



**Oldham**  
Council

## **Report to Audit Committee**

# **2025/26 Final Accounts - Proposed Accounting Policies and Critical Judgements**

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Abdul Jabbar MBE – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability

**Officer Contact:** Lee Walsh, Director of Finance

**Report Author:** James Postle, Senior Finance Manager and Vickie Lambert, Finance Manager

**26 March 2026**

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### **Reason for Decision**

In line with best practice principles, approval is sought for the significant accounting policies and the critical judgements to be adopted in the preparation of the Council's 2025/26 Statement of Accounts.

### **Executive Summary**

The report sets out the Council's proposed accounting policies and critical judgements to be adopted in completing the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Audit Committee:

- 1) approves the Council's proposed accounting policies to be adopted in completing the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts.
- 2) notes the critical judgements made by management when producing the Statement of Accounts.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The report presents the significant accounting policies that will be used in the preparation of the 2025/26 Statement of Accounts. The report also explains the requirement to disclose the critical judgements made by management when producing the Statement of Accounts.

**2. Accounting Policies**

- 2.1 The Council's accounting policies are the specific principles, conventions, rules and practices that are applied in the production and presentation of the annual Statement of Accounts. These policies must be disclosed as a note to the annual accounts. A copy of the policies can be found at Appendix 1 with changes to policies highlighted.
- 2.2 The CIPFA/LASSAC Code of Practice (the Code) introduces new requirements in relation to the valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment and intangible assets. Property Plant and Equipment is required to be valued on a rolling 5-year basis and supported with indexation in intervening years. Intangible assets are required to be held at historic cost only.
- 2.3 These changes to the Code are expected to have a minimal impact on the Council as they reflect the Council's current practices in respect to revaluations and the valuation basis of intangible assets. The Property Plant and Equipment Policy has been amended to reflect these changes.
- 2.4 The only other change in accounting policies for the 2025/26 financial year is the inclusion of a policy on capitalising borrowing costs in the policy on Property, Plant and Equipment (Policy 1.2) on multi-year capital projects financed with Prudential Borrowing. Previously all borrowing costs were expensed in year.

**3. Critical Judgements**

- 3.1 In line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2025/26 (the Code), the Council is required to disclose those judgements that management have made in the process of applying the Council's accounting policies that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements. These are shown at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 Critical Judgements include which schools' property, plant and equipment and PFI information should be included on the Council's balance sheet, which entities fall within the Council's group boundary and which organisations should be included within the Council's group accounts, how properties should be classified as investment property and the basis of valuation of some of the Council's shareholdings.
- 3.3 The Critical Judgements note has been reviewed for 2025/26 and there have been no changes compared to the 2024/25 Critical Judgements note in the published accounts.

**4. Options/Alternatives**

- 4.1 The options that Audit Committee Members might consider in relation to the contents of this report are:
- a) not to approve any of the accounting policies or to note the critical judgements.
  - b) not to approve some of the accounting policies or to note the critical judgements.
  - c) to approve all the accounting policies and note the critical judgements.

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5. **Preferred Option**

5.1 The preferred option is the option presented at 4.1 (c).

6. **Consultation**

6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Councils External Auditors, Forvis Mazars LLP.

7. **Financial Implications**

7.1 Dealt with in the body of the report.

8. **Legal Services Comments**

8.1 There are no Legal implications.

9. **Equality Impact, including implications for Children and Young people**

9.1 N/A

10. **Human Resources Comments**

10.1 There are no Human Resource implications.

11. **Key Decision**

11.1 No

12. **Key Decision Reference**

12.1 Not Applicable.

13. **Risk Assessments**

13.1 Not Applicable

14. **IT Implications**

14.1 Not Applicable

15. **Property Implications**

15.1 Not Applicable

16. **Background Papers**

16.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

File Ref: Background Papers are provided at Appendices 1 and 2.  
Officer Name: James Postle

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17. **Appendices**

- 17.1 Appendix 1 – 2024/25 Proposed Accounting Policies  
Appendix 2 – 2024/25 Proposed Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

## 1.1 General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2024/25 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2025. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 (the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Unless otherwise stated the convention used in this document is to round to amounts the nearest thousand pounds. All totals are the rounded totals of unrounded figures and, therefore, may not be the strict sums of the figures presented in the text or tables. Throughout the Statements all credit balances are shown with parentheses e.g. (£1,234).

## 1.2 Property, Plant and Equipment

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

### Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e., repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred. The Council has a £10,000 de minimis limit for the recognition of Capital Expenditure.

### Capitalisation of Borrowing Costs

The Council capitalises borrowing costs incurred whilst qualifying assets are under construction. An asset is classified as a qualifying asset if there is a substantial period of time from the initial capital expenditure financed from prudential borrowing and the asset being brought into use. A substantial period of time is considered to mean in excess of a year.

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## Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price;
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management;
- the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

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

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

- community assets, infrastructure assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost.
- dwellings – current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH).
- surplus assets – fair value, determined by the measurement of the highest and best use value of the asset.
- all other operational assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).
- **Intangible assets are held at Historic Cost**

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

Assets included on the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. **In addition, assets are indexed in the intervening years using relevant indices supplied by a qualified valuer. Where relevant indices are unavailable desktop valuations are undertaken in year 3, with an explanation of why no indices are appropriate.** Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

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

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

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

### **Impairment**

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist, and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

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

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

### **Depreciation**

Depreciation is provided for Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

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- dwellings and other buildings – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer;
  - vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment – straight-line allocation over the useful life of the asset as estimated by a suitably qualified officer; and
  - infrastructure – See section below.

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

### **Component Accounting**

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item and/or whose life is significantly different to the life of the host (main) asset, the components are depreciated separately.

Components are recognised in the financial year where:

- there has been a revaluation of assets;
- there has been an acquisition of assets within the financial year; and
- enhancement expenditure has been incurred within the financial year.

### **Disposals**

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

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

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. If the disposal relates to housing assets a proportion of the capital receipt is payable to the Government (75% for dwellings, 50% for land and other assets, net of statutory deductions and allowances). For 2024/25 the Council can benefit from the flexibilities in the amendment on Right to Buy (RTB) receipts. For 2024/25 the Council can retain 100% RTB receipts to finance capital expenditure on housing projects. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are transferred to the Usable Capital

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Receipts Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

## **Infrastructure Assets**

Highways infrastructure assets include carriageways, footways and cycle tracks, structures, street lighting, street furniture, traffic management systems and land which together form a single integrated system.

- Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition or replacement of components of the network is capitalised on an accrual's basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefit associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

- Measurement

Highways infrastructure assets are measured at depreciated historical cost. This is, however, a modified form of historical cost. Opening balances for highways infrastructure assets were originally recorded in the balance sheet at amounts of capital undischarged for sums borrowed as at 1 April 1994, which was deemed at the time to be historical cost.

- Impairment

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by the carrying amount of the asset being written down to the recoverable amount.

- Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on the parts of the highways network infrastructure assets that are subject to deterioration or depletion and by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives.

Annual depreciation is the depreciation amount allocated each year.

The useful lives of the various parts of the highways network are detailed below:

| Elements of the Highway Network | Useful Life |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Carriageways                    | 27          |
| Footways and Cycle Tracks       | 45          |
| Structures                      | 107         |
| Street Lighting                 | 40          |
| Street Furniture                | 40          |
| Traffic Management Systems      | 15          |

### Disposal and Derecognition

When a component of the network is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the component in the Balance Sheet is written off the 'Other Operating Expenditure' line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposal (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e., netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). The written off amounts of disposal are 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 General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### 1.3 Heritage Assets

The Council's Heritage Assets are held by the Council principally for their contribution to knowledge and/or culture. They are recognised and measured, including treatment of revaluation gains and losses, in accordance with the Council's Accounting Policies on Property Plant and Equipment. However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed allowing the Council's Heritage Assets to be included on the Balance Sheet at their insured value where available. Where insurance valuations are not available and the

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Council has no records of the original cost of the asset, then there is a narrative disclosure of the asset.

Heritage assets are deemed to have an indefinite life, therefore are not depreciated as the charge made would be minimal and immaterial. Nevertheless, where there is evidence of physical deterioration to a Heritage Asset, or doubts arise to its authenticity, the value of the asset has to be reviewed.

#### **1.4 Investment Property**

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the highest and best use value of the asset. Investment properties are not depreciated, and an annual valuation programme ensures that they are held at highest and best use value at the Balance Sheet date. Gains and losses on revaluation are charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the Financing and Investment Income line and result in a gain for the General Fund Balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and charged to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve.

#### **1.5 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Similar Contracts**

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

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the Property, Plant and Equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment. Following the introduction of IFRS 16, the liability is measured as the Net Present Value of future Lease payments with the original lease interest rate applied. The liability is subsequently adjusted for interest due and payments made. The liability is remeasured where there is a change in the future payments arising from a change in index or rate. Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as Property, Plant and Equipment owned by the Council.

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

- The value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- Finance cost – an interest charge is raised on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability and debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The interest rate is calculated for each scheme so that the Balance Sheet liability is zero at the end of each contract.
- Payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability.
- Lifecycle replacement costs – are split between revenue and capital costs. Revenue lifecycle costs are debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Capital lifecycle costs are debited to Property Plant and Equipment to reflect the enhancement of the PFI Asset.

## **1.6 Accounting for Schools**

In line with accounting standards and the Code on group accounts and consolidation, all maintained schools are considered to be entities controlled by the Council. Rather than produce group accounts the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows of each school are recognised in the Council's single entity accounts. The Council has the following types of maintained schools under its control:

- Community
- Voluntary Aided
- Voluntary Controlled
- Foundation Trust
- Foundation

Schools' non-current assets (school buildings and playing fields) are recognised on the Balance Sheet where the Council directly owns the assets, where the Council holds the balance of control of the assets or where the school or the school governing body own the assets or have had rights to use the assets transferred to them through a licence arrangement.

When a maintained school converts to an Academy, the school's non-current assets held on the Council's Balance Sheet are treated as a disposal. The carrying value of the asset is written off to Other Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

The written-off asset value is not a charge against the General Fund, as the cost of non-current asset disposals resulting from schools transferring to an Academy status is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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## **1.7 Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)**

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of Council Tax.

## **1.8 Capital Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets**

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

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

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in the approved Minimum Revenue Provision policy. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses, and amortisation are replaced by Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). This adjusting transaction is included in the Movement in Reserves Statement with the Capital Adjustment Account charged with the difference between the two amounts.

## **1.9 Financial Instruments**

### **Financial Liabilities**

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For most of the borrowings held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

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

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the CIES, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Council has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. When a premium or discount has been incurred and paid in full by a grant from an external body it is accounted for in full in the year that the grant is received. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the CIES to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

## **Financial Assets**

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost;
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL); and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI).

The Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows i.e. payments of interest and principal. Most of the Council's financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e. where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument).

## **Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost**

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

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Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

### **Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss (FVPL)**

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:

- instruments with quoted market prices – the market price; and
- other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the accounting policy set out in section 1.23 Fair Value Measurement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

IFRS 9 Financial Instruments sets out that investments in equity should be classified as fair value through profit and loss unless there is an irrevocable election to recognise changes in fair value through other comprehensive income. The Council will assess each investment on an individual basis and assign an IFRS 9 category. The assessment will be based on the underlying purpose for holding the financial instrument.

Any changes in the fair value of instruments held at fair value through profit or loss will be recognised in the net cost of service in the CIES and will have a General Fund impact.

### **Financial Assets measured at Fair Value through other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI)**

The Council has equity instruments designated at fair value through other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI).

The Council has made an irrevocable election to designate three of its equity instruments as FVOCI on the basis that it is held for non-contractual benefits, it is not held for trading but for strategic purposes. The assets are initially measured and carried at fair value. The value is based on the principal that the equity shares have no quoted market prices and is based on an independent appraisal of the company valuation.

Dividend income is credited to Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when it becomes receivable by the Council.

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Changes in fair value are posted to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and are balanced by an entry in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

When the asset is de-recognised, the cumulative gain or loss previously recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure is transferred from the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve and recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

### **Expected Credit Loss Model**

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

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

### **Instruments Entered into Before 1 April 2006**

The Council entered into a number of financial guarantees that are not required to be accounted for as financial instruments. These guarantees are reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that provisions might be required, or a contingent liability note is needed under the policies set out in the section on Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.

## **1.10 Employee Benefits**

### **Benefits Payable During Employment**

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, flexi and time off in lieu (TOIL) as well as bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. mobile phones) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

### **Employee Accumulated Absence Accrual**

An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the current accounting year. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday entitlement occurs.

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## Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis to the relevant services lines in the Comprehensive Income and 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 the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. 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 pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

## Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of three separate pension schemes:

- The Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme - administered by Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The Teachers' Pension Scheme - administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).
- The NHS Pension Scheme - administered by EA Finance NHS Pensions.

These schemes provide defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees working for the Council.

However, the arrangements for the teachers' and NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified specifically to the Council. These schemes are therefore accounted for as if they are a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Children's Services line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pension Scheme in the year. The Community Health & Adult Social Care Directorate line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to the NHS Pension Scheme in the year.

## The Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme

The Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

The liabilities of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method; an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits

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earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates and projections of future earnings for current employees. Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate (based on the indicative rate of return on a basket of high-quality corporate bonds, Government gilts and other factors).

The assets of the Greater Manchester 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;
- unitised securities – current bid price;
- property – market value.

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

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned in the current year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked;
- past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years will be debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting;
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability - the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

#### **Remeasurement comprising:**

- the return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
- actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure;
- contributions paid to the Greater Manchester Pension Fund - cash paid as employer contributions to the pension scheme in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

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- Effect of Asset Ceiling – where the defined benefit liability is negative (i.e. an asset), a limit is applied to the amount that may be recognised as an asset on the balance sheet, this limit is termed the asset ceiling. If an adjustment is required to reduce the total asset to the amount of the asset ceiling, this adjustment is charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve, to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund, and pensioners, and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the 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.

### **1.11 Accruals of Income and Expenditure**

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

Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that may not be collected.

### **1.12 Cash and Cash Equivalents**

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

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

### **1.13 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets**

#### **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. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date

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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. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made) the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

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

### **Contingent Liabilities**

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

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

### **Contingent Assets**

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

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

## **1.14 Government Grants and Contributions**

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

- the Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payment; and;
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are

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required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

Where revenue grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but have yet to be used to fund revenue expenditure, it is posted to the Revenue Grant Reserve. When eligible expenditure is incurred in future years the grant is transferred back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

### **1.15 Reserves**

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are held to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, local taxation, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council. These reserves are further explained in the relevant policies.

### **1.16 Revenue Recognition**

Revenue is defined as income arising as a result of the Council's normal operating activities and where income arises from contracts with service recipients it is recognised when or as the Council has satisfied a performance obligation by transferring a promised good or service to the service recipient.

Revenue is measured as the amount of the transaction price which is allocated to that performance obligation. Where the Council is acting as an agent of another organisation the amounts collected for that organisation are excluded from revenue.

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## 1.17 Tax Income

Council Tax, Retained Business Rates and Business Rates Top-up Grant income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year will be treated as accrued income.

Business Rates, Business Rates Top-up Grant and Council Tax income will be recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement within the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line. As a billing Authority, the difference between the Business Rates and Council Tax included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Each major preceptor's share of the accrued Business Rates and Council Tax income is available from the information that is required to be produced in order to prepare the Collection Fund Statement.

Business Rates and Council Tax income is recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council, and the amount of revenue can be measured reliably.

Revenue relating to Council Tax and Business Rates is 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.

## 1.18 Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to the relevant services in accordance with the Authority's arrangements for accountability and financial performance, with the exception of:

- Corporate and Democratic Core – costs relating to the Council's status as a multi-functional, democratic organisation;
- Non Distributed Costs – changes in past service costs and impairment losses chargeable on Assets Held for Sale.

Corporate and Democratic Core is identified as a separate heading in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Non Distributed Costs form part of the Capital, Treasury and Technical Accounting Directorate line with the Council's local reporting format.

## 1.19 Value Added Tax (VAT)

Value Added Tax payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

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## **1.20 Interests in Companies and Other Entities**

The Council has material interests in external entities that are classified as subsidiaries and therefore group accounts have been prepared. In the Council's single-entity accounts the Council's interest in companies and other entities are recorded as financial assets at cost less any impairment. Any gains or losses are recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

## **1.21 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors**

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

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

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

## **1.22 Events after the Balance Sheet Date**

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

- Adjusting Events - Those events that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events.
- Non-Adjusting Events - Those events that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but, where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and either their estimated financial effect or a statement that such an estimate cannot be made reliably.

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

## **1.23 Fair Value Measurement**

The Council measures some of its assets and liabilities at fair value at the end of the reporting period. Fair value is the amount that would be received from the sale of an asset

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or paid over to transfer a liability at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

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

The Council uses external valuers to provide a valuation of its non-financial assets and liabilities, for recognition or disclosure as appropriate, in line with the highest and best use definition within IFRS 13 Fair Value Measurement. The highest and best use of the asset or liability being valued is considered from the perspective of a market participant. Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of the Council's fair value measurement of its assets and liabilities are categorised within the fair value hierarchy as follows:

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

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

Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

## **1.24 Leases**

### **The Council as lessee**

The Council classifies contracts as leases based on their substance. Contracts and parts of contracts, including those described as contracts for services, are analysed to determine whether they convey the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of more than one year, through rights both to obtain substantially all the economic benefits or service potential from that asset and to direct its use. The Code expands the scope of IFRS 16 Leases to include arrangements with nil consideration, peppercorn or nominal payments.

### ***Initial Measurement***

Leases are recognised as right-of-use assets with a corresponding liability at the date from which the leased asset is available for use (or the IFRS 16 transition date, if later). On transition to IFRS16, an entity is not required to reassess whether a contract is, or contains, a lease at the date of initial application. Instead, the entity is permitted to only apply IFRS 16 to contracts that were previously identified as leases under IAS 17 and IFRIC 4.

The leases are typically for fixed periods in excess of one year but may have extension options. The Council initially recognises lease liabilities measured at the present value of lease payments, discounting at the rate implicit in the lease wherever the interest rate implicit in the lease cannot be determined. Lease payments included in the measurement of the lease liability include:

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- Fixed payments
  - Variable lease payments that depend on an index or rate, initially measured using the prevailing index or rate as at the adoption date
  - Amounts expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee
  - the exercise price under a purchase option that the authority is reasonably certain to exercise
  - lease payments in an optional renewal period if the authority is reasonably certain to exercise an extension option
  - penalties for early termination of a lease, unless the authority is reasonably certain not to terminate early.

The right-of-use asset is measured at the amount of the lease liability, adjusted for any prepayments made, plus any direct costs incurred to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or restore the underlying asset on the site on which it is located, less any lease incentives received. However, for peppercorn, nominal payments or nil consideration leases, the asset is measured at fair value.

### ***Subsequent Measurement***

The right-of-use asset is subsequently measured at current value in accordance with the CIPFA Code. The Council considers the current value model to be a reasonable proxy except for:

- assets held under non-commercial leases
- leases where rent reviews do not necessarily reflect market conditions
- leases with terms of more than five years that do not have any provision for rent reviews
- leases where rent reviews will be at periods of more than five years.

For these leases, the asset is carried at a revalued amount as determined by professionally qualified valuers in line with the Council's valuation policy. .

The right-of-use asset is depreciated straight-line over the shorter period of remaining lease term and useful life of the underlying asset as at the date of adoption.

The lease liability is subsequently measured at Net Present Value of the remaining lease payments.

The liability is remeasured when:

- there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in index or rate
- there is a change in the group's estimate of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee
- the authority changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option, or
- there is a revised in-substance fixed lease payment.

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When such a remeasurement occurs, a corresponding adjustment is made to the carrying amount of the right-of-use asset, with any further adjustment required from remeasurement being recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

### ***Low value and short lease exemption***

As permitted by the Code, the Council excludes leases:

- for low-value items that cost less than £10,000 when new, provided they are not highly dependent on or integrated with other items, and
- with a term shorter than 12 months, for the 2024/25 accounts any lease that expires on or before 31st March 2025 will be deemed to be a short-term lease.

### ***Lease expenditure***

Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement includes interest, straightline depreciation, any asset impairments and changes in variable lease payments not included in the measurement of the liability during the period in which the triggering event occurred. Lease payments are debited against the liability. Rentals for leases of low-value items or shorter than 12 months are expensed.

Depreciation and impairments are not charges against Council tax, as the cost of non-current assets are fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### **The Council as lessor**

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

### ***Finance leases***

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

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Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

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

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to the capital receipts reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund balance to [the deferred capital receipts reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the capital receipts reserve.

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 therefore appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

### ***Operating leases***

Where the authority grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease or where this is initiated by a service to the individual service, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

## 2024/25 Proposed Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

The following disclosure sets out critical judgements applied to the Accounting Policies of the Council that have a significant impact on the presentation of the financial statements. Critical estimation uncertainties are described in the note.

### **Accounting for Schools – Balance Sheet Recognition of Schools**

The Council recognises the land and buildings used by schools in line with the provisions of the Code of Practice. It states that property used by Local Authority maintained schools should be recognised in accordance with the asset recognition tests relevant to the arrangements that prevail for the property. The Council recognises school land and buildings on its Balance Sheet where it directly owns the assets or where the school or school Governing Body own the assets or where rights to use the assets have been transferred from another entity.

Where the land and building assets used by the school are owned by an entity other than the Council, school or school Governing Body then it is not included on the Council's Balance Sheet. The exception is where the entity has transferred the rights of use of the asset to the Council, school or school Governing Body.

The Council has completed a school-by-school assessment across the different types of schools it controls within the Borough. Judgements have been made to determine the arrangements in place and the accounting treatment of the land and building assets. The types of schools that have been assessed are shown below:

| Type of School              | No. of Primary Schools | No. of Secondary Schools | No. of Special Schools | Total      |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Community                   | 21                     | -                        | 1                      | <b>22</b>  |
| Voluntary Controlled (VC)   | 2                      | -                        | -                      | <b>2</b>   |
| Voluntary Aided (VA)        | 15                     | -                        | -                      | <b>15</b>  |
| Foundation/Foundation Trust | 4                      | 1                        | -                      | <b>5</b>   |
| <b>Maintained Schools</b>   | <b>42</b>              | <b>0</b>                 | <b>1</b>               | <b>43</b>  |
| Academies                   | 44                     | 14                       | 6                      | <b>64</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>86</b>              | <b>14</b>                | <b>7</b>               | <b>107</b> |

All Community schools are owned by the Council and the land and buildings used by the schools are included on the Council's Balance Sheet.

The Council has entered into Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreements to build and operate three schools in the Borough. One is a Foundation Trust school and the remaining two schools are Academies. Whilst the land which the buildings are sited on has been transferred to the respective Trust and Academy, the ownership of the buildings is determined by who holds the balance of control in line with accounting standards. The Council considers the buildings associated with these schools should be included on its Balance Sheet because:

- The reversion clause within the PFI agreement results in the Council having a residual interest in the buildings at the end of the agreement
- The services provided and the use of the building is controlled by the Council through the PFI agreement
- The PFI agreement is between the PFI contractor and the Council

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Legal ownership of VC school land and buildings usually rests with a charity, normally a religious body. The VC schools land and buildings are owned by the Council and included on the Balance Sheet.

Legal ownership of the VA school land and buildings rests with the relevant Diocese. The Diocese has granted a licence to the school to use the land and buildings. Under this licence arrangement, the rights of use of the land and buildings have not transferred to the school and thus are not included on the Council's Balance Sheet.

Foundation and Foundation Trust schools were created to give greater freedom to the Governing Body responsible for school staff appointments and who also set the admission criteria. There is one Foundation school in the Borough. For one school, the Governing Body has legal ownership of the land and buildings and thus these are included on the Council's Balance Sheet. For the remaining Foundation Trust schools, a separate Trust owns the land and buildings so these assets are not included on the Council's Balance Sheet.

Academies are not considered to be maintained schools in the Council's control. The land and building assets are not owned by the Council and are therefore not included on the Council's Balance Sheet.

## **Group Boundaries**

The Council carries out a complex range of activities, often in conjunction with external organisations. Where those organisations are in partnership with or under the ultimate control of the Council a judgement is made by management as to whether they are within the Council's group boundary. This judgement is made in line with the provisions set out in the Code and relevant accounting standards.

Those entities which fall within the boundary and are considered to be material are included in the Council's group accounts. Profit and loss, net worth, and the value of assets and liabilities are considered individually for each organisation against a materiality limit set by the Council. An entity could be material but still not consolidated if all of its business is with the Council and eliminated on consolidation – i.e., the consolidation would mean that the group accounts are not materially different to the single entity accounts. The assessment of materiality also considers qualitative factors such as whether the Council depends significantly on these entities for the continued provision of its statutory services or where there is concern about the level to which the Council is exposed to commercial risk.

The Council has assessed its group boundary for 2024/25. The Council has identified one subsidiary who are considered to be material and will be consolidated into its group accounts. The subsidiary included is MioCare Group Community Interest Company (CIC). Further details can be found in the group accounts in section 5 of the Council's accounts.

## **Investment Properties**

Investment properties have been assessed using the identifiable criteria under the International Accounting Standards and are being held for rental income or for capital appreciation. Properties have been assessed using these criteria, which is subject to

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interpretation, to determine if there is an operational reason for holding the property, such as regeneration.

## **Equity Investments**

The Council has equity investments in Oldham Property Partnership, Manchester Airport Group, Meridian Developments and Community 1<sup>st</sup> Oldham (Chadderton) Ltd. Following a review of the Council's equity investments under the accounting standard IFRS 9 Financial Instruments, the default valuation method of the Council's equity holdings would be Fair Value through Profit and Loss. However, these equity investments are strategic investments and not held for trading, therefore the Council, has designated the investment as fair value through Other Comprehensive Income. The decision to designate to fair value through Other Comprehensive Income is irrevocable and it is the Council view that this is a reasonable and reliable accounting policy for these investments.

## **Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) Loans**

The Council has £85.5m of outstanding LOBO loans in its debt portfolio which have long overall loan lengths (c 50 years). The Loans have option date frequencies of between 5 years and 6 months. At each option date the lender can choose to vary the interest rate payable on the loans and the Council can choose to repay the loan in full or accept the new interest rate. In the financial instruments note the Council has assumed that none of the options will be called and the Council repay the debt and included the total LOBO balances in Long Term Borrowing.