it or misstating it could influence decisions that users make on the basis of financial information about the Council.
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	A charge to the Council's General Fund balance to make provision for the repayment of the Council's past unfunded capital expenditure.
Non-Operational Assets	Non-current assets which are not used or consumed in the delivery of services or for the service or strategic objective of the Council.
Operating Lease	A lease where the ownership of the long-term asset remains with the lessor.
Operational Assets	Non-current assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the local council in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or a discretionary responsibility or for the service or strategic objectives of the Council.

## Glossary

Precept	The levy made by those authorities which do not run the local taxation system, e.g. KCC, Kent & Medway Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, on Swale Borough Council which collects the required income from local taxpayers on their behalf.
Property, Plant and Equipment	An asset that has physical substance which is used in the provision of services and is expected to be in use for longer than one year. The value is depreciated over the estimated life of the asset.
Provision	A provision is made when the Council has a present obligation as a result of a past event and it is probable that the Council will be required to settle that obligation.
Reserves	The accumulation of surpluses and deficits over past years. Reserves of a revenue nature are available and can be spent or earmarked at the discretion of the Council.
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	Legislation allows some expenditure to be classified as capital for funding purposes when it does not result in a non-current asset on the Balance Sheet. Such expenditure is charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.
Useful Economic Life	The period over which the Council derives benefits from the use of a non-current asset.

### Acronyms Used:

CCLA	Church, Charities and Local Authorities
CIPFA	Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CRR	Capital Receipts Reserve
IAS	International Accounting Standard
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards
KCC	Kent County Council
LGPS	Local Government Pension Scheme
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
MIRS	Movement in Reserves Statement

MKS	Mid Kent Services
MMF	Money Market Funds
MRP	Minimum Revenue Provision
PPE	Property, Plant and Equipment
REFCUS	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute
RICS	Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
RPI	Retail Price Index
S106	Section 106 – See Note 35
SMT	Strategic Management Team
VAT	Value Added Tax







## Contacting Swale Borough Council

The Customer Service Centre deals with all enquiries across the Council; it should be your first stop when contacting us.

Copies of this Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 are available on the council website

# Independent auditor's report to the members of Swale Borough Council

## Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

### Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Swale Borough Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2021, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Collection Fund and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Conclusions relating to going concern

We are responsible for concluding on the appropriateness of the Director of Resources' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify the auditor's opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.

In our evaluation of the Director of Resources' conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 that the Authority's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the Authority. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2020) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the Authority and the Authority's disclosures over the going concern period.

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

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Director of Resources' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

The responsibilities of the Director of Resources with respect to going concern are described in the 'Responsibilities of the Authority, the Director of Resources and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements' section of this report.

### **Other information**

The Director of Resources is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Financial Report, other than the financial statements. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in April 2020 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with 'delivering good governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition' published by CIPFA and SOLACE or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice**

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the financial statements and our knowledge of the Authority, the other information published together with the financial statements in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

### **Matters on which we are required to report by exception**

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

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make a written recommendation to the Authority under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or;
- we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit; or
- we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, in the course of, or at the conclusion of the audit.

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

## Responsibilities of the Authority, the Director of Resources and Those Charged with Governance for the financial statements

As explained in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Director of Resources. The Director of Resources is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Financial Report, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Director of Resources determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Director of Resources is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Authority will no longer be provided.

The Audit Committee is Those Charged with Governance. Those Charged with Governance are responsible for overseeing the Authority's financial reporting process.

### Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

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

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

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

- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant, which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements, are those related to the reporting frameworks (international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local authority accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Government Act 2003, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992), and the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
- We enquired of senior officers and the Audit Committee, concerning the Authority's policies and procedures relating to:
  - the identification, evaluation and compliance with laws and regulations;
  - the detection and response to the risks of fraud; and
  - the establishment of internal controls to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

- We enquired of senior officers, internal audit and the Audit Committee, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating officers' incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls, fraudulent revenue recognition and fraudulent expenditure recognition. We determined that the principal risks were in relation to journal entries we considered to be high risk and management bias in the calculation of significant estimates subject to a high level of estimation uncertainty and sensitivity to small changes in assumptions.
- Our audit procedures involved:
  - evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that the Director of Resources has in place to prevent and detect fraud;
  - journal entry testing, with a focus on manual journal entries and those made after the year end or considered irregular based on journal posting patterns identified by our review of the general ledger;
  - challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of land and buildings, investment property, and defined benefit pensions liability valuations;
  - testing income and expenditure recognition; and
  - assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.
- These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. However, detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as those irregularities that result from fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.
- The audit team discussed the risk of the Authority's potential non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations, the potential for fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, and the significant accounting estimates related to land and buildings, investment property and defined benefit pensions liability valuations.
- Assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:
  - understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation
  - knowledge of the local government sector
  - understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Authority including:
    - the provisions of the applicable legislation
    - guidance issued by CIPFA, LASAAC and SOLACE
    - the applicable statutory provisions.
- In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:
  - the Authority's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
  - the Authority's control environment, including the policies and procedures implemented by the Authority to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework.

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

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Our work on the Authority’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources is not yet complete. The outcome of our work will be reported in our commentary on the Authority’s arrangements in our Auditor’s Annual Report. If we identify any significant weaknesses in these arrangements, these will be reported by exception in a further auditor’s report. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on our opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021.

### **Responsibilities of the Authority**

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

### **Auditor’s responsibilities for the review of the Authority’s arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources**

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

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2021. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of ‘proper arrangements’. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

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

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

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

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for Swale Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2021 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until we have completed:

- our work on the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources and issued our Auditor's Annual Report.
- the work necessary to issue our Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) Component Assurance statement for the Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021

We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements.

#### **Use of our report**

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 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 Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Signature:

Darren Wells, Key Audit Partner

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

London

Date: