

Meeting of: Audit & Accounts Committee

Date: 31st July 2024

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: Council Chamber, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB

The meeting will also be live streamed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrLsMDOP7AYxik5pNP0gTIA/streams>

Supported by: Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer Tel: 01706 252423

Email: glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk

ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
A.	BUSINESS MATTERS	
A1.	Apologies for Absence	<p>Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer Tel: 01706 252423 Email: glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
A2.	Minutes of the last meeting To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 th March 2024	
A3.	Urgent Items of Business To note any items which the Chair has agreed to add to the Agenda on the grounds of urgency.	
A4.	Declarations of Interest <i>Members are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to seek advice on interest issues if necessary.</i> Members are requested to indicate at this stage, any items on the agenda in which they intend to declare an interest. Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's Code of Conduct, they must declare the nature of any personal interest and, if the interest is prejudicial, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.	
B.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
B1.	Public Question Time Members of the public can register their question by contacting the Committee Officer. Groups with similar questions are advised to appoint and register a spokesperson. This is an opportunity to ask a question about a matter which the Council may be able to	<p>Glenda Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer 01706 252423 glendaashton@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>

The agenda and reports are also available for inspection on the Council's website <https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/>. Other formats are available on request. Tel 01706 217777 or contact Rosendale Borough Council, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB

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ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
	<p>assist with. A time limit of 3 minutes applies for each question and you are only able to address the meeting once.</p> <p>To register for public question time your question must be received no later than 12noon on the day of the meeting by emailing democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk Please give your full name, telephone number and include a copy of your question.</p> <p>Please begin by giving your name and state whether you are speaking as an individual member of the public or as a representative of a group. (Question time normally lasts up to 30 minutes).</p>	<p>Please register an agenda related public question by emailing democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk no later than 12noon on Wednesday 31st July 2024</p>
C.	<p>Chair's Update To receive communications from the Chair</p>	Councillor Procter
D.	ORDINARY BUSINESS	
D1.	Statement of Accounts 2023/24 (Unaudited)	<p>Damon Lawrenson Interim Director of Resources / s151 Officer damonlawrenson@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
D2.	Corporate Risk Register Update Q4 2023/24	<p>Damon Lawrenson Interim Director of Resources / s151 Officer damonlawrenson@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
D3.	Annual Fraud Report 2023/24	<p>Damon Lawrenson Interim Director of Resources / s151 Officer damonlawrenson@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
D4.	Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24	<p>Mark Baskerville Lancashire County Council mark.baskerville@lancashire.gov.uk</p>
D5.	External Audit Progress Report	<p>Katie Kingston Mazars Auditors katie.kingston@mazars.co.uk</p>
D6.	Annual review of Committee Terms of Reference	<p>Damon Lawrenson Interim Director of Resources / s151 Officer damonlawrenson@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
E.	<p>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS To consider passing the appropriate resolution under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business since it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act.</p>	
E1.	Standards Complaints update (verbal)	Councillor Procter
E2.	Whistleblowing update (verbal)	Councillor Procter

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Huntington', written in a cursive style.

Rob Huntington
Chief Executive

Date Published: 23rd July 2024

MINUTES OF: THE AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 6th March 2024

**PRESENT: Councillor M Smith (Chair)
Councillors Cheetham (sub), Hodgkiss (sub), MacNae, Neal,
Procter and Walmsley**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Huntington, Chief Executive, RBC
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer), RBC
Andy Dalecki, LCC Internal Auditors
Alastair Newall, Mazars External Auditors
Katie Kingston, Mazars External Auditors
Glenda Ashton, Committee Officer, RBC**

**ALSO PRESENT: Kimberley Haworth, Head of Financial Services, RBC
1 member of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Councillors S Smith and Woods (Councillors Cheetham and Hodgkiss subbing) and Mr S McManus, Co-opted member.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29th November 2023

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 3.1 There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 4.1 Councillor Cheetham declared that she was a County Councillor at Lancashire County Council.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 5.1 There were no public questions.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

- 6.1 It was noted that the Debt Management Policy would be reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 11th March and considered by Cabinet on 5th June 2024.

7. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2022/23 – UNAUDITED

- 7.1 The Chief Finance Officer presented the report, which asked members to note the contents of the unaudited accounts for 2022/23 at Appendix A.
- 7.2 Due to time constraints training for Committee members had not been possible prior to publication. This would take place before the next Committee meeting.
- 7.3 The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- The Finance Team were congratulated on the work undertaken during challenging times.
- The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the Council was required to set a lawful budget and this had been achieved.
- Concerns were raised regarding councillor conduct at the 28th February budget setting Council meeting. Officers were thanked for setting a lawful budget.

RESOLVED:

The Audit and Accounts Committee noted the contents of the Unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 at Appendix A.

8. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER UPDATE Q3 2023/24

8.1 The Chief Finance Officer presented the report, which asked members to note the risk consequence, mitigation action and level of risk as detailed in Appendix 1. It was noted that there were two red risks, the Stability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets.

8.2 The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

Risk 1 – Sustainability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- Several authorities had recently issued S114 notices and 19 Councils were receiving exceptional financial support. This funding came with conditions and the money borrowed was at an inflated interest rate.
- Other authorities in Lancashire were in a similar position to the Council but Rossendale had a short and long term efficiency plan.
- The Chief Finance Officer was not aware of the East Lancs Councils writing to the Government regarding their financial positions. However it was noted that ongoing discussions were taking place between Lancashire’s Chief Executives.
- Work towards the MTFS and the priorities within the Valley Plan continued.
- Notification of the financial settlement from government was received very late in December, this made the setting of the budget and MTFS difficult.
- Being part of a two tier system increased costs for the Council but did not affect budget setting.
- There were concerns that the UK Shared Prosperity funding may be redirected to the upper tiers going forward. This would affect regeneration at local level.
- The devolution consultation results would be shared with members.

Risk 6 – Insufficient data and cyber security

- The second phase of cyber security training had been rolled out to officers and would be available for members in due course.

Risk 9 – Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets

- Rossendale had commissioned an independent review of the leisure provision in the borough. The recommendations/action plan from this review were currently being worked through.
- There was a level of confidence that the measures being put in place were sufficient to keep the risk under control. Other investments and funding streams were being investigated.
- It was noted that providing leisure facilities in the borough was not a statutory responsibility for the Council.

- A cross party leisure working group had been set up to discuss the borough's leisure provision and there was councillor representation on the Rossendale Leisure Trust Board.

RESOLVED:

- The Audit and Accounts Committee noted the Council's Corporate Risk Register as detailed in the report.
- Members noted the risk consequence, mitigation action and level of risk as detailed in Appendix 1.

9. INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT 2023/24 – DECEMBER 2023 – JANUARY 2024

9.1 The Head of Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council, outlined the report, which asked members to consider the Internal Audit report on progress to deliver the 2023/24 audit plan.

RESOLVED:

- The Committee considered the Internal Audit progress report for December 2023 to January 2024.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2024/25

10.1 The Head of Internal Audit, Lancashire County Council, outlined the report, which asked members to consider and approve the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25.

10.2 The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- It was recommended that members complete all mandatory training especially in relation to risk management.
- Concerns were expressed that not all members completed mandatory training. It was suggested that all new councillors sign a declaration on appointment to confirm that all mandatory training would be completed.
- It was confirmed that members had to be trained to sit or sub on Committees.
- Virtual training sessions were now recorded and were shared with all councillors after the training. Watching the recording was classed as training completion but there was no way to confirm that members had watched the training. If members had not completed training then the Council would need to assess if they had the appropriate skills and expertise.
- The External Auditors had been asked to include an assessment against best value duty which defines what a well-functioning authority displays.
- Key financials were included in the annual plan. The auditors look at issues and where value/assurance can be added.
- Reports from the Internal Auditors should clarify their independence and impartiality as the Council's auditors.

RESOLVED:

- The Committee considered and approved the Internal Audit Annual Plan for 2024/25.

11. EXTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT

11.1 The Audit Manager and Public & Social Sector Director, Mazars, outlined the report, which asked members to note the contents of the report.

11.2 The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- The report focussed on the Council's relationship with Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT)

and progress made rather than historical staffing issues within RLT.

- The report did not suggest wilful overspending but was a factual report that set out an unsustainable financial position. Strong controls and a savings plan was needed.
- The backstop date was a challenge for the Council; the detail would be discussed in due course.
- With regards to the Backstop date, where previous year accounts haven't been audited how would the starting balance of the General Fund be confirmed as correct? This was a national problem and the Audit bodies were working on a solution to this. Rossendale were in a good position as they had published their accounts unlike other authorities.
- Historical bank reconciliations issues are being rectified and it was hoped would be completed by the end of the month, however this had highlighted in-year bank reconciliation issues. Other checks and balances were in place.
- The External Auditors were thanked for their work on the audits/reporting. There was a good working relationship between the Council and auditors who had been very helpful.

RESOLVED:

- The Committee considered the External Audit progress report.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

- That the public and press be excluded from the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the items involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

13. STANDARDS COMPLAINTS UPDATE (VERBAL)

13.1 An update was provided in relation to Standards Complaints.

RESOLVED:

- That the update was noted.

14. WHISTLEBLOWING UPDATE (VERBAL)

14.1 An update was provided in relation to Whistleblowing.

RESOLVED:

- That the update was noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm

Signed (Chair)

Date

Subject:	2023/24 Statement of Accounts	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Audit and Accounts Committee	Date:	31st July 2024		
Report of:	Head of Financial Services	Lead Member:	Resources		
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>		
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Contact Officer:	Kimberly Haworth	Telephone:	01706 252409		
Email:	Kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk				

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 To note the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Accounts and Audit regulations do not require the Statement of Accounts to be brought to Audit and Accounts Committee until the external audit has been completed. Due to the current position regarding the accounts audits, this could mean a long delay before the accounts are presented to committee. Therefore, the Head of Financial Services is presenting the accounts for information and review at this committee.
- The Accounts will be subject to external audit by Mazars once the previous year's outstanding audits are completed.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council prepares its statutory Annual Accounts and supporting financial statements in accordance with applicable laws and regulations and in line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in United Kingdom (The Code).

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations require that the responsible Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer, now Director of Resources) certifies that the Statement of Accounts "present a true and fair view of the financial position". The Chief Finance Officer certified the accounts on 5th June 2024.
- 4.2 The 2023/24 unaudited Statement of Accounts were published on the Council's website on 5th June 2024, with the notice of public rights period running until 17st July 2024.
- 4.3 These accounts will now be subject to an external audit, which will be carried out by the Council's external auditor, Mazars. They will then provide their Audit Opinion. However, this will not be carried out until the outstanding audits from previous years have been completed.
- 4.4 Once the Audit Opinion has been given and accounts approved, they must be signed and dated by the Chair of Audit and Accounts committee. The Statement of Accounts can then be published as a public document.

5. RISK

5.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

6. FINANCE

6.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL

7.1 The annual Statement of Accounts are a statutory requirement and must comply fully with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in United Kingdom 2020/21 (The Code).

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 The Council is required to publish a statement of accounts for each financial year.

No background papers



Unaudited

Statement of Accounts 2023/24

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Introduction

Rosendale Borough Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 provides a comprehensive overview of the financial performance and position of the Council. This document is an essential component of our commitment to transparency and accountability, presenting detailed information on how public funds have been managed and allocated throughout the year.

The 2023/24 financial year has been a period of both challenges and achievements for Rosendale Borough Council. Against a backdrop of ongoing economic pressures, evolving public service demands, and legislative changes, the Council has remained steadfast in its mission to deliver high-quality services to its residents. This Statement of Accounts reflects the Council's resilience and adaptability in managing its resources efficiently and effectively.

This Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 has been prepared and published in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2023/24, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The accounting policies adopted by the Council comply with the relevant recommended accounting practices and the latest revisions to these from 1 April 2023. There have been no major changes in the Council's statutory functions during the year.



Audit Report

This Statement of Accounts 2023/24 will now be submitted for public inspection and external audit. The resulting audit report will appear on these pages when the final accounts are presented to the Audit & Accounts Committee.

Unaudited

Audit Report



Audit Report



Unaudited

Audit Report



Narrative Report

Introduction by the Head of Finance

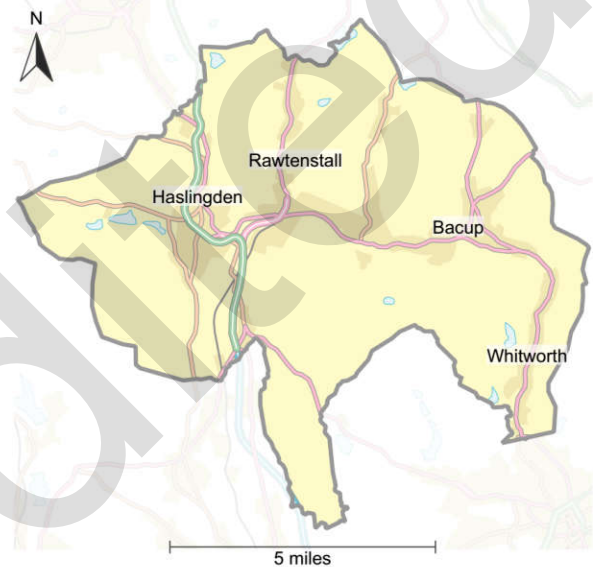
This Statement of Accounts gives an overview of the Council’s finances for 2023/24 with the Narrative Report outlining some of the key initiatives that took place and how these influenced the financial position of the Council. 2023/24 presented new challenges for the Council. As well as dealing with the legacy of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a downward turn in the national economic position and inflationary pressures affecting both the Council and local residents. The significant increase in inflation, lead to increased general prices for goods, materials and energy costs for the Council.

Rosendale – geography, economy and our priorities for 2023/24

Rosendale is an authority in East Lancashire that covers 138 square kilometres. During 2023/24 the Borough had 14 electoral wards, this has reduced to 10 from May 2024 following the boundary review.

Rosendale is a proud valley area with a rich industrial heritage, filled with friendly and welcoming communities in a number of vibrant market towns and villages. Rosendale is a distinctive part of East Lancashire with its dramatic scenery, rich heritage and characterful features.

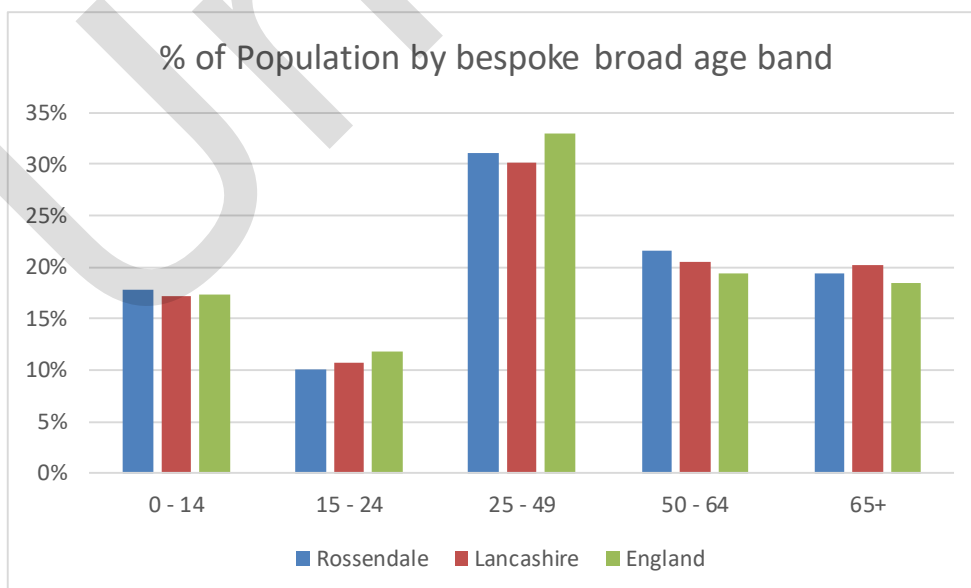
Sitting on the western slopes of the Pennines Rosendale is well connected to Lancashire, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire.



Our Vision: Rosendale, a place where people want to live, visit, work and invest

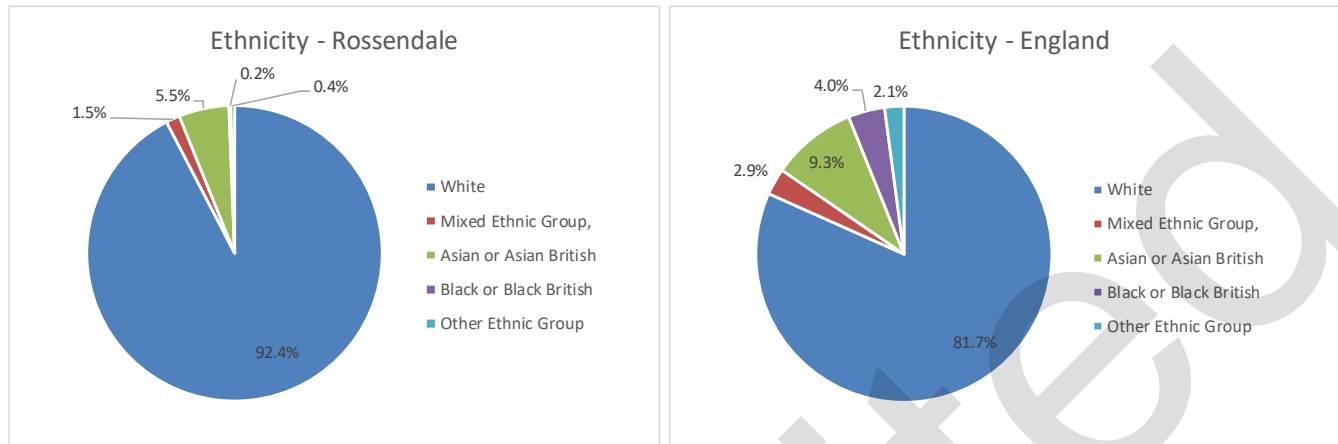
Our people:

The latest population estimate for the Rosendale area is c71,000. The age demographic make-up of the population compared with Lancashire and England (2021 census) is shown in the table below:-



Narrative Report

The population of Rossendale is growing and it is estimated that between 2018 and 2043 the population will increase by 12.6%, being the fourth highest increase in the Lancashire area. The ethnic makeup based on the 2021 census is shown in the comparative graphs below.



Housing:

There are c32,200 dwellings in the borough, 85% of which were owner occupied or private rented. In common with other East Lancashire authorities, Rossendale has a high proportion of its housing stock in the lowest category 'A' council tax band, almost 51% and in 2021 around 3.3% of dwellings were vacant.

A total of 14.6% of Rossendale households were in fuel poverty in 2020 compared to the England average of 13.2%. The main factors that determine this are the energy efficiency status of the property, the cost of energy, and household income. The 2019 national indices of deprivation revealed that Rossendale was the 91st most deprived area out of the 317 districts and unitary authorities in England.

Our businesses:

As in most places, the manufacturing sector has shed jobs over the years whilst the service sector has grown to become a far greater source of employee jobs. However there still continues to be a bias towards a larger proportion of employees in the manufacturing sector in Lancashire and Rossendale, than is the national norm and a lower proportion of jobs in the service sector. Rossendale does, however, maintain a relatively high percentage of private-sector jobs. In 2023 there were 2,540 active enterprises in Rossendale, slightly fewer than in 2022, the reason for this is unrecorded. The most recent local companies to win a Queen's Award for Enterprise, namely Slingco Ltd in Rawtenstall and Orthoplastics Ltd in Bacup.

Our area:

Though Rossendale is not served by the main railway network it does have excellent road links with the M66 heading south to Greater Manchester and the M62 corridor over the Pennines and the M65 heading west to link up with the M6. The 2011 census figures on commuter flows revealed that only 40.3% of Rossendale residents work within the borough and over 10% of working residents commute between 20 and 30 kilometres, the highest percentage in Lancashire and well above regional and national averages.

Lancashire has over 8,000 hectares of common land (1.5% of the nation's total) and Rossendale is one of the three boroughs which account for a significant proportion of this total. Rossendale has 22.6% of its land designated as green belt, safeguarding our countryside and preserving the

Narrative Report

character of our historic towns. This also contributes to maintaining our air quality, which is better than the county and national averages.

Priority A: Thriving Local Economy

The nature of the local economy continues to change and we will be playing an active role in creating the right conditions for local businesses to thrive.

We will continue to grow the local economy, attracting businesses to our employment sites

Key Outcomes:

- To support Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall town centres as better places to provide their own unique offers and a destination for local shoppers and visitors
- To have secured new inward investment in the borough creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills provision with future job and career opportunities
- Having a thriving visitor economy which is more widely known with enhanced attractions and a much improved accommodation offer

The Bacup HAZ project completed with a total of 14 properties refurbished
Continuing to progress the Haslingden 2040 NLHF project.
UKSPF funded Town Centre Managers delivered several successful town center events
Work commenced on concept designs for the Gyrotory and Rawtenstall & Bacup Markets

Priority B: High Quality Environment

The high quality of our natural environment is something local people love and take pride in. The council recognises the value of our physical and built environment and the particular importance of our Pennine uplands and villages.

Key Outcomes:

- A high quality 'clean and green' local environment where people feel proud to live
- Reduce our carbon footprint
- Improve the waste recycling rate across the borough

16,000 trees planted by April 2024, as part of 'Rossendale Forest' project
The £21m LUF funded capital regeneration project commenced.
Operation Trident continued cracking down on fly tipping and other environmental crime, with 7 prosecutions completed.
32 Parks, 38 Play Areas, 8 MUGAS, 3 Skate Parks & 4 Pump Tracks Maintained

Priority C: Healthy and Proud Communities

Having access to a good quality home to either rent or buy plays a fundamental part in our residents' quality of life. We want people to live long lives and take pride in their communities.

c280 new homes completed in 2023/24

Narrative Report

Key Outcomes:

- To have delivered more new homes and a good mix of housing tenures
- Improved the health of residents through access to better leisure facilities and health services
- A more joined up approach to physical and mental well-being which is more rapidly reducing health inequalities
- Residents share a sense of pride in their immediate community and the wider borough

Extended disabled facilities grant support through the introduction of a Home Improvement Agency, in partnership with Homewise and issued 126 disabled facility grants during

Successfully delivered the Household Support Fund 4 assisting 8,621 vulnerable families

'Age of Inspiration' event hosted, with over 90 attendees

Priority D: Effective and Efficient Council

It is important that we are an effective and efficient council - one with ambition, clear direction, which delivers good quality services and which provides good value for money to our residents.

Key Outcomes:

- Provide good quality and responsive services embracing new technology
- Be a financially sustainable council with a commercial outlook whilst always considering social value
- Provide sound governance to enable key decisions and major projects to be progressed, in an efficient and professional way
- Have a skilled and happy workforce, where we are able to retain and attract good staff

The new Rosendale Borough Council website went live in October 2023

Migration to new financials, payment and payroll systems completed

231 Planning Applications approved.

c2.5m refuse/recycling household bins emptied

10 Workplace Health & Wellbeing Champions trained

Narrative Report

Rosendale folk - the people behind the borough

Our councillors

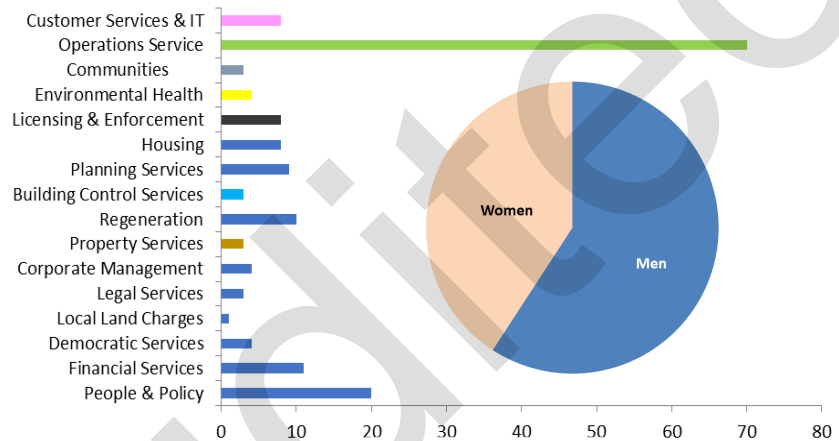
During 2023/24 we had 36 councillors in Rosendale serving 14 wards across the borough. At the end of 2023/24 the political balance was:

- 21 Labour
- 9 Conservative
- 2 Community First
- 2 Independent
- 1 Green
- 1 Vacancy

Our staff

During 2023/24 the Council employed 169 people across its services, 41% of whom provide front-line services within the Operations Team collecting refuse, maintaining our parks and cemeteries and keeping the roads around the borough clean. Of our 169 employees 59% are women and 43% are over 50.

Staff employed across services in 2023/24



The Senior Management Team during 2023/24



Rob Huntington
Chief Executive



Andrew Taylor
Head of
Operations



David Smurthwaite
Director of
Economic



Karen Spencer
Chief Finance
Officer



Clare Birtwistle
Head of Legal



Clare Law
Head of People &
Policy

Narrative Report

Our partners, community groups and the volunteers that we work with

CAPITA Capita provide our revenues, benefits and customer services.

Civic Pride groups support the borough by providing a gardening and litter clearance service, building upon the work done by the Council's workforce.



Calico Homes now manage the East Lancashire Empty Homes project.

Together Housing manage social housing across the borough



RTB Partnership Ltd is an equal partnership development vehicle set up in February 2013 to facilitate a number of development projects across the borough.



Rosendale Leisure Trust provides the sports facilities provision in the Borough.

The NHS and **East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group** are the health providers for Rossendale.

Main hospital services are provided by **East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust**. Some other facilities are run by the **Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust**.



East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

Lancashire Constabulary is the local police force.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue provide our fire service.

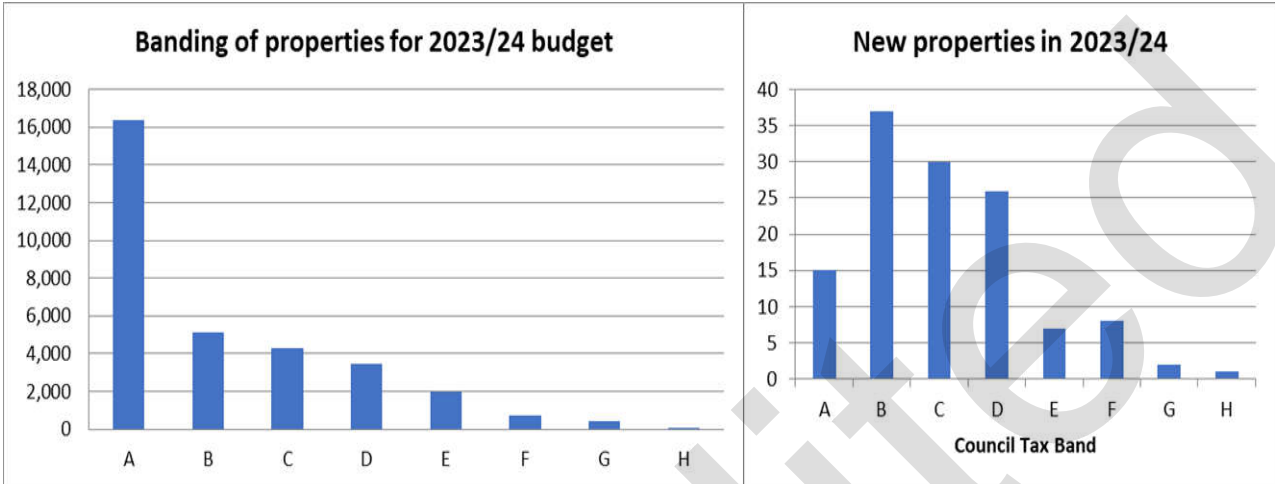
Lancashire County Council upper tier responsibilities



Narrative Report

Council Tax in Rosendale

Almost 51% of all the domestic properties in Rosendale fall into Band A, the lowest band for Council Tax purposes. Though the Band D is taken nationally as the average for the purposes of collecting Council Tax, only 10.6% of properties in Rosendale fall into this band. The total number of properties when the 2023/24 Council Tax was set was 32,418, up by 126 from 2022/23.



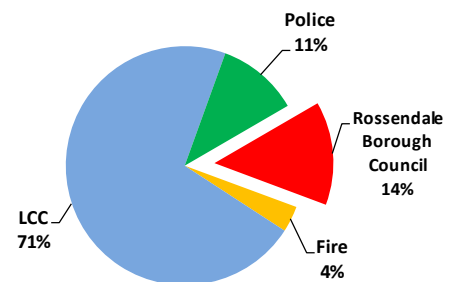
Rosendale Borough Council collects Council Tax on behalf of each of the major preceptors, Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and Lancashire Constabulary. In 2023/24, we also collected a precept for Whitworth Town Council from 3,665 properties.

In 2023/24 Rosendale Borough Council increased its element of the Council Tax by 2.99% which made the 2023/24 charge for a band D property £299.49. The Council retained £6.238m in Council Tax in 2023/24.

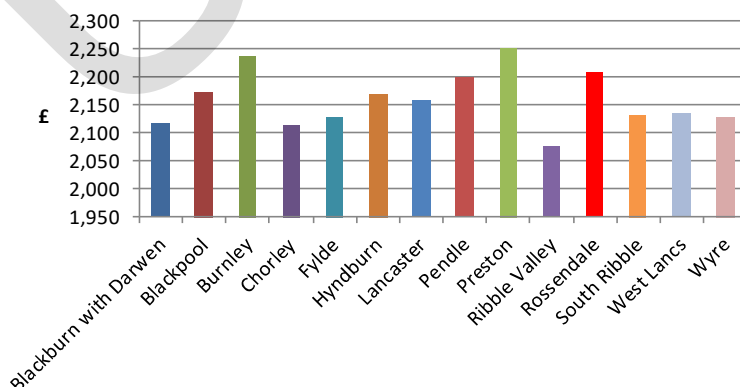
Precepting Body	% Increase	2022/23	2023/24	Increase £	% Share
		Band D £	Band D £		
Rosendale BC	2.99%	290.80	299.49	8.69	13.6%
Lancashire County Council *	1.99%	1,334.53	1,364.66	30.13	61.8%
LCC Adult Social Care *	2.00%	179.76	210.05	30.29	9.5%
Combined Fire Authority	6.47%	77.27	82.27	5.00	3.7%
Police & Crime Commissioner	6.34%	236.45	251.45	15.00	11.4%
Total (Excl' Whitworth)	4.21%	2,118.81	2,207.92	89.11	100.0%
Whitworth Parish Council	1.00%	26.87	27.14		
Total Whitworth Parish	4.17%	2,145.68	2,235.06		

* Percentage increase is based on the total combined tax level

Each £1 of Council Tax was split



Council Tax Band D across Lancashire



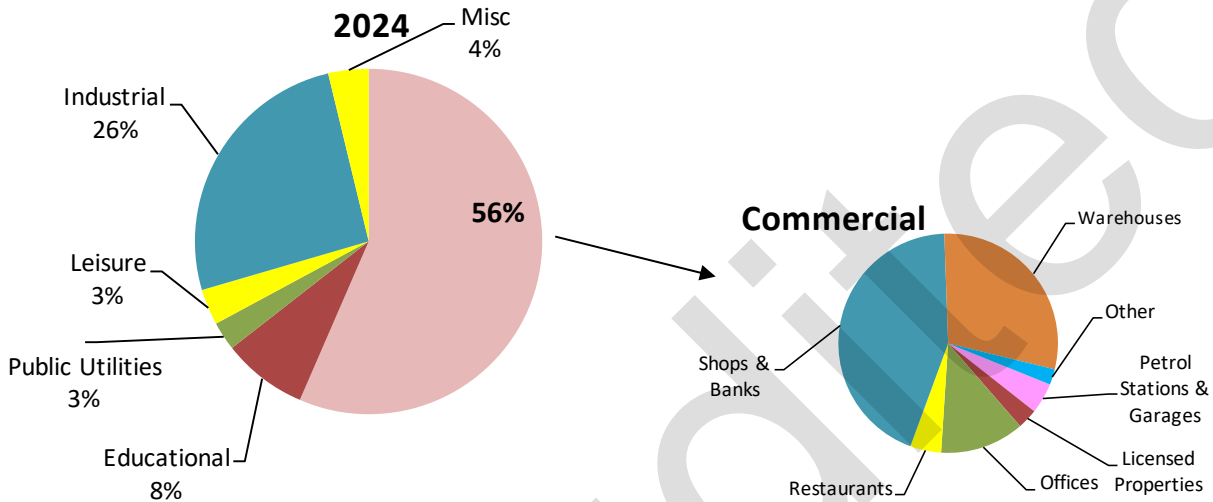
In comparison with our neighbouring authorities across Lancashire, Rosendale has the third highest total Band D charge.

Narrative Report

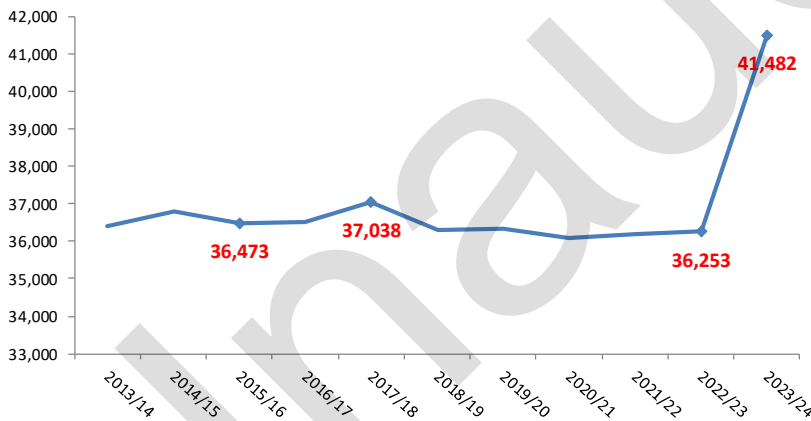
Business Rates in Rosendale

Business Rates are payable based upon a rateable value set by the national Valuation Office. The total rateable value of business premises in Rosendale at the 31st March 2024 was £41,482k, up from £36,253k in March 2023. This is mainly due to the National Business Rates Revaluation implemented in April 2023. Due to the cost of living crisis the Government has continued with the Retail, Hospitality & Leisure rate relief originally introduced to help businesses survive the pandemic. The Council has received s31 grants from Central Government to cover this loss of income. Full details can be found in the Collection Fund statements.

Rateable Values by Sector as at 31st March



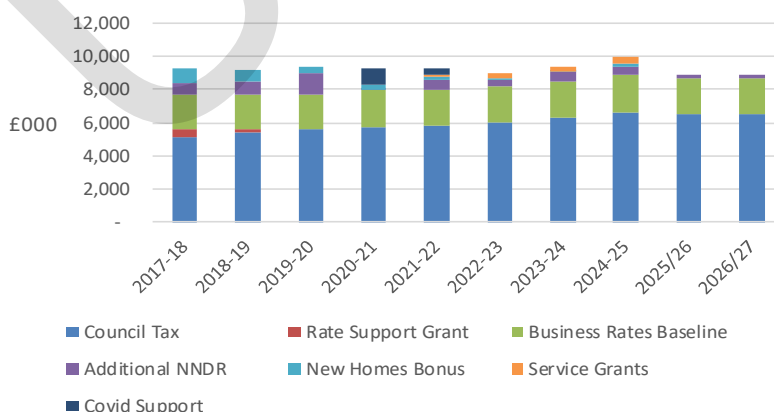
Rosendale Rateable Values in recent years



Rateable values underwent a national revaluation exercise in 2017 and again in 2023. As can be seen by the adjacent graph, the 2023 revaluation has had a significant impact on rateable values within the Borough, with Industrial and Commercial properties seeing the biggest increases.

Since 2010/11 the Council has seen significant reductions in core funding and an increasing reliance on Council Tax income to fund services. The sources of funding available for Council Services can be seen in the table opposite, along with future predictions over the Medium Term Financial Strategy. In 2020/21 and 2021/22 the Council received various Covid grants to support the Council's Covid related activities.

Funding Sources



Narrative Report

Revenue Outturn

At the time of setting the original budget in February 2023, the medium term financial strategy (MTFS) indicated a balanced budget of £10.256m for 2023/24. The Council reviews its MTFS at regular intervals, and in November 2023, reported to Council that the anticipated 2023/24 outturn was likely to be £10.308m. The Council finances its net budget through Council Tax, General Government Grants and Retained Business Rates income.

With the continued drop in external funding, local taxation has to contribute towards the MTFS challenge and in the 2023/24 budget, members again made the difficult decision to increase the Council Tax by the maximum allowed, 2.99%, resulting in estimated Council Tax income of £6,278k. The retained business rates baseline funding was £2,261k and the Council received £1k in New Homes Bonus. In addition the Council also received one off grants of:-

- Funding Guarantee of £290k.
- Services grant of £85k.
- Revenue Support grant of £85k - Rolled in Local Council Tax Support Admin and Family Annex Grants

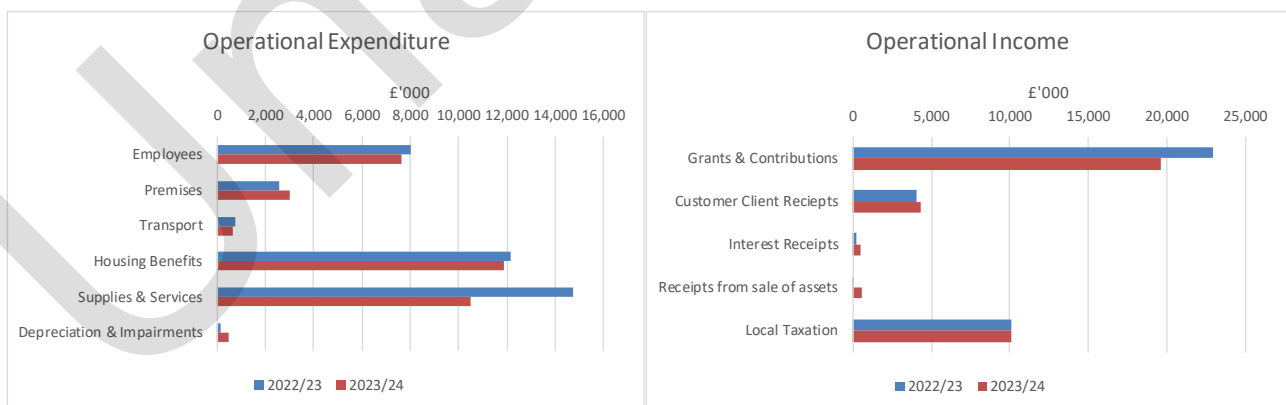
It was also anticipated that the Council would make a pooling gain/NNDR growth of £500k.

Members also approved the use of £756k from the Transitional Reserve to fund the estimated budget gap.

The Council manages and presents in-year financial information in the format of Directorate Budgets. The Directorate outturn position will be reported within the Outturn Report to Cabinet in July 2024. Full details of expenditure, income and budget variances are set out within the report which will be available on the Council's website.

The following table and charts show the General Fund figures before the technical accounting adjustments required by the Code in the CIES. These follow the operational basis shown in the financial monitoring reports presented to members at Cabinet meetings on a quarterly basis.

The graphs below show the year on year comparison between expenditure and income analysed by nature.



Narrative Report

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2023/24		Variance (adv)/ fav £000s
	Adjusted Budget £000s	Operational Out-turn £000s	
Communities Directorate			
Customer Services & E Government Operations	1,641	1,302	339
Parks & Cemeteries	2,163	2,240	(77)
Public Protection Unit	741	686	55
Environmental Health	184	176	8
Licensing & Enforcement	150	175	(25)
Communities Team	85	88	(3)
Economic Directorate			
Planning	131	115	16
Building Control	351	368	(17)
Regeneration	17	19	(2)
Property Services	181	115	66
Housing	545	756	(211)
Corporate Management			
Corporate Management	181	143	38
Legal Services	454	364	90
Local Land Charges	190	172	18
Democratic Services	(15)	10	(25)
Financial Services	618	547	71
People and Policy	767	803	(36)
Non-distributed Costs	730	703	27
Capital Financing & Interest	131	326	(195)
Leisure Services	742	143	599
Empty Homes	(31)	15	(46)
Empty Homes	300	95	205
Total cost of General Fund Services	10,256	9,361	895
Contrib to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(756)	1,206	(1,962)
Amount to be met from government grants & local tax payers	9,500	10,567	(1,067)
Precept on the Council Tax Collection Fund	6,278	6,278	-
National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)	2,261	3,330	(1,069)
Funding Guarantee	290	290	-
NNDR Pooling gain	500	498	2
Rate Support Grant	85	85	-
New Homes Bonus	1	1	-
Service Grants	85	85	-
Amounts received from government grants & local tax payers	9,500	10,567	(1,067)

This table compares the operational outturn against the budget. As can be seen the final outturn is £895k less than the budget. The main variances relate to increased interest gained on cash balances, due to interest rates throughout the year being significantly higher than when the budget was set in February 2023. With other areas of significance being Revenues & Benefits increased income and a £205k underspend on the Empty Homes revenue budget (the capital element of this project is also showing an underspend of c£295k). Offsetting the favourable variances are adverse variances against the property income budgets and pension costs.

The Council has also seen a significant gain in NNDR income.

The final result being that rather than relying on reserves to balance the budgeted funding gap of £756k, the Council has been able to replenish reserves by £1.206m.

Other financial factors

The Council continues to be the accountable body for the East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme, which has brought back into use almost 200 long-term empty domestic properties across East Lancashire, funded through a combination of Homes and Communities Grant, owner contributions, local housing associations and contributions from the other neighbouring local councils. The properties are managed by management agents with the majority of the properties being managed by Calico homes Ltd, under a self-financing contract. The scheme cost the Council £95k revenue and £204k capital in the 2023/24 financial year.

At the end of 2023/24 there are 27 properties remaining on the scheme. The scheme is due to end in December 2024. Where possible these properties will continue to be let for the remainder of their leases.

Narrative Report

Capital Strategy and the Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27

In February 2023 the Council set an affordable capital budget for 2023/24 of £5,963k including new projects of £1,899k, funded from £2,297k of grants, £3,466k of prudential borrowing, and £200k from capital receipts. The programme included £329k for new vehicles, £100k on maintaining the Council's operational assets and £1,000k on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for domestic properties across the borough.

This was added to capital slippage at the end of 2022/23 of £6,027k. Giving a revised opening capital programme of £11,990k.

Capital projects added during 2023/24 included £130k Weir Play area funded from a combination of internal borrowing and external funding, and £160k additional DFG's funded by external grant. The Hareholme viaduct project was also increased. This brought the final capital programme for 2023/24 to £12,782k.

More information on the capital costs and funding sources can be found in Note 18.

At the end of 2023/24 slippage of c£7,210k was considered for carrying forward into 2024/25 and reprofiling. The majority of this was disabled facility grants of £2,529k, £1,762k for Haslingden National Lottery Heritage Funded scheme, and £1,247 of Levelling Up funded capital projects.

The Collection Fund

Billing authorities in England, such as Rossendale, are required by statute to maintain a separate fund for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates). The key features relevant to accounting for council tax and business rates in the Core Financial Statements are:

- In its capacity as a billing authority the Council acts as agent; it collects and distributes council tax income on behalf of the major preceptors and itself; under the scheme of Business Rates Retention introduced from 2013/14, business rates are also collected on behalf of Central Government and the major preceptors;
- While the council tax and business rate income credited to the Collection Fund is the accrued income for the year, regulations determine when it should be released from the Collection Fund and transferred to the General Fund of the billing authority or paid out of the Collection Fund to major preceptors.

The council tax and business rate income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is the accrued income for the year. The difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the Collection Fund has been taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and is included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Since the collection of council tax and business rates income is in substance an agency arrangement, cash collected by the billing authority from council tax and business rates debtors belongs proportionately to the billing authority and the major preceptors. There is therefore a debtor/creditor position between the billing authority and each major preceptor which is recognised since the net cash paid to each major preceptor in the year will not be its share of the cash collected from taxpayers.

The surplus on the Collection Fund for Council tax as at 31st March 2024 was £162k and will be shared between the Council (billing authority), the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire

Narrative Report

Authority in following years. The actual rate of in year collection of Council Tax for 2023/24 was 95.75% (95.95% for 2022/23).

At the 2023/24 year end the collection fund position for NNDR was a deficit of £196k which will be carried forward and recovered in subsequent years' budgets. Rossendale Borough Council's share of this is £123k with the balance due to the Government and major preceptors. The actual in year collection rates for business rates for 2023/24 was 98.60% (98.85% for 2022/23)

This Council signed up to the Lancashire Business Rates Pool which came into effect on the 1st April 2016. In a Business Rate Pool, tariffs, top-ups, levies and safety nets can be combined. This can result in a significantly lower levy rate or even a zero levy rate meaning that more or all of the business rate growth can be retained within the pool area instead of being payable to the Government

In 2023/24 the council was a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool on a 50% business rates retention basis and this has continued in to 2024/25. In 2023/24 the Council made a pooling gain of £498k.

Further details in relation to the Collection Fund can be found in the Supplementary Statements.

Treasury Management

Treasury Management is conducted in-house with advice provided by an external organisation, Link Asset Services. Investment performance has struggled to meet the budget target as interest rates on the Council's bank accounts continued to be below bank base rates in previous years. Interest rates however increased during the year and by the end of the year the council was earning over 5% on balances, this was higher than the 3.35% earned in 2022/23. During 2023/24 the level of balances held averaged £12.2m, but the interest rate increases meant that the £525k interest income earned exceeded budget.

Treasury management during the year was conducted within the borrowing limits and investment criteria approved in the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices approved at Full Council in February 2023.

The Council is able to borrow money from PWLB (an agency of HM Treasury), banks and building societies, or from other public bodies. The Council's borrowing need as at 31 March 2024 was met by a combination of long term actual debt of £3.574m and internal cash balances. The use of internal cash balances in lieu of borrowing has continued to be the most cost effective means of funding capital expenditure. These amounts are analysed in the notes to the Balance Sheet. The interest payable in relation to the Council's borrowing totalled £119k in 2023/24. As the value of useable reserves drops over the life of the Council's MTFs, greater consideration will need to be made of the need for additional PWLB borrowing to fund future capital investments.

The **Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)**, a key Prudential Indicator, determines the amount that the Council needs to borrow for a capital purpose and is the total of the Council's capital assets less all of the Council's capital reserves. The CFR for the year ending 31 March 2024 was £18.2m.

The **Authorised Limit for External Debt** is a key Prudential Indicator that controls the overall level of borrowing and is a statutory limit set by the Council that must not be breached. The Council's Authorised Limit for external debt for 2023/24 was £22.5m. The Council's actual total long term debt of £3.574m is well below the Authorised Limit.

Pensions Fund Liabilities

Rosendale BC participates, as an employing authority, in the Lancashire County Pension Fund administered by Lancashire County Council. The scheme is a defined benefit scheme i.e. retirement

Narrative Report

benefits are determined independent of the scheme investments. A pensions reserve and pensions liability are incorporated within the Council's accounts reflecting the amount by which the Rossendale element of the Lancashire Fund is underfunded/overfunded compared with the assessed payment liability to pensioners.

There are also entries in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement to show the pensions benefits earned in the year. All of these pensions costs entries do not however affect the amount calculated as being due from taxpayers through Council Tax.

The latest triennial valuation was carried out as at 31/03/22 (to take effect 01/04/23) resulting in the overall pensions deficit changing to a surplus. The overall uncapped pensions surplus of the Council as at 31 March 2024 was £15.3m (£11.0m surplus as at 31 March 2023). More information on the assumptions used by the actuaries can be found at Note 32.

Principal Risk & Uncertainties

The Council has a risk management strategy in place to identify and evaluate risks. All risks are identified, potential impacts are highlighted and controls and mitigations are set in place. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) identified a number of key corporate risks which the Council monitors and reports to Cabinet Members and Audit & Accounts Committee during the year, a selection of the risks have been highlighted below:

Corporate Risks
Sustainability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy
Major disaster affecting the delivery of Council services
Incident resulting in death or serious injury or HSE investigation
Sustainable Workforce
Insufficient data and cyber security
Non-Delivery of Corporate Programmes
Financial sustainability of the Council owned leisure assets

Key Future Financial Risks – Along with the corporate risk there are a number of key financial risks identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy which potentially could have a significant impact on the financial forecast, these are:

Key Financial Risks
Impact on the economy – Cost of living crisis – Inflation and high interest rates
Resources – Inc future Government funding, any change to the Business Rate retention scheme and level of reserves
Bridging the funding gap
Council Tax – Housing Levels not in line with forecast projections
Pay inflation
The Empty Homes Scheme
Rosendale Leisure Trust
Increase in demand for Temporary Accommodation
The major regeneration schemes bring a high level of financial risk

Narrative Report

The Economic Climate and Financial Outlook for the Future

The latest MTFs reported to Budget Council in February 2024 sets out the Council's spending plans and available capital and revenue resources for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28. The MTFs set out the funds required to deliver the Council's essential services and the objectives in our priority areas. It also highlighted the key areas/issues facing the Council in the current year and future years. For 2024/25 onwards a major concern is the ongoing cost of living crisis and future levels of Government funding.

The Government has further delayed the implementation of the outcome of the Fair Funding Review and the Business Rate reforms. Until this announcement is made and the local government finance settlement figures are published we have no indication of the level of funding the Council will receive from 2024/25 onwards.

In light of the current risks and uncertainties the Council will aim to continue to maintain a healthy and robust level of reserves. The Council's strategic budget plan has been to use reserves to fund the gap between income and expenditure over the life of the forecast, whilst looking to identify savings and income generating opportunities. The aim is for the Council to bridge the gap, i.e. the shortfall between how much the Council spends and how much the Council receives in funding and build up reserves to ensure, long term financial sustainability for the Council.



Narrative Report

Explanation of the Statement of Accounts

The Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 has been prepared and published in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2023/24 (the Code), issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2023/24 (SeRCOP).

The layout and purpose of each statement is as follows:-

Introductory Statements

- Narrative Report - provides information about Rosendale, including key issues affecting the Council and its accounts. It also provides a summary of the financial position as at 31 March 2024. It should be fair, balanced and understandable for the users of the financial statements, containing a commentary on the major influences affecting the authority's income and expenditure and cash flow, as well as information on the financial needs and resources of the authority.
- Annual Governance Statement – explains the way the Council ensures responsible stewardship of its assets.
- Statement of Responsibilities - explains the responsibilities of the Council and its Chief Financial Officer in relation to the Council's financial affairs and the Statement of Accounts.

Core Statements

- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) - a summary of the resources generated and consumed by the authority in the year in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Cost of Services section is now presented in the same format as the authority's operational reports. Note 1 presents a reconciliation between the General Fund Summary in the Narrative Report and the CIES figures produced here under statutory accounting practices.
- Movement in Reserves Statement – this statement shows the movement in year on the reserves held by the Council, analysed into 'useable reserves' (ie those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. It reverses the statutory accounting adjustments in the CIES to get back to the General Fund Balance Sheet Reserve.
- Balance Sheet - this shows the value of the assets and liabilities. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the value of reserves held, split between Useable and Unusable reserves.
- Cash Flow Statement - summarises changes in cash and cash equivalents during the year, and how the Council generates and uses cash through operating, investing and financing activities.

Notes to the core financial statements

All the notes to the core statements above are now collected in one place. Notes on the policies used in the preparation of the figures in these accounts, including judgements and assumptions, have been moved to the end of the notes area.

Other Statements

- The Collection Fund – this agency statement reflects the Council's statutory obligation to maintain a separate Collection Fund for its transactions as a billing authority in relation to council tax and non-domestic rates.

Glossary - an explanation of some of the key technical terms used in these accounts.

Annual Governance Statement

Annual Governance Statement: Year Ended 31st March 2024

1) Scope of responsibility

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council has put in place arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

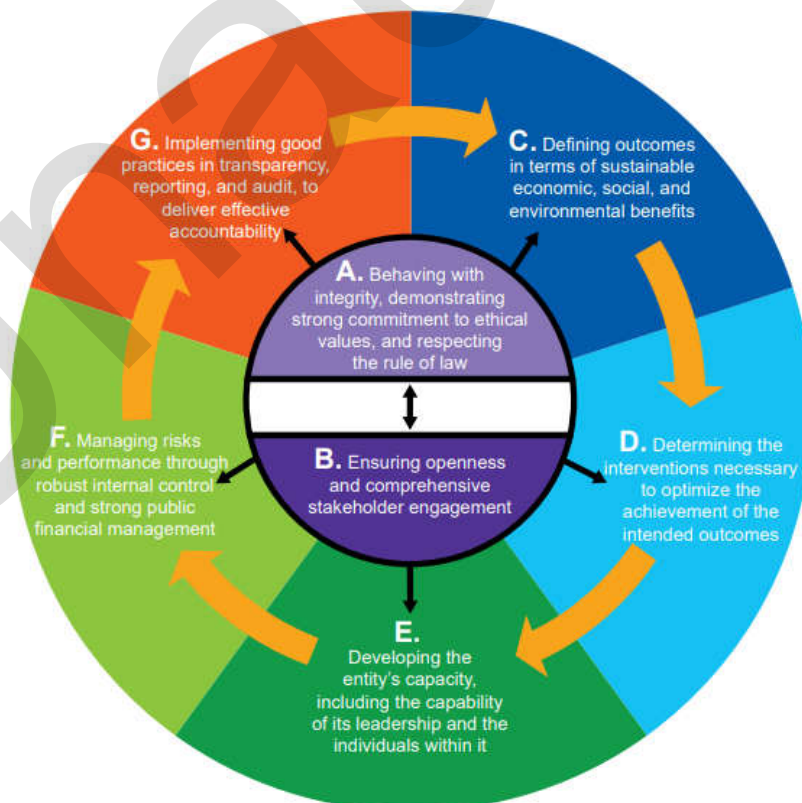
This Annual Governance Statement provides an overview of the Council's key governance systems and explains how they are tested and the assurance that can be relied upon to show that those systems are working effectively. The statement comprises an overview of the key elements of its governance framework and what evidence has been received in order to determine the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements. In addition the statement contains an update on areas for improvement which were identified last year together with proposed areas for improvement for the coming year.

What is Corporate Governance?

Corporate governance refers to the processes by which organisations are directed, controlled, led and held to account.

Rosendale Borough Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. This statement explains how Rosendale Borough Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulation 6(1), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

CIPFA's framework for Good Governance in the Public Sector defines the principles against which the Annual Governance Statement reports:



Annual Governance Statement

2) The purpose of the governance framework

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

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

The governance framework has been in place at Rosendale Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

3) The Governance Framework

Key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the authority's governance include arrangements for:

Principle A: *Behave with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law*

The Council has a formal Constitution which is reviewed annually, amended as required and made publicly available on our website at www.Rosendale.gov.uk. The Constitution sets out how we operate, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for us to choose.

The Constitution includes the following documents which provide guidance for officers and Councillors on the standards of behaviour expected to ensure integrity:

- Code of Conduct for Members (Councillors)
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Roles & Functions of all Councillors

The Council's Monitoring Officer maintains the Codes of Conduct up to date and investigates any suspected breaches. Alleged breaches of the Members Code of Conduct are conducted in accordance with an agreed protocol. Councillors sign a formal declaration agreeing to abide by the Code of Conduct. For staff, the Employee Handbook sets out the requirements and standards expected and this forms part of the staff induction process.

The Council also has established a set of core values which are intended to underpin all that we do. These are published as part of our Corporate Plan and include the following ethical values:-

- Pride - We take pride in the way we help our residents and are proud to work for the council
- Passion - We are ambitious for Rosendale, enthusiastic and want to improve resident's lives
- People - We work together, treat everyone with respect and take ownership of problems

Underpinning everything we do is our commitment to equality, diversity, transparency, inclusion, sustainability and value for money.

Annual Governance Statement

Staff and Councillors are made aware of other policies relevant to this principle of the framework including the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Bribery and Whistleblowing Policies. These arrangements are reviewed and reported on via the Council's Audit and Accounts Committee, being the Committee charged with oversight of the governance arrangements at the Council. At the heart of these policies is the requirement for all relevant parties to act with integrity.

The Council has operated a Standards regime consistent with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 during the year. During 2023/24 there has been no requirement to convene the Standards Board.

All Councillors have to register and declare certain pecuniary interests such as employment, land holdings and contracts with the Council. The register of interests is available on our website at www.rossendale.gov.uk. Councillors must declare such interests at meetings which they attend. There are also procedures laid down for staff and Councillors relating to the receipt of gifts and hospitality.

All Council decisions have to consider legal implications. These are set out in reports to Councillors which are published on the Council's website. The Council's Constitution sets out the responsibility for decision-making. Certain decisions are reserved to full Council with others delegated to the Cabinet or other Committees each acting in accordance with parameters set out in the Constitution.

A number of areas are delegated to officers for the purposes of decision-making; however, limits on the exercise of delegation are laid down in an approved Scheme of Delegation to Officers within the Constitution. The Council's legal team will advise on the legal implications of proposed decisions and where necessary will engage external legal advisors. The Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer have specific responsibility for ensuring legality, for investigating any suspected instances of failure to comply with legal requirements, and for reporting any such instances to Councillors.

Principle B: *Ensure openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement*

Our Corporate Plan identifies and reiterates our commitment to working with partners, volunteers, and our residents. Performance management against key actions, performance measures and risks represent an essential part of our assurance and accountability process to our residents and our partners.

All decisions of the Council are made in accordance with principles laid down in the Constitution and include the following:-

- a presumption in favour of openness
- explanation of the options considered and the reasons for decisions.

All meetings of the Council, Cabinet and other Committees are open to the public.

Agenda papers and reports together with the Minutes of all meetings are publicly available on the Council's website unless they are exempt from publication.

The Council's guidance on, the role of a Councillor, contains the following which reinforces the importance of openness requiring Councillors to:

- Contribute to the governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision making

The Code of Conduct for Councillors also outlines the following requirements:-

Councillors must:

- Impartially exercise their responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest

Annual Governance Statement

- exercise reasonable care and diligence
- ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with the Councils requirements and in the public interest.

The Council undertakes consultation on specific topics. The Council also makes use of social media via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

The Council is committed to publishing information freely and to develop further our culture of openness and transparency and publishes information in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code. The Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme provides a general guide for the public in terms of what information should routinely be available to them by either accessing our website or upon request.

Partnership working is important and the Council has in place a wide range of arrangements ranging from small scale local groups (e.g. Civic Pride groups) to larger and more formal partnerships (e.g. public/private partnership with Rosendale Leisure Trust and Capita).

Principles C & D – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable benefits (economic, social and environmental) and determining the interventions necessary to achieve them.

The Council's strategic vision for the Borough is set out in our Corporate Plan. Our vision is *To have a thriving economy, built around our changing town centres, creating a quality environment for all and improving the life chances of all those living and working in our borough*. We aim to achieve this by working on our four priority areas:

- Thriving Local Economy
- High Quality Environment
- Healthy and Proud Communities
- Effective and Efficient Council

Underpinning our Corporate Plan are robust business plans for each of our service areas. These detail how we will deliver the strategy, our vision and priorities. They also detail how we will continue to deliver services to our residents and meet our financial challenges.

In December 2021 the Council adopted its Local Plan, this was a major milestone in setting out the spatial policy for the Borough. By adopting the Local Plan the Council is able to bring forward its strategic aims, ensure it has greater control over the development that takes place in the Borough and that it is accompanied by appropriate infrastructure improvements as well as other local facilities and is of a design suitable for Rosendale. It will also assist in addressing the Council's climate change priorities as well as meeting the needs of the Borough's residents. Linked to this the Council has gone on to develop and publish a series of development management policies against which to measure planning applications.

Service areas are required to set, monitor and manage agreed targets for performance. Performance against and achievement of expected outcomes is monitored regularly via the Council's corporate performance management system and reported quarterly to Councillors and the Management Team. Where expected performance is not being achieved intervention measures are considered and implemented where appropriate.

In relation to the buying of goods and services, staff must comply with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. These set out relevant considerations when reaching decisions on award of contracts and include relevant environmental and sustainability aspects including the achievement of 'social value' in addition to cost.

Decisions on the overall level of resources allocated are taken by the Council following recommendations from the Cabinet. Resources and spending plans are critically reviewed to optimise their use and level of fit with the Council's objectives. Financial planning arrangements are

Annual Governance Statement

well established and underpinned by a four year forward projection as part of the Council's medium term financial planning arrangements. This includes both capital and revenue budgets.

Principle E - Develop the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

At the heart of this principle is the Council's commitment to *'Have a skilled and happy workforce, where we are able to retain and attract good staff'*. The aim is to ensure that, as an organisation, we are suitably placed to deliver the priorities identified for Rossendale and its residents. To do this we will employ the right people with the right skills in the right job. We will maintain robust financial processes, standards and systems optimising the technology and resources we have available to us, making us more efficient and effective in our service delivery and becoming digital by default.

In recent years the Council has invested in training programmes to enhance organisational development, develop leadership skills and promote a coaching culture with staff at all levels encouraged to be innovative and challenge the normal way of doing things. All staff take part in annual personal development reviews which include consideration of their individual training and development needs. A range of training methods and resources are applied and feedback is actively encouraged to assess the benefit of investment in training. The Council has developed a Training and Development plan, organisational development strategy and a wellbeing strategy. Training is available for Councillors including induction and topic specific matters in addition to what is available from organisations such as the Local Government Association.

Capacity is enhanced via a range of partnerships and collaborative arrangements, as well as our commissioning and procurement processes through which the Council operates a mixed economy approach to delivering services in the most effective and efficient way. Service delivery models include, in-house, external outsourced (CAPITA Revenues & Benefits Partnership), transfers to external partners (Rossendale Leisure Trust). On a regional and sub-regional basis the Council works closely with the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and Pennine Lancashire bodies notably in areas such as economic development, regeneration and skills/training. It also works closely with local colleges on training provision.

Leadership roles are well defined at the Council for staff and Councillors, distinguishing for example the role of Council Leader and the officer being the Head of Paid Service (i.e. the Chief Executive). A protocol is included in the Council's Constitution which reflects the principles underlying the respective Codes of Conduct which apply to Members and Employees. The shared object of these codes is to enhance and maintain the integrity of local government and therefore, demands high standards of personal conduct.

The Council is committed to a culture of continuous improvement and has a focus on service delivery and effective performance management. Peer learning is encouraged and in November 2021 the Council undertook a Peer Challenge review led by the Local Government Association to provide an assessment and feedback on,

- Corporate and placed-based prioritisation
- Climate Change
- Governance/Commercialisation.

The Organisational Development Strategy acknowledges the essential role staff play in the Council's ability to deliver effective services; thus wanting to ensure that every employee fulfils their potential and takes advantage of the development opportunities available to them.

Sustaining organisational resilience is increasingly challenging at a time when headcount is reducing in response to ongoing resource constraints. Set against this, the importance of supporting staff health and well-being is acknowledged and a suite of policies and procedures are in place to help staff maintain their own physical and mental well-being. Examples include the family friendly policy and the operation of flexible working for most staff. In addition the Council has

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invested in an Employee Assistance Programme to provide staff with access to a variety of support and guidance to aid their wellbeing.

Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

The maintenance of systems and processes to identify and manage the key strategic and operational risks is integral to the achievement of the Council's objectives. The Council's **risk management framework** continues to evolve and presently includes the following arrangements:-

- Risk Management Strategy
- arrangements for the Strategic Risk Register comprising corporate risks assigned to designated officers, with appropriate counter-measures and an action plan established for each key risk
- Frequent review of risks in-year with reports to the Council's Management Team, Cabinet and the Audit and Accounts Committee
- the use by Internal Audit of a risk based approach in the preparation and delivery of the internal audit plan
- the requirement for Officers of the Council to consider risk management issues when submitting reports to Committee for consideration by Councillors
- a suite of policies and procedures in relation to Whistleblowing, Anti-Fraud and Corruption, and Anti-Money Laundering
- a suite of Business Continuity Plans are in place, i.e. Rossendale Emergency Plan, Service Area Business Plans and a Business Recovery Plan for critical services
- Councillors and officers have previously been trained in risk management and the Leader of the Council is briefed on the strategic risks faced by the Council. Managers have the responsibility for the effective control of risk, and all service plans have a section on risk management.
- Corporate Governance including risk management, incorporating the key strategic risks for the Council, are the subject of quarterly reports to Cabinet and the Audit and Accounts Committee.
- The Corporate Management Team review the Corporate Risk Register to ensure that risks are being actively monitored and managed and risk scores are included for all identified strategic risks as a means of providing much greater focus on those areas where risk management can be effective. Details of changes are reported to the Audit and Accounts Committee.
- The Chief Executive, as the Council's Head of Paid Service, is responsible for the corporate management of the Council, taking an active role in the corporate governance arrangements, including the organisation of the Council's staff and ensuring that appropriate internal control mechanisms are in place to achieve the Council's objectives in the most economical, efficient and effective way.
- The Head of Legal is appointed the Council's Monitoring Officer. The appointment of a Monitoring Officer is required in accordance with Section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It is the function of the Monitoring Officer to report to Members upon any contravention of any enactment or rule of law or any maladministration by the Authority. The Monitoring Officer also has responsibilities under the Council's Ethical Framework relating to the Members' Code of Conduct and the Standards Regime.
- The Chief Financial Officer is designated as the officer with statutory responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- The three statutory officers referred to above have unfettered access to information and to Councillors on the Council so that they can discharge their responsibilities effectively. The functions of these Officers and their roles are clearly set out in the Council's Constitution. In

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particular, the role of the Chief Financial Officer at the Council accords with the principles set out in CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government.

An established **financial management framework** comprising the following:-

- Financial and Contract Procedure Rules as part of the Constitution
- Medium term financial planning using a four-year cycle, updated annually, to align resources to corporate priorities
- Service and financial planning integrated within the corporate performance management cycle
- Annual budget process involving scrutiny, challenge and consultation
- Annual review of the adequacy of the level of financial reserves
- Regular monitoring by management of revenue and capital budgets with reports to Management Team and Cabinet
- Annual reports to Councillors on both the final revenue and capital out-turns compared to the approved budget
- Continuous challenge of the scope for securing efficiencies and service improvements
- Production of an annual Statement of Accounts compliant with the requirements of local authority accounting practice
- Compliance with the requirements established by CIPFA, the public sector accountancy body
- A regular review of the Council's Financial Management arrangements.

A **performance management framework** provides an explicit link between the corporate priorities and personal objectives of staff and their training and development needs. Performance is reported to Councillors and the Management Team on a systematic basis with areas of poor performance investigated proactively. Key features of the Performance Management Framework include:-

- An annual review of the Corporate Plan to ensure that priorities are reviewed, remain relevant and reflect the aims of the Council
- Service Plans produced with explicit goals and associated performance targets in order to ensure that achievement of performance is measurable
- The Council's staff appraisal system – Annual Personal Development Reviews link personal objectives directly to Service Plans
- Regular reports on the performance of key indicators which are presented to Councillors and Officers

Significant projects are controlled by project management techniques and overseen by a Programme Board. The Board meets quarterly and receives updates on project performance and delivery.

An **Information Governance Framework** which sets out the way we handle and process information, in particular, the personal and sensitive data relating to residents, suppliers and employees. Key features of the information governance framework include:-

- A suite of policies and procedures on the Council's Information Security which are available on the Intranet for all staff to review
- Arrangements for document management and retention
- A Data Protection Policy and Procedure with nominated staff responsible for providing advice and guidance on Data Protection matters
- Compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code and provision of Open Data on Council website
- A system for dealing with requests for information submitted to the Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (including a regular review of the Council's Publication Scheme)
- Regular reviews of the Council's Information Governance and Security arrangements by Internal Audit and external assessors.

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The Internal Audit function operates in accordance with the statements, standards and guidelines published by the Auditing Practices Board, CIPFA (particularly the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards) and the Institute of Internal Auditors. The Internal Audit function examines and evaluates the adequacy of the Council's system of internal control.

The Council has partnered with Lancashire County Council (LCC) for the delivery of the Internal Audit function. LCC provide an independent and objective appraisal function for reviewing the system of internal control. This is in compliance with Regulation 5 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 that specifically requires a local authority to undertake an adequate and effective system of internal audit. This work is delivered by way of a Strategic Audit Plan developed using a risk-based approach. The Internal Audit plan is agreed and monitored by the Audit and Accounts Committee. The Audit Manager is required to give an opinion on the adequacy of the Council's system of internal control each year and report to the Audit and Accounts Committee. This Committee can make recommendations or highlight any matters requiring attention to the Cabinet and Council.

Lastly, each member of Management Team is required to sign an Assurance Statement in relation to a range of key controls operating in their area of work. This specifically seeks assurance from Senior Managers that, other than those identified during the course of their normal work or by Internal Audit, they are not aware of any weaknesses in the Council's systems of internal control.

Principle G - Implement good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

Reports to meetings of Council, Cabinet and other committees are publicly available on our website with the Minutes also published showing what decisions have been taken and the reason(s) why. Other forms of public accountability reporting include the annual Statement of Accounts, the Council's Annual Report and in year financial and performance monitoring reports. Reports from external audit are also published online including their annual report setting out the findings resulting from their audit of the accounts.

The Council reports performance against targets and financial targets on a regular basis. The Internal Audit service complies with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and has direct access to Councillors and all staff in order to discharge its responsibilities.

The Council publishes information in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code. The Council's website includes a section on Access to Information, which is about being transparent, sharing our information with the wider community, and giving them the opportunity to use that data to build useful applications.

The Council welcomes peer challenge reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and will act on any recommendations arising as appropriate.

4) How the Council Gains Assurance/Review of Effectiveness

The Council has a responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its Governance Framework including the system of internal control. This review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Council's Management Team who have a responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Audit Manager's Annual Report on Internal Audit also reports from the external auditor and any other review agencies and inspectorates.

The purpose of a review is to identify and evaluate the key controls in place to manage principal risks. It also requires an evaluation of the assurances received, identifies gaps in controls and assurances and should result in an action plan to address significant internal control issues.

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During 2023/24 work undertaken to maintain and review the effectiveness of the Council's Governance Framework included the following:-

- The Council's Monitoring Officer and the Council in general oversee the operation of the Constitution to ensure its aims and principles are given full effect. The Constitution was most recently reviewed by full Council in November 2023.
- The Council's decision making arrangements operated according to the Constitution, either through the Council, Committees or the Scheme of Delegation. Decisions arising from these arrangements have been published on the Council's website as required. Where decisions were taken under the Exercise of Urgent Business Protocol these were documented as appropriate.
- The arrangements for scrutiny operate via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required, allowing for the review of key policy areas and providing opportunities for public involvement in specific matters of business. This committee receives reports from the Task & Finish group. During 2023/24 the committee didn't receive any reports from the Task & Finish group.
- Further scrutiny of Cabinet decisions is also provided by the Council's Call-In procedures. However where possible Overview and Scrutiny Committee are given the opportunity to input into policies and procedures prior to presentation to Cabinet.
- The Council has operated a Standards regime consistent with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 during the year.
- The Audit and Accounts Committee met throughout the year and received various reports on the progress by External and Internal Audit against their respective work plans. The Internal Audit annual report will be presented to the Committee in July 2024, it is currently anticipated that the Council will receive **Moderate** Assurance overall on the adequacy of design and effectiveness in the operation of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control. The equivalent report was submitted to the Accounts and Audit Committee in July 2023, which received **Moderate** Assurance.
- There have been no formal reports during the year from either the Council's Monitoring Officer or Section 151 Officer on matters of legality or financial related concerns. There were also no objections from local electors in respect of the financial statements and supporting information for the previous financial year.

5) Dealing with Last Year's Key Improvement Areas

Last year's Annual Governance Statement highlighted the following areas for improvement. The narrative below sets out the action has been taken to address these issues in the current year:

Area of Concern	Progress Update
<p>Financial Resilience - there are significant financial challenges facing the Council in 2023/24, with very little financial flexibility. Additional potential budget options were presented to full Council in June 2023, however beyond that there is little scope for achieving additional in-year savings.</p> <p>Monitoring of the 2023/24 budget will be undertaken and reported to CMT on a regular basis to determine the corrective</p>	<p>The progress of the savings plan is tightly monitored as part of the Council's embedded financial monitoring process and reported to Cabinet quarterly.</p> <p>Throughout 2023/24 Officers worked with Cabinet to develop further efficiency savings and income growth options to include within the 2024/25 MTFS update, this is an ongoing process and further work is being undertaken to flesh out some of the proposals.</p>

Annual Governance Statement

<p>action required to balance the budget and protect the level of general reserves.</p>	<p>Due to the single year financial settlement, uncertainty remains regarding the forward estimates of core Government funding within the MTFs, beyond 2024/25. In addition further savings/income growth will be required in future years in order to address the funding gap and achieve a balanced budget.</p> <p>The Empty Homes Scheme which has added to the financial pressures the Council is facing is due to come to an end in 2024/25.</p>
<p>Procurement Compliance – review of the procurement support required will be completed by summer and the revised Contract Procedure Rules will be adopted, this will be followed by procurement training for officers.</p>	<p>A review was undertaken and the Council have engaged with In-tend Ltd to provide procurement support.</p> <p>The revised Contract Procedure Rules were adopted in November 2023. Staff training is due to be carried out during 2024/25.</p>
<p>Statement of Accounts Publication - due to staff turnover there have been delays in producing the annual statement of accounts. A plan is in place to ensure publication of all outstanding draft accounts by the end of September 2023.</p>	<p>The outstanding draft Statement of Accounts were published by the end of January 2024.</p> <p>The finance team are working towards publishing the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts by 31st May, the statutory deadline.</p>
<p>Accounts Audit - the Council has a significant backlog of unaudited accounts. The Council will work with Mazars to agree a plan to bring the audits up to date.</p>	<p>The backlog of unaudited accounts is a national issue and the Government have consulted on a backstop solution which will mean all accounts prior to 2023/24 will need to have been audited by the end of September 2024. We are awaiting the detail and will work with the External Auditors to ensure the Council can comply with this directive.</p>
<p>Performance Management including Programme Board will be refreshed – there will be more focus on performance management rather than just performance reporting, to ensure that appropriate action is taken within year to address underperformance.</p>	<p>During 2023/24 the performance management reporting process has been redesigned to be more streamlined and more focused on performance management.</p>
<p>Risk Management – the strategy and the Corporate Risks will be reviewed, with a cross party working group to be set up</p>	<p>The Corporate risks are reviewed and updated quarterly. The revised Risk Management Strategy is currently being</p>

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including members of the Audit & Accounts Committee and senior officers.	drafted, this will then be reviewed by an Audit & Accounts working group during 2024/25
Policy Framework refresh – ensure all policies are reviewed and updated where necessary.	The policy framework has been updated and the policies that require refreshing have been identified. The policies will be refreshed during 2024/25

6) Key Areas for Further Improvement

Building on the improvements in 2023/24 the Council has reviewed the governance arrangements and identified the following areas where it wishes to see improvements in 2024/25:

- Financial Resilience – the Council continues to face significant financial challenges. The February 2024 MTFS included a significant savings requirement in future years, to ensure the minimum level of reserves is maintained. These savings will need to be firmed up during 2024/25.
Monitoring of the 2024/25 budget will be undertaken and reported to CMT on a regular basis to determine the corrective action required to balance the budget and protect the level of general reserves.
- Procurement Compliance – Procurement training needs to be rolled out to relevant staff during 2024/25
- Accounts Audit – once the result of the Backstop Consultation is announced, the Council will work with Mazars to agree the back log of audits are concluded by the statutory backstop date.
- Risk Management – the strategy needs to be reviewed and once adopted staff training will be undertaken.
- Policy refresh – ensure all policies are reviewed and updated where necessary.
- Review the relationship with Rosendale Leisure Trust and ensure there is a comprehensive signed agreement in place to formally document the working relationship.
- Ensure processes are in place for the preparation and review of all monthly reconciliations

7) Conclusion

Some of the governance improvements proposed for 2023/24 were delayed as a result of staff turnover, however a number of these are set to be fully implemented and reported to Members imminently. Details of progress are reported above.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for 2024/25 improvements identified and will monitor their progress, implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:

On behalf of Rosendale Borough Council

Alyson Barnes

Leader of Council

Rob Huntington

Chief Executive

Statement of Responsibilities

The following responsibilities are placed upon the authority and the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the Council's financial affairs.

The Authority's 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 Head of Finance.
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Chief Finance Officer's Responsibilities

As Chief Finance Officer, I am responsible for the preparation of the authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with the proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC 2023/24 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain (referred to as "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 Code;
- kept proper accounting records which were up-to-date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certificate of Chief Finance Officer

I certify that this Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Rosendale Borough Council at 31st March 2024, and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2024, including any known post balance sheet events as at 5th June 2024.

Karen Spencer

Signed : **Karen Spencer**
Chief Finance Officer

Dated 5th June 2024

Approval of Accounts

These unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 were submitted for public inspection and external audit on the 5th June 2024.

Signed : **Councillor N Harris**
Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee

Dated _____ 2024

Core Financial Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) shows the cost of providing services in the year in accordance International Financial Reporting Standards, rather than the amount to be funded from Council Tax and other Government grants. The amount funded from Council Tax and Government grants differ from this by a series of adjustments made in accordance with regulations, these adjustments are reversed in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	2022/23			2023/24			Note
	Gross Expend £000s	Income £000s	Net Expend £000s	Gross Expend £000s	Income £000s	Net Expend £000s	
Communities Directorate	25,094	(19,509)	5,585	21,054	(14,918)	6,136	
Economic Development Directorate	9,055	(5,092)	3,963	8,720	(5,849)	2,871	
Corporate Management	3,591	(147)	3,444	2,716	(277)	2,439	
Cost of Services	37,740	(24,748)	12,992	32,490	(21,044)	11,446	
Other Operating Expenditure							
Whitworth Town Council Precept			58			60	
(Gain)/Loss on disposal of fixed assets			(54)			(203)	
Other Income			(453)			(1,446)	
Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure			445			(630)	3
Taxation and Non-Specific Grants			(10,583)			(10,878)	4
(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services			2,405			(1,651)	
(Surplus)/deficit on revaluation of non-current assets			(329)			1,125	
Remeasurement of the net defined pension liability			(22,794)			1,220	32f
Other Comprehensive (Income)/Expenditure			(23,123)			2,345	
Total Comprehensive (Income)/Expenditure			(20,718)			694	

Core Financial Statements

Movement in Reserves Statement

This Statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (ie those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves.

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows how the movements in year of the Council's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to Council Tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance in the year following those adjustments.

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT	General Fund Balance	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Total Useable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 31 March 2022	1,000	9,566	2,451	2,222	15,239	5,143	20,382
Movement in Reserves in 2022/23							
Total Comprehensive Income/(Expenditure)	(2,405)	-	-	-	(2,405)	23,123	20,718
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	323	-	(515)	356	164	(164)	-
Net increase/(decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(2,082)	-	(515)	356	(2,241)	22,959	20,718
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	2,082	(2,082)	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in Year	-	(2,082)	(515)	356	(2,241)	22,959	20,718
Balance at 31 March 2023	1,000	7,484	1,936	2,578	12,998	28,102	41,100
Movement in Reserves in 2023/24							
Total Comprehensive Income/(Expenditure)	1,651	-	-	-	1,651	(2,345)	(694)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	191	-	572	68	831	(831)	-
Net increase/(decrease) before transfers to Earmarked Reserves	1,842	-	572	68	2,482	(3,176)	(694)
Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves	(1,843)	1,843	-	-	-	-	-
Increase/(decrease) in Year	(1)	1,843	572	68	2,482	(3,176)	(694)
Balance at 31 March 2024	999	9,327	2,508	2,646	15,480	24,926	40,406

Core Financial Statements

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council. The net assets (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement of Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

BALANCE SHEET	31st March 2023	31st March 2024	Note
	£000s	£000s	
Property, Plant & Equipment	35,118	36,077	14
Heritage Assets	2,399	2,399	15
Investment Property	525	525	16
Intangible Assets	59	156	17
Long-term Investments	2	2	
Long-term Debtors	242	238	20
Long-term Assets	38,345	39,397	
Inventories	115	95	
Short Term Debtors	7,498	6,344	23
Cash and cash equivalents	6,212	7,709	24
Assets held for sale within one year	570	-	25
Current Assets	14,395	14,148	
Short-term Borrowing	(234)	(234)	27
Short-term Creditors	(6,293)	(5,578)	26
Grants Received in Advance (Revenue)	(153)	(30)	29
Current Liabilities	(6,680)	(5,842)	
Long Term Borrowing	(3,624)	(3,340)	27
Provisions	(1,321)	(1,240)	28
Grants Received in Advance (Capital)	(16)	(1,508)	29
Pensions Liability	-	(1,210)	32
Long-term Liabilities	(4,961)	(7,298)	
Net Assets	41,099	40,405	
Represented by:			
General Fund	1,000	1,000	
Earmarked Reserves	7,484	9,326	30a
Capital Receipts Reserve	1,933	2,506	30b
Capital Grants Unapplied	2,578	2,645	30c
Usable Reserves	12,995	15,477	
Revaluation Reserve	14,665	13,233	31a
Pension Reserve	-	(1,210)	32a
Capital Adjustment Account	12,184	11,741	31b
Deferred Capital Receipts	1,265	1,265	31c
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(10)	(101)	31d
Unusable Reserves	28,104	24,928	
Total Reserves	41,099	40,405	

Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer

5th June 2024

Core Financial Statements

Cash Flow Statement

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

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

Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the authority's future service delivery. The cash outflows here relate to capital spend on assets held by the Council, such as buildings, vehicles and equipment, which will be used to provide services in the future. Cash inflows relate to the sale of assets no longer required by the Council to provide its services, or capital grants and contributions received by the Council.

Cash flows arising from financing activities show the net movements in investments and borrowing during the period in accordance with the Council's treasury management strategy. These can be useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (ie borrowing) to the Council.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT	2022/23	2023/24	Note
	£000	£000	
Operating Activities			
Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	(2,405)	1,651	
Adjustment for noncash movements	(8,213)	2,478	
Adjustment for items that are investing and financing activities	1,500	1,491	
Net cash flows from Operating Activities	(9,118)	5,620	
Investing Activities			
Additions to property, plant and equipment & intangible assets	(2,018)	(3,489)	
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment	85	572	
(Increase)/decrease in Deferred Capital Receipts	-	-	
Increase/(decrease) in long-term debtors	(30)	(4)	
Other income	453	1,446	
Cash inflows - Short-term investments	18,520	153,300	
Cash outflows - Short-term investments	(13,000)	(156,500)	
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	4,010	(4,675)	
Financing			
Cash Inflows/(Outflows) - agency operations	-	-	
National non-domestic rates	615	705	
Council Tax	(246)	131	
Cash Inflows - New Borrowing	-	-	
Cash Outflows - Repayments of amounts borrowed	(284)	(284)	
Cash Inflows/(Outflows) - New long-term loans	-	-	
Cash Inflows/(Outflows) - New short-term loans	-	-	
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	85	552	
Net increase/(decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(5,023)	1,497	
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the year	11,235	6,212	
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the year	6,212	7,709	

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Core Financial Statements

Note 1 Accounting Policies

1. Accounting Concepts & Principles

This Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the end of the year of 31 March 2024. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which required the Accounts to be prepared in accordance with the proper accounting practices. These practices are primarily comprised of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 (the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

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

2. 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 goods or a 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.

3. Accruals of Income & Expenditure

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis for all transactions and balances. Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

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

4. Employee Benefits

The code has interpreted IAS 19 *Employee Benefits* and confirmed that local authorities should account for:

- benefits payable during employment,
- termination benefits
- post-employment benefits
- pension fund accounts

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 - 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 eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered by Lancashire County Council. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees work for the Council. Retirement benefits are determined independently of scheme investments and the Council must contribute to any deficit where assets are insufficient to meet retirement benefits.

Pension Fund - The Local Government Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- the liabilities of the scheme attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc. and projections of earnings for current employees. Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a real discount rate of 4.9% (4.8% 2022/23) determined by reference to market yields at the balance sheet date based on high quality corporate bonds
- the assets of the pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.

The change in the net pension 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 in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability, i.e. net interest expense for the Council. This is the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- re-measurements 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; and,
 - actuarial gains and losses. Due to 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. This is charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- contributions paid to the pension fund. This is cash paid to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities.

Statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. This means that there are transfers in the Movement in Reserves Statement to remove the

Core Financial Statements

notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and any amounts payable, but unpaid at the year end.

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

5. Interest

Interest paid on external borrowings is accrued in the accounts of the period to which it relates and interest earned on the external investment of surplus funds is credited to the General Fund using the effective interest method as set out in the Code.

6. Value Added Tax

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

7. Principal and Agent transactions

Where an authority is acting as a principal, transactions shall be included in the authority's financial statements. However, where authorities act as agents transactions shall not be reflected in an authority's financial statements, with the exception in respect of cash collected or expenditure incurred by the agent on behalf of the principal, in which case there is a debtor or creditor position and the net cash position is included in financing activities in the Cash flow Statement. This Council acts as an agent for the collection of council tax and non-domestic rating income.

8. Tax Income (National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) and Council Tax)

NNDR and Council Tax income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year will be treated as accrued income and 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 NNDR and Council Tax included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

NNDR 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 NNDR and Council Tax 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.

9. 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. These assets are further classified as follows:

- Operational land and buildings,
- Operational plant, furniture, equipment, and motor vehicles.
- Infrastructural assets which are the fixed utility systems, and
- Community assets.
- Surplus assets – held for future regeneration opportunities

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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 Council will receive future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item. This excludes expenditure on routine repairs and maintenance of property, plant or equipment which is charged direct to service revenue accounts.

Capital expenditure is initially added to the value of an asset but if that is not considered to be the case it is classed as impairment.

Measurement

Non-current assets are valued on the basis recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and in accordance with the Valuation Standards 6th Edition issued by The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). Non-current assets are classified into the groupings required by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

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; and,
- 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:

- Infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- Surplus assets – the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective
- All other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV)

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.

Revaluation

Revaluations of fixed assets are undertaken by professionally qualified valuers on a five year rolling basis. Any unrealised gains on revaluation are shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement then removed in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Revaluation Reserve on the Balance Sheet.

Revaluation gains are depreciated in line with the asset to which they relate. Future revaluation losses are matched against any balance in the Revaluation Reserve in the first instance on a strict per-asset basis, with the remaining balance being transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

An impairment review is undertaken at the end of each accounting period and material changes to asset valuations are adjusted as they occur. Impairment loss on a re-valued asset is recognised in the Revaluation Reserve to the extent that the impairment does not exceed the balance in the Revaluation Reserve for that asset and thereafter as a cost to the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

However, the Code stipulates that impairments do not impact on the council tax, therefore the charge is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account.

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment with a finite useful life. Useful life is estimated at the time of acquisition or revaluation. 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).

Infrastructure, community assets and surplus non-operational assets are not depreciated each year but measured at historical cost.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- 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
- Infrastructure – straight-line allocation as advised by a suitable qualified officer

Newly acquired assets are depreciated the year following acquisition, although assets in the course of construction are not depreciated until they are brought into use, thereafter an equal charge to revenue is made over the useful life of the assets.

Component Accounting

Where the asset comprises two or more major components with substantially different useful economic lives, each component should be accounted for separately for depreciation purposes and depreciated over its individual useful life. Componentisation elements are considered as assets are professionally revalued within the 5-year rolling programme.

10. Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are:

- Tangible assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities which are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.
- Intangible heritage assets with cultural, environmental or historical significance, such as recordings of significant historical events

For Rosendale Borough Council Heritage Assets include the Panopticon in Haslingden and the war memorials across the borough as well as civic regalia and exhibits at Whittaker Park Museum.

Where heritage assets are purchased or costs capitalised, these assets are now valued on a historic cost basis. This has occurred in examples such as the creation of the Panopticon. However, for historic assets where it is not possible to obtain a cost value commensurate with the benefit to users of the financial statements, the Council is entitled to use any method it deems appropriate and relevant. For the exhibits at Whittaker Park Museum the latest insurance values have been used as an approximation for the asset value.

Depreciation or amortization is not required on heritage assets which have indefinite lives. However, the carrying amount of such assets is reviewed regularly to ensure that they have not suffered any physical deterioration, which would be treated as an impairment.

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11. Investment Properties

investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation, or both. This Council has one piece of land which meets the definition of an Investment Property.

Investment properties are initially measured at cost. After initial recognition they are measured at fair value. The fair value reflects market conditions at the Balance Sheet date. A gain or loss arising from a change in the fair value of investment property is recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Investment properties are not depreciated, but are re-valued annually according to market conditions.

An investment property is derecognised on disposal. Gains or losses arising from the disposal are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are reversed out of the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account.

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

12. Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets are assets that do not have physical substance and are held for use in the provision of services or for administrative purposes on a continuing basis (e.g. software licences). They are controlled by the Council as a result of past events and future economic or service benefits flow to the Council from intangible assets. These assets are capitalised at cost and amortised (depreciated) to the relevant revenue service over their economic lives. This amortisation is then reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and a transfer is made to the Capital Adjustment Account. An intangible asset is derecognised on disposal. The gains or losses arising from the disposal are recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services.

13. Surplus Assets and Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes evident that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale rather than its continued use, it can be reclassified as an asset held for sale. An asset can only be classed as held for sale if it is available for immediate sale in its present condition, the sale must be highly probable, it is being actively marketed and the sale should be expected to be completed within one year of its original classification. When events or circumstances extend the period beyond one year and there is sufficient evidence that the Council remains committed to the sale of the assets they are classified as long term assets held for sale.

Assets held for sale are held at the lower of the carrying amount and the fair value less cost to sell. If this results in a loss in value the loss is posted to Other Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previous loss recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

If these assets no longer meet the classification of assets held for sale they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale.

14. Leases

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

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

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Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets. There are no finance leases within the Council where the Council acts as either Lessee or Lessor.

Operating Leases

Lessee - Rental income paid under operating leases is treated as a revenue transaction and is charged to the relevant service expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment.

Lessor - Rental Income from operating leases is recognised on a straight line basis over the lease period and is shown in the Other Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Assets held for use as operating leases are recorded on the Council's Balance Sheet.

15. Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS) is expenditure of a capital nature that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset on the Balance Sheet. These are generally grants and expenditure on assets not owned by the Council.

Expenditure is charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services as the expenditure is incurred. This is reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement and a transfer made to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Grants receivable in relation to REFCUS are accounted for as revenue grants in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, even if described as capital grants by the giver of the grant. Grant income is posted to the service(s) that the qualifying expenditure is charged to.

16. Government Grants and Other 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 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 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.

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 or taxation and non-specific grant income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

Core Financial Statements

17. Capital Receipts

Amounts to be treated as capital receipts are defined by statute and usually arise from disposal of an interest in a fixed asset. Any difference between the receipt value and the carrying value of the asset in the balance sheet at the time of disposal is shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as a gain or loss on disposal.

However, some statutorily defined capital receipts do not arise from the disposal of an interest in a fixed asset and as such are treated separately in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as 'Other Income'.

Capital receipts are not attributable to the General Fund Balance and are therefore transferred to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

18. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits available on demand. Cash equivalents are short-term (three months or less) highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

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

19. Short-term Investments

Short-term investments are those with a life of between 3 months and 1 year at the Balance Sheet date and are shown in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

20. Long-term Investments

Long-term investments are those with a remaining life of more than 1 year at the Balance Sheet date and are shown in the Balance Sheet at fair value.

21. Inventories and Long-Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the First in First out (FIFO) or Average (AVCO) (for vehicle fuel) costing formulas. Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus/ Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

22. Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, for which a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. Provisions are a charge to the Net Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

23. Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is either:

- (a) a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Council's control, or
- (b) a present obligation that arises from past events but is not recognised because: (i) it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, or (ii) the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

A material contingent liability is not recognised within the accounts as an item of expenditure. It is, however, it is disclosed in a note to the accounts.

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24. 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.

25. Reserves

Reserves are classified as either 'usable' (identified and maintained for specific future purposes and contingencies and include General Fund reserve, Earmarked reserve and Usable Capital Receipts reserve) or 'unusable' (kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council) – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating 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 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.

26. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the authority is required to set aside a minimum revenue provision for repayment of debt. Minimum Revenue Provision is a charge to the cost of services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement. The Council calculates MRP to match the life of the asset.

27. Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is a contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another entity. Non-exchange transactions, such as those relating to taxes and government grants, do not give rise to financial instruments.

Financial Liabilities

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

The majority of the Council's financial liabilities held during the year are measured at amortised cost and comprise:

- long-term loans from the Public Works Loan Board;
- trade payables for goods and services received.

Financial Assets

A financial asset is a right to future economic benefits controlled by the Council that is represented by cash, equity instruments or a contractual right to receive cash or another financial assets or a right to exchange financial assets and liabilities with another entity that is potentially favourable to the Council. The financial assets held by the Council during the year are accounted for under the following classifications:

Core Financial Statements

(i) Amortised cost (where cash flows are solely payments of principal and interest and the Council's business model is to collect those cash flows) comprising:

- cash in hand
- bank current and deposit accounts
- fixed term deposits with banks and building societies
- loans to other local authorities
- treasury bills and gilts issued by the UK government
- debtors for goods and services provided

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

- money market funds
- pooled bond funds

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. Financial assets held at amortised cost 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.

Financial assets that are measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss 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. Any changes in the fair value of instruments held at fair value through profit or loss will be recognised in the net cost of services in the CIES and will have a General Fund impact.

(iii) Expected Credit Loss Model

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

28. Fair Value

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

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

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

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

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Core Financial Statements

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

- Level 1 - quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the Council can access at the measurement date
- Level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- Level 3 - unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

29. Prior Period Adjustments

Prior period adjustments are material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or estimates or from the correction of fundamental errors. The Code requires that the financial statements should disclose, where practicable the nature of the change in policy and the impact of any adjustment on the preceding accounting period where practicable. Where this is not practicable, the fact this is so and the reasons for it should be disclosed.

30. Events after the Balance Sheet date

Local authorities are required to account for events, both favourable and unfavourable, which occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue in accordance with IAS 10 *Events after the Reporting Period* and IPSAS 14 *Events after the Reporting Date*. Two types of events can be identified:

- Adjusting Events - where events arising after the balance sheet date provide additional evidence of conditions that existed at the balance sheet date and are of a material nature the amounts should be reflected in the Core Statements.
- Non-adjusting Events – events which arise after the balance sheet date and concern conditions which did not exist at that time should be detailed in Notes to the Core Statements if they are of such materiality that their disclosure is required for the fair presentation of the financial statements, rather than reflected in the Core Statements.

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

Core Financial Statements

Note 2 Expenditure Funding Analysis

2022/23				2023/24				
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Service Segments	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement
£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
4,633	149	803	5,585	Communities Directorate	5,070	22	1,044	6,136
1,247	86	627	3,963	Economic Development Directorate	1,939	(55)	987	2,871
4,543	(1,335)	236	3,444	Corporate Management	2,711	(245)	202	2,439
10,423	(1,100)	1,666	12,992	Net Cost of Services	9,720	(278)	2,233	11,446
(12,572)	3,367	(1,382)	(10,587)	Other Income & Expenditure	(9,490)	(1,565)	(2,042)	(13,097)
(2,149)	2,267	284	2,405	(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	230	(1,843)	191	(1,651)
1,000	9,566			Opening General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance	1,000	7,484		
0	2,082			(Surplus)/Deficit on General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance as at 31 March	0	(1,843)		
1,000	7,484			Closing General Fund/Earmarked Reserve Balance in Year	1,000	9,327		

Notes to the Expenditure Funding Analysis

2a Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis						2023/24	
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes	Net change for pensions adjustments	Other statutory differences	Total Statutory adjustments	Other (non-statutory) adjustments	Total adjustments	
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	
Communities Directorate	681	363	-	1,044	-	1,044	
Economic Development Directorate	805	182	-	987	-	987	
Corporate Management	-	202	-	202	-	202	
Net cost of services	1,486	747	-	2,233	-	2,233	
Other income and expenditure from expenditure funding analysis	(1,376)	(757)	91	(2,042)	-	(2,042)	
Difference between General Fund/reserves surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	110	(10)	91	191	-	191	

Comparator information for 2022/23 is shown below:-

Core Financial Statements

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis						2022/23
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for capital purposes	Net change for pensions adjustments	Other statutory differences	Total Statutory adjustments	Other (non-statutory) adjustments	Total adjustments
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Communities Directorate	401	402	-	803	-	803
Economic Development Directorate	498	168	-	666	-	666
Corporate Management	-	236	-	236	-	236
Net cost of services	899	806	-	1,705	-	1,705
Other income and expenditure from expenditure funding analysis	(1,867)	551	(1,537)	(2,853)	-	(2,853)
Difference between General Fund/reserves surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(968)	1,357	(1,537)	(1,148)	-	(1,148)

1) Adjustments for capital purposes – this column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

- **Other operating expenditure** – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.
- **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the statutory charges for capital financing ie minimum revenue provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.
- **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

2) Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For financing and investment income and expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

3) Other statutory adjustments between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For financing and investment income and expenditure the other statutory adjustments column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts.
- The charge under taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for council tax and NNDR that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognized under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future surpluses or deficits on the collection fund.

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2b Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

Expenditure & Income Analysed by Nature	2022/23	2023/24
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	11,109	7,635
Other service expenses	25,892	24,518
Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	1,347	347
Interest payments	120	119
Prescripts and levies	58	60
(Gain)/loss on disposal of assets	(54)	(203)
Total Expenditure	38,472	32,476
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(25,297)	(22,490)
Interest and investment income	(277)	(761)
Income from council tax, non-domestic rates, district rate income	(8,450)	(8,308)
Government grants and contributions	(2,043)	(2,570)
Total Income	(36,067)	(34,129)
(Surplus) or deficit on provision of services	2,405	(1,653)

Note 3 Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Interest Payable on Debt	120	119
Interest and Investment Income	(197)	(498)
Pensions - Interest Cost	2,987	4,077
Pensions - Past Service Cost	-	-
Pensions - Admin Expenses	28	31
Pensions - Interest on Assets	(2,413)	(4,098)
Trading Undertakings	(80)	(262)
	445	(631)

Note 4 Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Collection Fund		
Council Tax	(6,043)	(6,298)
Retained Business Rates	(1,803)	(2,455)
Collection Fund (surplus)/deficit		
Council Tax	(81)	(61)
Retained Business Rates	(613)	591
Revenue Support Grant	-	(85)
Non service related Government Grants	(2,043)	(2,570)
	(10,583)	(10,878)

Note 5 Trading Operations

The Council operates 3 markets in Haslingden, Bacup and Rawtenstall, which between them ensure that there is at least one market open within the borough every day of the week from Tuesday to Saturday.

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The Council has 37 industrial/Retail trading units, promoting economic regeneration across the borough.

Business Offices include a small number of high-tech managed office spaces as well as conference and meeting facilities at the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup.

Trading Operations	Net Expend/ (Income) 2022/23 £000s	Gross Expend 2023/24 £000s	Income 2023/24 £000s	Net Expend/ (Income) 2023/24 £000s
Markets	94	121	(27)	94
Industrial Units	(109)	45	(171)	(126)
Business Office Facilities	288	233	(37)	196
Futures Park Units	(353)	23	(449)	(426)
Total Trading Accounts	(80)	422	(684)	(262)

Note 6 Retained Business Rates

In April 2013 Local Government funding changed with the introduction of a system of locally retained business rates. Rossendale Council now has a direct stake in the business rates collected within the borough and at Full Council in February the Council sets a precept based on 40% of the business rates forecast to be collected within the Borough, from which it pays a tariff to Central Government.

The Lancashire Business Rates Pool, of which Rossendale Borough Council is a member, came into effect on 1st April 2016. Under the Pool arrangements, the first 50% of business rates continue to go to Central Government, 9% goes to Lancashire County Council and 1% goes to Lancashire Fire Authority, with Rossendale Borough Council taking the remaining 40%. From that 40% Rossendale continues to pay a Tariff to the Pool. As a result, Rossendale Borough Council retains 90% of any and all surplus or deficit arising from increases in the overall business rates. Added to this, Rossendale Borough Council benefits from 100% of the business rates from renewable energy installations.

Business Rates Income & Expenditure	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Rosendale Borough Council Share of Business Rates Income	(4,517)	(5,705)
Less Tariff Payable to Central Government	2,714	3,482
(Surplus)/Deficit Payment in Year (declared January prior to start of year)	906	479
Movement on Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit at Year End	(613)	589
Business Rates Retained on Renewable Energy Schemes	(178)	(231)
10% Retained Levy Payable to Lancashire County Council under pooling	72	55
Overall Net Retained Business Rates Related Income	(1,616)	(1,331)

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Note 7 Grant Income

The Council recognised the following significant grants, contributions and donations during 2023/24:

Grants and contributions received	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Credited to Cost of Services		
<i>Grants received for Revenue Purposes</i>		
DWP - Housing Benefits - paid to claimants	11,510	11,230
DWP - Housing Benefits - re Council Tenants	417	478
DWP - Discretionary Housing Payments	71	70
DWP - Housing Benefits - administration grant	184	172
DWP - Misc Grants	64	84
DLUHC - Flexible Homeslessness Prevention Grant	160	207
DLUHC - Rough Sleeping Initiative	119	151
DLUHC - New Burdens Grants	151	30
DLUHC - Business Rates Collection Grant	96	97
DLUHC - Domestic Abuse New Burdens	36	33
DLUHC - Energy Schemes	4,427	157
DLUHC - Other Grants	-	187
DLUHC - Capital Regeneration Project - Capacity and Capability	-	86
DEFRA - Grants	-	86
Home Office Asylum Dispersal Funds	175	245
LCC - Domestic Abuse Grant	81	40
LCC - Housing Support Fund	640	640
LCC - Ukraine Funding	279	140
LCC - Afgan Resettlement Programme (ARP)	53	18
LCC - Other Grants	147	-
LCC - Affordable Warmth Grant	32	61
UKSPF - Revenue	296	541
Historic England - Heritage Action Zone	46	24
National Lottery Heritage Fund	162	-
Other minor grants and contributions	506	416
	19,653	15,193
<i>Grants received for Capital Purposes</i>		
LCC Better Care Fund - Disabled Adaptations Grant	1,160	1,265
Lancashire Environmental Fund	47	30
UKSPF - Capital	45	101
Capital Regeneration Programme (CRP)		1,224
On Street Residential Charge point Scheme (ORCS)		129
DLUHC - Local Authority Housing Fund		688
Historic England - Heritage Action Zone	366	83
Lancashire Enterprise Partnership	21	136
National Lottery Heritage Fund	46	184
S106 Capital Contributions	72	750
FCC Recycling UK		198
Lawn Tennis Association Trust		110
Misc Contributions	241	148
	1,997	5,046
Total in the CIES Cost of Services	21,650	20,239

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Grants note continued..		
Credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income		
Service Grant	150	88
Funding Guarantee	-	286
Revenue Support Grant	-	85
Lower Tier Services Grant	100	-
DLUHC- New Homes Bonus	132	1
DLUHC - Business Rates - Small Business Reliefs	1,661	2,195
Non-Specific Grants in the CIES	2,043	2,655

Note 8 Members Allowances

An Independent Remuneration Panel meet at a minimum of every 4 years to review Member's Allowances. This group last met in December 2023, the panel proposed an increase of 4.04% for 2023/24, and that in future member allowance increase by the average % increase awarded to officers. Council members voted to accept the proposed increase in allowances.

Total Cost of Elected Members	2022/23	2023/24
	£000s	£000s
Basic Allowance	119	124
Special Responsibility Allowance	72	71
Employers National Insurance incurred	3	3
Mileage, subsistence & other reimbursements	9	8
	203	205

Annual amounts payable for elected roles	2022/23	2023/24
	£s	£s
Basic Allowance	3,342	3,477
Special Responsibility Allowances		
Leader of Majority or Largest Group	13,368	13,908
Deputy Leader of Majority or Largest Group	10,026	10,431
Leader of Minority or Second Largest Group	6,684	6,954
Cabinet Members	6,684	6,954
All Committee Chairs (4)	3,342	3,477
One off Payment for Chairing Meetings	150	156

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Note 9 Senior Officers' Remuneration

The table below shows remuneration details for the Chief Executive and the Senior Officers directly responsible to him, along with their respective salary (including fees and allowances), employer's pension contributions and total remuneration during 2023/24, along with prior year comparators.

Adam Allen, Director of Communities, was acting Chief Executive until April 2023 when Rob Huntington joined the Authority.

Senior Officers			Salary	Other Allowances & Expenses	Election Duties	Pension	Total
			£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	Start date 03/04/23 01/04/22 - 02/01/23	2023/24	112,374	531	3,023	16,407	132,334
Executive		2022/23	82,472	177	3,034	15,049	100,732
Director of Economic Development	01/04/22 - 02/01/23	2023/24	80,118	-	302	11,697	92,117
Director of Communities	01/02/23 - 31/03/23	2022/23	58,446	52	245	10,286	69,029
Director of Communities	End date 28/05/23	2022/23	12,693	-	-	2,234	14,927
Chief Finance Officer		2023/24	14,201	-	299	2,003	16,503
Legal Services Manager		2022/23	88,702	-	303	15,612	104,616
HR Manager		2023/24	71,535	132	162	10,078	81,907
		2022/23	66,820	122	158	11,760	78,861
		2023/24	55,659	-	432	8,126	64,217
		2022/23	53,580	104	722	9,430	63,837
		2023/24	55,659	46	-	8,126	63,831
		2022/23	53,580	32	-	9,430	63,042

Note 10 Other Officers' Remuneration

The number of employees whose remuneration, excluding pension contributions, was £50,000 or more are listed in the table opposite in bands of £5,000.

The Code includes a requirement to disclose the costs of exit packages paid by the Council in bands of £20k. The Council has paid no exit packages, in either 2022/23 or 2023/24.

Officers with remuneration above £50,000 (excl pension)	2022/23 Number	2023/24 Number
£50,000 - £54,999	3	2
£55,000 - £59,999	-	-
£60,000 - £64,999	-	-
£65,000 - £69,999	-	-
£70,000 - £74,999	1	1
£75,000 - £79,999	1	-
£80,000 - £84,999	-	2
£85,000 - £89,999	1	-
£80,000 - £99,999	-	-
£100,000 - £109,999	1	-
£110,000 - £114,999	-	1
	7	6

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Note 11 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 allows readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

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, provides a large proportion of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (eg council tax bills, housing benefits).

Other local authorities and precepting bodies

- payments to the Lancashire County Council Pension Fund.
- precepts in relation to Council Tax and Business Rates are paid to Central Government, Lancashire Police Authority, Lancashire Fire Authority, Lancashire County Council.
- The Lancashire Business Rates Pool.
- precept payable to Whitworth Town Council – see the Narrative Statement and the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Other key partners

- In June 2004 the bulk of Rosendale's Leisure Facilities transferred to the management of the newly-formed independent Rosendale Leisure Trust.
 - In previous years the Council has given the Trust an operational grant. However, the Council purchased the balance of the Haslingden Gym extension loan in November 2016 at a cost of £1,010k. The Trust now pays a rental charge for using the asset of £60k per annum for its remaining 12 year life. This represents a saving for the Trust which negated the need for any grant funding from 2017/18 onwards. The outstanding balance on this loan at the end of 2023/24 is £685k.
 - Since 2015/16 the Council has made four loans to the Trust
 - 2015/16 a loan of £266k was made for Grip & Go. 2023/24 was the final year with a payment made of £11k
 - 2016/17 a loan of £41k was made for Solar Panels at Marl Pits. As at 31st March 2024 the balance owed on this loan was £2.3k.
 - 2016/17 a loan of £24.6k was made for Solar Panels at The Ashcroft. As at 31st March 2024 the balance owed on this loan was £5.5k.
 - 2019/20 an interest bearing loan of £256k was made for gym equipment refresh at the Adrenalin Centre. As at 31st March 2024 the balance owed on this loan was £154.7k.

The Council deferred payment on all the above loans for 2020/21 and 2021/22 due to the Covid Pandemic. The loan repayments were re-instated in 2022/23 and remain in place in 2023/24.

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- During 2023/24 the Trust transferred monies at the end of each month to reduce the intercompany balance. The agreement was to pay the salary costs and creditor payments within the month plus £50k to reduce the outstanding debt brought forward from previous years. This was on the understanding that £200k would be retained in the RLT bank account. This has proven difficult during 2023/24 due to increased payroll costs and energy costs. The balance brought forward from 2022/23 was £1,012k. The balance at the end of March 2024 was £1,284k
- The £1,284k debt is included within Council's Sundry Debtors.
- The grip and go loan and the solar panel loans to the Trust are considered soft loans because interest payments have not been charged and are not material in 2023/24.
- To assist the Trust in its efforts to find operational efficiencies, the Council began to provide its professional financial and IT services in April 2013 under a service level agreement. From April 2023 the trust has taken both services back in house and RBC makes a financial contribution of £70 to the trust in respect of these costs.
- In December 2024 the council sold WLC to Whitworth Town Council.
- The RTB Partnership Ltd was incorporated on the 4th February 2013, with equal partners being Rossendale Borough Council, Together Housing and Barnfield Construction Ltd. The Partnership is a vehicle to facilitate a variety of development projects across the borough. During 2023/24 no contributions have been made by the council (there were no contributions in 2022/23)

Members and Chief Officers

The Council's Standing Orders make provision for a register of Members and Officers interests.

Upon review of this register it is considered that any transactions involving Members and Chief Officers with related parties have complied with the above regulations and are not material.

Note 12 External Audit Costs

The sums due from Rossendale Borough Council to the external auditors for works carried out relating to the year of account 2023/24 were:-

Audit costs	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Fees payable in respect of external audit of accounts	37	37
Share of redistribution of surplus funds on national PSAA Account	(2)	(2)
Fees payable for non-audit assurance work	21	21
	56	56

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Note 13 Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under regulations

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

The table below details the changes in 2023/24 while the financial year 2022/23 can be found on the following page.

Adjustments to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Movement in Reserves Statement	2023/24			
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Unuseable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Adjustment Account adjustments				
Depreciation of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	1,245	-	-	(1,245)
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	114	-	-	(114)
Revaluation gain/loss on Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)	(161)	-	-	161
Deferred Capital Receipts	-	-	-	-
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	13	-	-	(13)
Revenue Expend funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	1,745	-	-	(1,745)
REFCUS for Empty Homes Scheme	204	-	-	(204)
Net book value of assets sold	362	-	-	(362)
Statutory provisions for financing of capital investment (MRP)	(522)	-	-	522
Capital Expend charged to General Fund	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts Reserve adjustments				
Transfer of cash proceeds of assets sold	(572)	572	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to fund capital spend	-	-	-	-
Capital Grants Unapplied Account adjustments				
Capital grants and contributions credited to the CIES	(68)	-	68	-
Application of grants to the Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)	(2,250)	-	-	2,250
Pensions Reserve adjustments				
Employer contributions paid to the Pension Fund	(901)	-	-	901
Net IAS19 charges made for retirement benefits	891	-	-	(891)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account adjustments				
Difference between the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CIES and that calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	91	-	-	(91)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	191	572	68	(831)

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Adjustments to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the Movement in Reserves Statement	2022/23			
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Govt Grants Unapplied	Unuseable Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Capital Adjustment Account adjustments				
Depreciation of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	1,060	-	-	(1,060)
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment (PPE)	75	-	-	(75)
Revaluation gain/loss on Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)	212	-	-	(212)
Deferred Capital Receipts	-	-	-	-
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	-	-	-	-
Revenue Expend funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)	1,142	-	-	(1,142)
REFCUS for Empty Homes Scheme	397	-	-	(397)
Net book value of assets sold	31	-	-	(31)
Statutory provisions for financing of capital investment (MRP)	(413)	-	-	413
Capital Expend charged to General Fund	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts Reserve adjustments				
Transfer of cash proceeds of assets sold	(85)	85	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts to fund capital spend	-	(600)	-	600
Capital Grants Unapplied Account adjustments				
Capital grants and contributions credited to the CIES	(356)	-	356	-
Application of grants to the Capital Adjustment Account	(1,560)	-	-	1,560
Pensions Reserve adjustments				
Employer contributions to the Pension Fund	(1,030)	-	-	1,030
Net IAS19 charges made for retirement benefits	2,387	-	-	(2,387)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account adjustments				
Difference between the Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CIES and that calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	(1,537)	-	-	1,537
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	323	(515)	356	(164)

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Note 14 Property, Plant and Equipment

14a Movements during the year

Movements on property, plant & equipment assets in 2023/24 were as follows:-

Property, Plant & Equipment 2023/24	Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equip £000s	Infra- structure Assets £000s	Community Assets £000s	Assets under constr'n £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Total Assets £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2023	34,397	8,485	385	3,145	6,163	744	53,319
Additions	1,743	870	-	484	227	18	3,342
Donated Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/(decreases)							
to Revaluation Reserve	(1,128)	-	2	-	-	-	(1,126)
to Provision of Services	(161)	-	-	-	-	-	(161)
Reclassifications-							
to/from Assets Held for Sale	570	-	-	-	-	-	570
others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition- on disposal	-	173	-	-	-	-	173
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2024	35,421	9,528	387	3,629	6,390	762	56,117
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 1st April 2023	(11,480)	(5,328)	(244)	(541)	(477)	(131)	(18,201)
Depreciation for the year-							
to Revaluation Reserve	(178)	-	-	(3)	-	-	(181)
to Provision of Services	(311)	(679)	(9)	(52)	(13)	-	(1,064)
Impairment (losses)/reversals							
to Revaluation Reserve	(9)	-	-	(15)	-	-	(24)
to Provision of Services	(10)	(2)	-	(22)	-	-	(34)
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition- on disposal	(341)	(194)	-	-	-	-	(535)
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments 31st March 2024	(12,329)	(6,203)	(253)	(633)	(490)	(131)	(20,039)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2024	23,092	3,325	134	2,996	5,900	631	36,078
Net Book Value at 31st March 2023	22,917	3,157	141	2,604	5,686	613	35,118

Depreciation, using the straight line method, has been charged according to the estimated life of the assets involved on the following basis.

- Operational buildings generally have a useful life of 50 years, except where expert opinion has reduced this estimate. The land upon which the buildings reside is not subject to depreciation.
- Vehicles are depreciated over a useful life of 3-7 years depending upon their technical or mechanical nature.
- Equipment such as refuse bins, are depreciated over their individual useful life determined at the point of acquisition.

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- All other assets under land, assets under construction, community assets, investment and surplus assets are not depreciated.

Component accounting is applied to all revaluation exercises on the following basis.

- For all property assets, land and buildings are valued separately. Only assets with a combined land and buildings value of £500k and over will be subject to component accounting.
- Significant components are items (or groups of items) with a value of at least 25% of the total asset value.

Fair Value Hierarchy – Surplus Assets

- Surplus assets comprise land from which the Council does not provide services. The Council has determined all of its surplus assets are valued at level 2 inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly at 31 March 2023 and 2024. There were no transfers between levels during 2022/23 or 2023/24.

Comparator movements in 2022/23 were as follows:

Property, Plant & Equipment 2022/23	Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant, & Furniture & Equip £000s	Infra- structure Assets £000s	Community Assets £000s	Assets under constr'n £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Total Assets £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2022	34,149	7,709	381	2,974	5,642	731	51,586
Additions	281	1,190	4	167	383	13	2,038
Donated Assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases/(decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	319	-	-	10	-	-	329
to Provision of Services	(206)	-	-	(6)	-	-	(212)
Reclassifications- to/from Assets Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
others	(138)	-	-	-	138	-	-
Derecognition- on disposal	(8)	(414)	-	-	-	-	(422)
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2023	34,397	8,485	385	3,145	6,163	744	53,319
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 1st April 2022	(10,917)	(5,277)	(235)	(477)	(466)	(131)	(17,503)
Depreciation for the year- to Revaluation Reserve	(227)	-	-	(3)	-	-	(230)
to Provision of Services	(302)	(457)	(9)	(49)	(11)	-	(828)
Impairment (losses)/reversals to Revaluation Reserve	(16)	-	-	(7)	-	-	(23)
to Provision of Services	(18)	-	-	(5)	-	-	(23)
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition- on disposal	-	406	-	-	-	-	406
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairments 31st March 2023	(11,480)	(5,328)	(244)	(541)	(477)	(131)	(18,201)
Net Book Value at 31st March 2023	22,917	3,157	141	2,604	5,686	613	35,118
Net Book Value at 31st March 2022	23,232	2,432	146	2,497	5,176	600	34,083

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14b Revaluation Programme

During 2023/24 the Councils property portfolio was valued by external RICS-qualified officers from Capita Symonds Ltd, PO BOX 212, Faverdale Industrial Estate, Darlington, DL1 9HN, in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

The Council carries out a revaluation programme that ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued at least every five years. Assets valued in previous years have not undergone any material changes which would alter their valuations.

Properties regarded by the Council as operational are to be valued on the basis of existing use value or, where this cannot be assessed because there is no market for the subject asset, the depreciated replacement cost. Valuations of vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment are based on depreciated historic cost.

The details below show the history of the revaluation programme and the next planned revaluation exercise for each type of asset held. Under the provisions of the Code assets of a similar type should be revalued together.

Revaluation Programme for assets under Property, Plant & Equipment	Carried at Historic Cost £000s	March 2020 £000s	March 2021 £000s	March 2022 £000s	March 2023 £000s	March 2024 £000s	Total Net Book Value £000s
Land	104	75	6	964	-	1,734	2,883
Administrative Buildings	-	-	-	-	-	1,496	1,496
Depots and Workshops	-	-	-	2	659	-	661
Garages	-	-	195	-	-	-	195
Car Parks	-	1,086	8	-	-	-	1,094
Cemeteries	-	-	-	172	194	-	366
Sports & Leisure Facilities	113	2	-	(7)	74	5,287	5,469
Parks, & Recreation Grounds	92	254	4	118	603	8	1,079
Woodlands & Open Spaces	33	186	158	1,666	38	42	2,123
Industrial Units	-	-	-	307	-	-	307
Domestic Housing	-	106	321	-	121	-	548
Business Offices/Premises	-	898	3,456	2,460	35	-	6,849
Public Conveniences	-	10	-	(3)	136	-	143
Bus Shelters	-	-	339	10	5	2	356
Markets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sheltered Accommodation	-	-	-	73	-	-	73
Plant, Vehicles & Equipment	1,618	-	-	-	-	-	1,618
Other Assets	85	368	79	(449)	-	-	83
Assets under construction	735	-	-	-	-	-	735
Net Book Value 31st March 2023	2,780	2,985	4,566	5,313	1,865	8,569	26,078

Note 15 Heritage Assets

The Heritage Assets held by the Council fall into four categories: Whitaker Museum Collection, War Memorials, Panopticon and Civic Regalia. All these categories have been in the Council's ownership for a number of years and are held for their intrinsic worth as opposed to potential financial gain. As such, they are unlikely to be sold.

The War Memorials and Panopticon are reported at historic cost and the Museum Collection and Civic Regalia are reported at insurance valuation. According to the Code there is no prescribed minimum period between valuations and so the Council does not intend to revalue its Heritage Assets in the near future.

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Heritage Assets	Whitaker Museum Collection	War Memorials	Panopticon	Civic Regalia	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April 2022	1,507	73	21	800	2,401
Additions	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Gains	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	(2)	-	-	(2)
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2023	1,507	71	21	800	2,399
Additions	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Gains	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation Losses recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	-	-	-	-	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March 2024	1,507	71	21	800	2,399

Note 16 Investment Properties

The Council has one piece of land classified as an investment property following the agreement of a long-term lease.

Fair Value Hierarchy – Investment Properties.

The Council has determined that this asset should be valued as a level 2 input, therefore, the level of rental income receivable is factored into the calculation to determine the fair value of the asset.

Investment Properties	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Fair Value 1st April	525	525
Revaluations	-	-
Cost or Valuation 31st March	525	525
Gains/Losses in Fair Value	-	-
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 31st March	-	-
Fair Value at 31st March	525	525
Rental income within the year	25	25

Core Financial Statements

Note 17 Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Cost or Valuation 1st April	1050	1,141
Acquisitions	91	34
Assets reclassified to/(from) PPE	-	133
Cost or Valuation 31st March	1,141	1,308
Accum Depreciation 1st April	(1,053)	(1,082)
Impairment losses/(reversals)	-	(56)
Amortisation for the period	(29)	(14)
Accum Depreciation and Impairments 31st March	(1,082)	(1,152)
Net Book Value at 31st March	59	156

The Council accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item under Property, Plant and Equipment. At Rosendale Borough Council these intangible assets comprise only purchased licenses as the Council has no internally generated software.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the expected benefit to the Council, over which depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis. The default value for the useful life is 5 years and all current assets have been deemed to follow that standard.

Note 18 Capital Expenditure, Financing and Capitalisation of Borrowing Costs

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

18a - Capital Expenditure on Council Assets

The Capital Financing Requirements (CFR) is a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed. This capital expenditure is charged to future years through Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) as assets are used by the Council. Rosendale Borough Council now splits the CFR into two distinct elements; those costs pertaining to the East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme and other capital expenditure. The movement in the CFR during the year is analysed in the second part of this note.

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Capital Financing Requirement	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	14,272	16,425
Non-Empty Homes Opening Capital Financing Requirement	14,825	15,528
Capital investments		
Property, Plant & Equipment	1,646	3,343
Intangible Assets	91	166
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	1,539	1,745
	3,276	5,254
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	(600)	-
Government Grants and other contributions	(1,560)	(2,921)
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	-	-
Direct revenue contributions	-	-
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(413)	(522)
Non Empty Homes Closing Capital Financing Requirement	15,528	17,339
Empty Homes Opening Capital Financing Requirement	897	897
Empty Homes		
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	390	204
Sources of Finance		
Capital Receipts	-	-
Sums set aside from Revenue:-		
Direct revenue contributions	(390)	(204)
Empty Homes Closing Capital Financing Requirement	897	897
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	16,425	18,236
Explanation of movements in the year -		
Increase in underlying borrowing (net of direct grants and contributions)	1,116	2,333
Repayments (MRP)	(413)	(522)
Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	703	1,811

The capital expenditure shown above is split between Council-owned assets and those owned by third parties. The Council incurs capital expenditure on third party assets through schemes like the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), the Bacup Heritage Action Zone and the East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme. The distinction is an important one because capital expenditure on assets not owned by the Council is permitted by Statute, but is accounted for as revenue expenditure, along with its respective funding. Hence, in the table above there are details of 'Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute' (REFCUS) and funding from grants and other receipts and contributions, not from MRP.

18b – Capital Commitments

As at 31st March 2024, the Council was contractually committed to a total of £539k (£1.625m 2022/23). The individual capital schemes are listed below:-

Contractual commitments	31 st March 2024 £000s
Henrietta Street Software improvements	98
LEP Growth Deal	51
Bacup Market	182
Rawtenstall Market	58
Rawtenstall Gyrotory	60
Mechanics Hall	32
Varius small projects	58
	539

Core Financial Statements

Note 19 Leases

19a - Authority as Lessee

During 2014/15 the Council became directly responsible for the leases of domestic properties under the East Lancashire Empty Homes Scheme which were to be met from future rental incomes. The Council has contracted with managing agents to manage the properties on its behalf, with the majority of properties being managed by Calico Housing Ltd. The managing agents arrange the contracts with tenants, collect the rent and pay the leases over to the property owners. The lease commitments shown below refer solely to the properties which the Council is in the process of returning to the owners at which point all future lease commitments shown below will be extinguished.

Authority as a Lessee	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Lease Payments within the year	211	163
Future minimum lease commitments		
Amounts falling due within 1 year	132	30
Amounts falling due within 2-5 years	36	6
Amounts falling due within 6-10 years	-	-
Total Minimum Lease Payments	168	36

19b – Authority as Lessor

The Council leases out land and property under operating leases for services sport and leisure, regeneration and commercial use.

Authority as a Lessor	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Not later than one year	483	597
Later than one year and not later than five years	1,690	2,065
Later than five years	5,368	5,253
	7,541	7,915

The minimum lease payments receivable do not include rents that are contingent on events taking place after the lease was entered into, such as adjustments following rent reviews.

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Note 20 Long-term Debtors

Long Term Debtors	Ross'dale Leisure Trust £000s	Empty Homes Loans £000s	Other loans & mortgages £000s	Total £000s
Debt Outstanding 1st April 2022	30	1,255	10	1,295
Advances	-	-	-	-
Receipts	(1)	(29)	-	(30)
	29	1,226	10	1,265
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	-	(1,023)	-	(1,023)
Balance at 31st March 2023	29	203	10	242
Debt Outstanding 1st April 2023	29	1,226	10	1,265
Advances	-	2	-	2
Receipts	(6)	-	-	(6)
	23	1,228	10	1,261
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	-	(1,023)	-	(1,023)
Balance at 31st March 2024	23	205	10	238

The East Lancs Empty Homes Strategy moved into full operations during 2013-14. Funded by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in the first instance, this programme saw long-term empty properties across East Lancashire brought back into use. Any renovation costs, shown above as advances, are being recouped from property rentals during the life of the lease, shown above as receipts. At the end of these leases these properties revert to their owners.

Note 21 Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

21a - Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instruments are carried on the Balance Sheet:

Financial Assets - Balances at Amortised Cost	2022/23		2023/24	
	Long Term £000	Short term £000	Long Term £000	Short Term £000
Investments	2	1,170	2	5,500
Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	5,042	-	2,209
Debtors	242	3,522	238	2,204
<i>Debtors that are not financial Instruments</i>		3,976		4,140
<i>Total Debtors</i>	242	7,498	238	6,344
Total Financial Assets	244	9,734	240	9,913

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Financial Liabilities - Balances at Amortised Cost	2022/23		2023/24	
	Long Term	Short term	Long Term	Short Term
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Borrowing	(3,624)	(234)	(3,340)	(234)
Creditors	-	(3,476)	-	(3,498)
<i>Creditors that are not financial Instruments</i>		(2,817)		(2,079)
<i>Total Creditors</i>		(6,293)		(5,577)
Total Financial Liabilities	(3,624)	(3,710)	(3,340)	(3,732)

The Financial Instruments categorised above represent:

Financial Assets

- Amounts shown under Investments consist of cash held by the Council, bank accounts and short term investments.
- Amounts shown under Long-Term Debtors consist of loans to property owners under the Empty Homes scheme and a loan to Rosendale Leisure Trust.
- Amounts shown under Short-Term Debtors represents net operational (sundry) debtors.

Fair Value Hierarchy of Investments - The investments above were assessed as level 2 - inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly at 31 March 2023 and 2024.

Financial Liabilities

- Amounts shown under Long-Term and Short-Term borrowings are loans with the Public Works Loan Board.
- Amounts shown under Short-Term Creditors are the Council's operational creditors.

21b - Financial Instrument Gains/Losses

The amounts shown below are recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under the (Surplus) or Deficit on Provision of Services:

Income & Expenses Gains and Losses	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000
Financial Liabilities		
Interest Expenses	120	119
Financial Assets		
Interest Income	(195)	(527)
Net (Gain)/Loss charged to Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services	(75)	(408)

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21c - Fair value of assets and liabilities carried at amortised cost

Financial liabilities and assets represented above under Categories of Financial Instruments are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost. The fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions.

- For loans from the PWLB the fair value was calculated by reference to the premature repayment set of rates in force on 31st March 2023 and 31st March 2024 respectively.
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised.
- Where an instrument will mature in the next 12 months the carrying amount is assumed to approximate to fair value.
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced amount.

The fair values are calculated as follows:

	31st March 2023		31st March 2024	
	Carrying amount £000s	Fair Value £000s	Carrying Amount £000s	Fair Value £000s
Borrowings	(3,858)	(3,575)	(3,574)	3,423
Short Term Creditors	(3,476)	(3,476)	(3,498)	(3,498)
Total Financial Liabilities	(7,334)	(7,051)	(7,072)	(75)
Long Term Investments	2	2	2	2
Investments <1 year	1,170	1,170	5,500	5,500
Long Term Debtors	242	242	238	238
Short Term Trade Debtors	3,537	3,537	2,204	2,204
Cash and Cash Equivalents	5,042	5,042	2,209	2,209
Total Financial Assets	9,993	9,993	10,153	10,153

At March 2024 Rosendale Borough Council had two outstanding PWLB Loans. One was taken out in March 2010 for 25 Years at a fixed rate of 4.49%, the other was taken out in August 2019 for £2m over 20 years at a fixed interest rate of 1.34%. The premature repayment rates applicable on 31st March 2024 were 3.69% and 3.71% respectively. The figures for fair value above were £2,109k and £1,314k, as supplied by the Council's treasury management advisor, Link Asset Services. For a sensitivity analysis, Link Asset Services have confirmed that similar new loans on the 31st March 2024 at the discount rates above would have reduced the fair value of the loan at the end of 2023/24 by £208k to £3,215k.

The Council's Portfolio of treasury management investments does not include any long-term deposits over 365 days. For Investments under 365 days the deposit value is taken as a fair approximation of their value.

Short-term debtors and creditors are carried at cost as this is a fair approximation of their value.

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Note 22 Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

Key Risks

The Council's activity exposes it to a variety of financial risks, the key risks are:

- 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 funds available to meet its commitments to make payments;
- Re-financing risks the possibility that the Council might be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms;
- Market risk the possibility that financial loss might arise for the council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates movements.

Overall procedures for Managing Risks

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets, and implementing restrictions to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. The procedures for risk management are set out through a legal framework set out in the

Local Government Act 2003 and the associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Investment Guidance issued through the Act. Overall these procedures require the Council to manage risk in the following ways:

- by formally adopting the requirements of the Code of Practice;
- by approving annually in advance prudential indicators for the following three years limiting:
 - the Council's overall borrowing;
 - it's maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable rates;
 - it's maximum and minimum exposures of the maturity structure of its debt;
 - it's maximum annual exposures to investments maturing beyond a year.
- by approving an investment strategy for the forthcoming year setting out its criteria for both investing and selecting investment counterparties in compliance with the government guidance.

These requirements are known as Prudential Indicators and are required to be reported and approved alongside the Council's annual Council Tax budget setting in February, along with the annual Treasury Management Strategy which outlines the detailed approach to managing risk in relation to the Council's financial instrument exposure. Actual performance is also reported monthly to Members.

These policies are implemented by the Council's Financial Services staff. The Council maintains written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash through Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). These TMPs are a requirement of the Code of Practice and are reviewed annually.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, and credit exposures to the Council's customers. Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria and limits approved by the Council.

The Council maintains strict criteria for investment counterparties and monitors activity against these criteria. As a result of this high credit criteria there has been no experience of defaults. The Council

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refers to an approved list of organisations for investment purposes, assessed by the rating agencies, consisting of major banks, building societies and other local authorities. Maturity limits apply for each counterparty category and maximum investment limits also exist per counterparty and per sector.

No breaches of these criteria occurred during the reporting period and the Council does not expect any losses from non-performance by any counterparty in relation to financial deposits.

The following analysis summarises the Authority's potential maximum exposure to credit risk, based on experience of default assessed by the ratings agencies and the Council's experience of its customer collection levels over the last three financial years, adjusted to reflect current market conditions.

22a Credit Risk

Credit Risk	Actual Amount March 2024 £000s	Historical default £000s	Adjusted for market conditions %	Estimated maximum exposure March 2024 £000s	Estimated maximum exposure March 2023 £000s
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,209	0.00%	0.00%	-	-
Investments - Bank Deposits	5,500	0.00%	0.00%	-	-
Investments - Others	-	0.00%	0.00%	-	-
Long Term Debtors	238	0.00%	0.00%	-	-
Short Term Trade Debtors	2,204	6.60%	7.00%	154	403
Total Financial Assets	10,151			154	403

22b Trade Debtors

The Council does not generally allow credit for its trade debtors. The Council reports the level of trade debts outstanding each quarter in the financial monitoring report to Cabinet, which is available on the website. The balance of Trade Debtors at 31st March 2024 stood at £4,580k (£4,840k at March 2023). Against this the Council held an Expected Credit Loss Impairment of £2,376k (£1,318k at March 2023), as shown in the table below.

Short Term Trade Debtors by age	31st March 2023 £000s	31st March 2024 £000s
Less than 3 months	2,684	2,469
Three to six months	101	22
Six months to one year	489	610
Over one year	1,566	1,479
Expected Credit Loss Impairment	(1,318)	(2,376)
Total Net Trade Debtors	3,522	2,204

Liquidity Risk

The council has ready access to borrowings from the Public Works Loan Board for long term borrowing and the Money Markets to cover any day-to-day cash flow need. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

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The Council manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the treasury management and investment strategy reports), as well as through cash flow management procedures required by the Code of Practice. The Council's performance in managing its current cash position is reported each month in the financial monitoring reports available on the website.

Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The approved prudential indicator limits for the maturity structure of debt and the limits placed on investments of greater than one year in duration are the key parameters used to address this risk. The approved treasury and investment strategy addresses the main risks and sets the operational parameters should the Council ever need to borrow funds.

Market Risk

There are three related risks the Council is aware of: interest rate risk, price risk and foreign exchange risk.

Interest Rate Risk

The Council has limited exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Borrowings are carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and reflected in the General Fund Balance.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The annual Medium Term Financial Strategy draws together the Council's prudential indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. The aim of the prudential indicators is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits reducing the risk or likelihood of an adverse movement in certain interest rates or borrowing decisions that could impact negatively on the Council's overall financial position.

Within this Strategy prudential indicators are set which provide maximum and minimum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The Financial Services staff monitor markets and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposure appropriately. The indicators in force during 2023/24, which were approved along with the Council's annual budget in February 2023, are shown below.

Limits in interest rate exposure	2022/23	2023/24
Max principal sums borrowed > 364 days	£20.75m	£20.75m
Borrowing limits on Fixed Interest Rates	100%	100%
Borrowing limits on Variable Interest Rates	0%	0%
Max sums invested > 364 days	£0m	£0m
Max sums invested with single body	£8m/50%	£8m/50%
Max sums invested with any group	£10m	£10m

If all lending interest rates had been 1% higher, with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would only impact on the interest receivable on variable rate investments by an extra £55k at 431st March 2024. All other interest payable and receivable is fixed.

Price Risk

The Council does not invest in instruments with this type of risk.

Foreign exchange risk

The Council has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies and has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates

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Note 23 Debtors

The short-term debtors are shown below.

Debtors		31 st March 2023 £000s	31 st March 2024 £000s
Central Government Bodies		1,496	1,058
Other Local Authorities		1,543	1,317
Other entities and individuals	Council Tax	145	522
	Retained Business Rates	440	(61)
	Housing Benefits	-	805
	Advance Payments	352	499
	Sundry Trade Debtors	4,840	4,580
	Credit Loss Impairment	(1,318)	(2,376)
		4,459	3,969
Net Balance at 31st March		7,498	6,344

Note 24 Short Term Investments and Cash and Cash Equivalents

Short Term Investments and Cash & Cash Equivalents		31 st March 2023 £000s	31 st March 2024 £000s
Short Term Investments		1,170	5,500
Short-term Investments at 31st March		1,170	5,500
Bank Deposits - Current Accounts		5,041	2,208
Petty Cash Accounts		1	1
Cash and cash equivalents at 31st March		5,042	2,209

To allow added flexibility and speed to the response to the current economic climate, particularly in the payment of grant support, a higher level of cash was held in the council's Bank Current Accounts at the end of the financial year.

Note 25 Assets Held for Sale

Current Assets held for sale	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Balance at 1st April	584	570
Revaluation Gain on Dipsoal	1	-
Revaluation gains/(losses) to the Revaluation Reserve	(15)	-
Amounts written back to tangible fixed assets	-	(570)
Balance at 31st March	570	-

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Note 26 Creditors

The short-term creditors are shown below.

Creditors	31 st March	31 st March
	2023	2024
	£000s	£000s
Central Government Bodies	1,937	1,488
Other Local Authorities	110	37
Bodies external to government		
Advance Receipts: Council Tax	108	99
Advance Receipts: Retained Business Rates	56	73
Advance Receipts: Others	550	357
Accumulated Absences	56	25
Sundry Trade Creditors	3,476	3,498
Balance at 31st March	6,293	5,578

Note 27 Borrowing

In March 2010 the Council took out a PWLB loan of £4.6m over a life of 25 years at 4.49% to support the Council's capital spending, including the planned investment resulting from the Leisure Services Review. In August 2019 the Council took out a further loan of £2m over 20 years at 1.34%. Repayment of both loans is based on equal instalments of principal.

PWLB Borrowing	31 st March	31 st March
	2023	2024
	£000s	£000s
Repayable in less than 12 months	234	234
Repayable between 1 and 2 years	234	234
between 2 and 5 years	702	702
between 5 and 10 years	1,170	1,170
in 10 years or more	1,518	1,234
Balance at 31st March	3,858	3,574

Note 28 Provisions

Provisions	31st March	Movement in Year	31 st March
	2023		2024
	£000s		£000s
Business Rate Appeals Provision	877	214	1,091
Strategic Housing Provision	149	-	149
Corporate Services	285	(285)	-
Other Provisions	10	(10)	-
Total Provisions	1,321	(81)	1,240

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Note 29 Short-term Grant Receipts in Advance

This account holds the movements between grants received and those recognised through the CIES when the grant conditions have been met.

In 2017/18 a grant of £3,421k was received in advance from Lancashire County Council towards the construction of the new bus station element of the Spinning Point Phase 1 project. Construction of a new bus station began in January 2019 and the facility was opened in December 2019. The remaining grant was to be used to landscape the surrounding area and this work was completed in year ending March 2024.

During 2023/24 the Council was awarded funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the ringfenced monies unspent at the year end have been held as grant receipts in advance until such a time that the funds are spent and the conditions met.

Short-term Grant Receipts in Advance	31 st March 2023 £000s	31 st March 2024 £000s
LCC Grant for Spinning Point Phase 1		
Balance Brought forward	41	168
Grant received/(repaid) in the year	-	-
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)	(41)	-
UKSPF Grants - Revenue		
Grant received/(repaid) in the year	296	642
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)	(143)	(760)
Capital Regeneration Programme		
Grant received/(repaid) in the year		1,224
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)		(553)
On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS)		
Grant received/(repaid) in the year		129
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)		-
Local Authority Housing Fund		
Grant received/(repaid) in the year		688
Amounts recognised into the CIES (conditions met)		
UKSPF Grant - Capital Received in Advance	15	
	168	1,538
Balance at 31st March	168	1,538

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Note 30a Usable Reserves

The overall movements in the Council's Usable Reserves can be seen in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Further details on the movements in the individual Earmarked Reserves and Capital Grants Unapplied accounts can be found below, along with greater explanation of the activity on the Usable Capital Receipts Reserve.

Note 30a - Earmarked Reserves

Employment & Transport Reserve – re future investment in transport and employment opportunities.

Leisure Reserve – This reserve is held to meet any potential leisure expenditure i.e. feasibility studies

Directorate Investment Reserve – This reserve holds unspent budgets future one-off revenue projects.

Directorate Operational Reserve – This reserve holds funds set aside for ongoing or incomplete revenue projects where there is no contractual obligation but member approval has been granted.

Homelessness Reserve – This reserve holds funds for supporting ongoing and future projects to tackle homelessness within Rossendale.

Vehicle Reserve – To support vehicle maintenance costs and the rolling replacement programme.

Transitional Reserve – This reserve is to support the Council in its medium-term financial strategy.

Individual Registration Reserve – Individual electoral registration implementation began in summer 2014 and this reserve was established to hold grant funds received during 2013/14 to be matched against costs as they arose over the subsequent years.

Business Rates Retention Reserve – Following the localisation of non-domestic rates in April 2013, this reserve was established with the additional grant received for Small Business Rate Relief to support any future volatility of this new resource stream. The balance on this reserve will also be required to support the deficit on the Collection Fund Adjustment Account. Under the timings permitted by the Code each year's surplus or deficit will not impact on the CIES until the following year.

Planning Strategy Reserve – This reserve is to cover the costs of public scrutiny associated with reviews of planning strategy in the future.

Tourism Strategy Reserve – Since the Tourism Officer post was disestablished in 2011/12, monies have been set aside to allow the Council to support various events/ activities.

Haslingden Regeneration Reserve – The Council has previously set aside £100k to provide pump-priming funds for the wider regeneration of Haslingden.

Rawtenstall Bus Station Reserve – This reserve holds the commuted sum received from Lancashire County Council to cover future maintenance costs associated with the Rawtenstall Bus Station.

Response and Recovery Reserve – The Council received a number of grants in response to Covid19 to support service delivery and the community through the pandemic.

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Earmarked Reserves	Balance 31st March 2023 £000s	Income & Transfer to Reserves £000s	Transfers between Reserves £000s	Utilised from Reserves £000s	Balance 31st March 2024 £000s
Leisure Reserve	30	-	(30)	-	-
Directorate Operational Reserves	1,196	166	(135)	(263)	964
Homelessness	421	-	-	(107)	314
Transitional Reserve	3,063	2,096	73	(367)	4,865
Individual Registration	124	24	-	(55)	93
Business Rates Retention	1,028	-	-	-	1,028
Planning Strategy	65	266	93	(37)	387
Tourism Strategy	28	-	-	-	28
Haslingden Regeneration	34	-	-	-	34
Rawtenstall Bus Station	500	-	-	(14)	486
Response and Recovery	709	-	(1)	(150)	558
Asylum Dispersal Funds	135	151	-	(139)	147
Ukraine Guests	151	43	-	-	194
MMI	-	229	-	-	229
	7,484	2,975	-	(1,132)	9,327

Note 30b - Capital Receipts Reserve

These are capital receipts (net of asset values) which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure or repay debt.

Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Balance at 1st April	2,447	1,931
Capital receipts in year	84	2,325
Capital receipts used to fund capital expend	(600)	(1,753)
Non Empty Homes sub-total	1,931	2,503
Empty Homes		
Balance at 1st April	2	2
Capital receipts in year	-	-
Capital receipts used to fund capital expend	-	-
Empty Homes sub-total	2	2
Balance at 31st March	1,933	2,505

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Note 30c - Capital Grants Unapplied Account

Capital grants and other contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipt have been complied with.

Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Balance 31 st March 2023 £000s	Grants Received £000s	Grants Applied £000s	Balance 31 st March 2024 £000s
Disabled Facilities Grants	2,578	1,260	(1,193)	2,645
	2,578	1,260	(1,193)	2,645



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Note 31 Unusable Reserves

31a Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains unrealised revaluation gains, net of depreciation and disposals on that revaluation amount, on a strict per-asset basis. This Reserve is matched by fixed assets within the Balance Sheet. It does not represent resources available to the authority.

Revaluation Reserve	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Balance at 1st April	14,592	14,665
Surplus/(Deficit) on revaluation of assets in the year		
Property, Plant & Equipment	329	(1,125)
Value of assets disposed of in the year	(2)	(102)
Depreciation in the year	(230)	(181)
(Impairments)/Impairment Reversals in the year	(24)	(24)
Balance at 31st March	14,665	13,233

31b Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account provides a balancing mechanism between the different rates at which assets are depreciated under the Code and are financed through the capital controls mechanism.

In the main this account holds the gains on historical revaluations of the assets still held by the Council, depreciated over the life of the assets. It is managed as a total figure, not on a per-asset basis, and does not represent cash resources available to the authority.

Capital Adjustment Account	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Balance at 1st April	13,451	13,760
Revenue and Capital Receipts used to finance capital		
Revenue Contributions	-	-
Useable Capital Receipts	600	-
Capital Grants and Contributions	1,560	2,250
Gains/(Losses) on Revaluation of assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	(212)	161
Write off NBV of disposals (net of Revaluation Reserve)	(29)	(112)
Minimum Revenue Provision for repayment of debt	413	522
Depreciation of Property, Plant and Equipment	(830)	(1,064)
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	-	-
Impairment of Property, Plant & Equipment assets	(51)	(90)
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under statute	(1,142)	(1,894)
Non Empty Homes sub-total	13,760	13,533
Empty Homes		
Balance at 1st April	(1,180)	(1,576)
Revenue and Capital Receipts used to finance capital		
Revenue Contributions	-	-
Useable Capital Receipts	-	-
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under statute	(396)	(216)
Empty Homes sub-total	(1,576)	(1,792)
Balance at 31st March	12,184	11,741

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31c Deferred Capital Receipts Account

The Deferred Capital Receipts holds the value of renovation loans on the East Lancs Empty Homes properties.

Deferred Capital Receipts Account	31 st March 2023 £000s	31 st March 2024 £000s
East Lancs Empty Homes Scheme Loans		
Balance at 1st April	1,265	1,265
New Deferred Receipts	-	-
Amounts received	-	-
Balance at 31st March	1,265	1,265

31d Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account allows for differences between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund. The balance on the account represents the Council's share of the Collection Fund surplus or deficit. The large balance relating to Business Rates is offset by Section 31 grants received from Central Government.

Rosendale Borough Council - Collection Fund Adjustment Account	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax	Business Rates	Council Tax	Business Rates
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at 1st April	(18)	(1,531)	2	(12)
Prior year (Surplus)/Deficit transferred to/from revenue	(64)	906	(40)	479
Apportioned Estimated Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	125	(479)	125	22
Apportioned Final Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(41)	1,092	(65)	(611)
Accumulated Surplus/(Deficit) at 31st March	2	(12)	22	(122)

Note 32 Local Government Pension Scheme – a defined benefit scheme

The following note explains the terms and conditions of the retirement benefits of the Council officers and other employees. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the authority has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The authority participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Lancashire County Council – this is a funded scheme, meaning that the authority and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

The Lancashire County Pension Fund is a multi-employer arrangement, under which each employer is responsible for the pension cost, liabilities and funding risks relating to its own employees and former employees. Each employer's contributions to the Fund are calculated in accordance with the LGPS Regulations, which require an actuarial valuation to be carried out every three years.

The latest actuarial valuation of the Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022, and at that date showed a funding level of 115% (up from 100% at the last valuation - assets of £10.7bn against accrued liabilities of about £9.3bn). The weighted average duration of the liabilities of the fund is 10

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years, measured on the IAS19 assumptions. The duration of the liabilities for the individual employers which participate in the scheme can be significantly different from this, reflecting the profile of its employees and former employees.

The Fund targets a pension paid throughout life. The amount of the pension depends on how long employees are active members of the scheme and their salary when they leave the scheme (a “final salary” scheme) for service up to 31 March 2014 and a re-valued average salary (a “career average” scheme) for service from 1 April 2014 onwards.

Impact of McCloud judgement

On 16 July 2020 the Minister for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) released the consultation on the McCloud remedy for the LGPS in England and Wales. The key feature of the proposed remedy was broadly as expected in that the final salary scheme underpin is to be extended to a wider group of members for service up to 31 March 2022 but there are a small number of areas of detail which will need further consideration.

An allowance for the McCloud remedy is included in the 31 March 2024 figures, and will be included in future calculations on an ongoing basis (unless there are specific reasons or instruction not to do so). The calculations of the additional liabilities and service costs have generally been done in line with the proposed underpin in the consultation. However there are some minor changes to the underpin for all members who were active on or before 31 March 2012 (e.g. it can now apply historically to members leaving service after 1 April 2014), and the calculation will apply retrospectively even in those cases where a member no longer has a benefit entitlement from the Fund. Other than in exceptional circumstances the impact of these minor proposed changes is expected to be nil.

Furthermore when calculating the potential cost of the McCloud Judgement as part of the 2022 actuarial valuations the Funds Actuary (Mercers) have carried out a stand-alone estimate of the cost of the McCloud Judgement. It is estimated that the cost is an increase in past service liabilities at the valuation date of £107m and has been included in the 2022 liability figure.

32a – Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Council’s obligation in respect of its defined benefit plan is as follows:-

Pension Assets and Liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(76,054)	(75,974)
Fair value of plan assets	86,523	91,295
Net Asset/(Liability) arising from defined benefit obligation	10,469	15,321
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	(10,469)	(16,531)
Net Asset/(Liability) after asset ceiling adjustment	-	(1,210)

Asset Ceiling

Following the pensions valuation by the Council actuary, the Council determined that the fair value of its pension plan assets outweighed the present value of the plan obligations at 31 March 2024, resulting in a pension plan asset for the second time. IAS 19 Employee Benefits requires that, where a pension plan asset exists, it is measured at the lower of:

- The surplus in the defined benefit plan; and
- The asset ceiling.

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The asset ceiling is the present value of any economic benefits available in the form of refunds from the plan or reductions in future contributions to the plan. The Council's actuary calculated the asset ceiling as the net present value of future service costs less the net present value of future contributions.

The Council has therefore limited the pension asset recognised in the balance sheet to the asset ceiling. The adjustment has been recognized within the comprehensive income and expenditure in the CIES.

32b - Present Value of Scheme Liabilities

The following table reconciles the opening and closing values of the scheme liabilities.

Scheme Liabilities	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Scheme Liabilities as at 1 st April	108,435	76,054
Current Service Cost	1,785	881
Interest on Pension Liabilities	2,987	3,574
Member Contributions	301	338
Past Service cost/(gain)	-	-
Remeasurement of liabilities	(33,624)	(1,351)
Benefits/transfers paid	(3,830)	(3,522)
Scheme Liabilities as at 31st March	76,054	75,974

Of the above liabilities there is an unfunded element, for which the value at 31st March 2024 was £1,210k (£1,315k at 31st March 2023).

32c - Present Value of Scheme Assets

The following table reconciles the opening and closing values of the scheme assets.

Note 32c - Scheme Assets

Scheme Assets	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Scheme Assets as at 1 st April	86,998	86,523
Interest on plan assets	2,413	4,098
Remeasurement of assets	(361)	2,988
Administration expenses	(28)	(31)
Employer contributions	1,030	901
Member contributions	301	338
Benefits/transfers paid	(3,830)	(3,522)
Scheme Assets as at 31st March	86,523	91,295

32d - Major Categories of Scheme Assets

Scheme Assets	31st March 2023		31 st March 2024	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Equities	101	0.1%	100	0.1%
Bonds	178	0.2%	73	0.1%
Property	1,303	1.5%	1,173	1.3%
Alternatives	84,253	97.4%	88,261	96.7%
Cash & Cash equivalents	688	0.8%	1,688	1.8%
Total Scheme Assets	86,523		91,295	

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32e - Scheme Membership

The membership of the scheme was as follows:-

Scheme Membership	31st March	31 st March
	2023	2024
Active Members	156	163
Deferred Members	241	238
Pensioners	424	426
Spouses / dependents	110	105

32f - Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account

Authorities recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge required against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so that the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out in the Movement in Reserves Statement and replaced with the cash paid in the year.

The table below shows transactions within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the corresponding adjustments made in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Reconciliation of the movement in the Pension Fund Reserve	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Net Costs of Services - Current Service Cost	1,785	881
Past Service cost/(gain)	-	-
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure		
Interest cost	574	(524)
Expected return on assets in the scheme	361	(2,988)
Administration expenses	28	31
Total post-employment benefit charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,748	(2,600)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		
Actuarial (gains)/losses	(33,624)	(1,351)
Total post-employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(30,876)	(3,951)
Movement in Reserves Statement		
Reverse net charges for retirement benefits in accordance with the Code	(2,748)	2,600
Actual charge to the General Fund Balance in the year		
Employer's contributions payable to the scheme	1,030	901

32g – Re-measurement impacts in the Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement

Remeasurement Gains/(Losses)	2022/2023 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Experience gains/(losses)	6,605	698
Gains/(losses) on financial assumptions	(37,709)	(969)
Gains/(losses) on demographic assumptions	(2,520)	(1,080)
Remeasurement of Liabilities gains/(losses)	(33,624)	(1,351)
Net Actuarial gains/(losses) in current year	(33,624)	(1,351)

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32h – Actual gains and losses on plan assets

The actual gains measured against experience gains/(losses) in the year can be seen in the following table, along with the relevant percentages of period-end assets and liabilities which these values represent:

Actual Gains/(Losses)	2022/23		2023/24	
	£000s	%	£000s	%
Actual Return on Plan Assets	2,730	3.2%	7,085	7.8%

32i - Actuarial Assumptions

The Borough Council fund liabilities and assets have been assessed by Mercer Human Resource Consulting, an independent firm of actuaries. The main assumptions used in their calculations at the beginning and end of the year are shown below, with an effective date of 31st March 2024.

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

Assets in the Lancashire Pension Fund are valued at fair value, principally market value for investments, and consist of the following categories, by proportion with their expected rates of return at the beginning and end of the year:

Actuarial Assumptions	Beginning of Period %	End of Period %
Duration information as at the end of the accounting period		
Estimated Macaulay duration of liabilities	15 yrs	15 yrs
Duration profile used to determine assumptions	Very Mature	Very Mature
Financial Assumptions		
Rate of CPI inflation	2.70%	2.70%
Rate of increase in salaries	4.20%	4.20%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.80%	2.80%
Discount rate	4.80%	4.90%
Post retirement mortality assumptions		
Non-retired members	SAPS 3 / SAPS 3 Middle CMI 21 1.5% / CMI 21 1.5%	SAPS 3 / SAPS 3 Middle CMI 22 1.5% / CMI 22 1.5%
(retiring in the future in normal health)	119% / 105%	113% / 101%
Current pensioners (retired in normal health)	SAPS 3 / SA(S 3 Middle 113% M 105% F	SAPsS 3 / SAPS 3 Mddle 108% M 101% F
Life expectancy		
of a male (female) future pensioner aged 65 in 20 yrs	22.8 (25.6) yrs	22.4 (25.3) yrs
of a male (female) current pensioner aged 65	21.5 (23.8) yrs	21.1 (23.5) yrs
Takeup of option to convert annual pension into lump sum at retirement	50% take maximum cash,	50%
	take 3/80ths cash	
Market value of total fund assets		
	£10,712m	£11,097m
Last actuarial valuation	Start of Period	End of Period
31st March 2022	30th June 2023	31st January 2024

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32j – Sensitivity Analysis of Actuarial Assumptions

Under IFRS the assumptions made by the actuary must be submitted to a sensitivity analysis. Below are the main assumptions used by the actuary and the effects on the pension fund accounts if those assumptions changed.

Sensitivity analysis based on assumptions as at 31st March 2023	Central Estimates for 2023/24	Sensitivity 1	Sensitivity 2	Sensitivity 3	Sensitivity 4	Sensitivity 5	
		+ 0.1% p.a. discount rate	+ 0.1% p.a. inflation	+ 0.1% p.a. salary inflation	+ 1 yr to member's life expect	change in investment returns	
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	+1% £000s	-1% £000s
Liabilities	75,974	71,426	78,356	76,215	77,867	75,974	75,974
Assets	(91,295)	(91,295)	(91,295)	(91,295)	(91,295)	(92,197)	(90,393)
Deficit/(Surplus)	(15,321)	(19,869)	(12,939)	(15,080)	(13,428)	(16,223)	(14,419)
Projected current service cost	831	721	891	831	854	831	831
Projected net interest cost	(773)	(1,097)	(653)	(757)	(677)	(817)	(728)
Projected Employer contributions	(901)	(901)	(901)	(901)	(838)	(838)	(838)

32k – Budgeting figures used in the Assumptions

Budgets used in assumptions for following year	2022/23 £000s	2023/24 £000s
Projected Pension cost next year		
Estimated Pay	4,614	5,153
Service Cost (% of pay)	16.7%	15.7%
Implied Service Cost including interest	788	831
Net Interest Cost	(523)	38
Administration Expenses	28	31
	293	900
Projected employer contributions next year		
Normal contributions	(674)	(752)
£ for £ recharges	(164)	(149)
	(838)	(901)
Projected deficit/(surplus) for operations next year	(545)	(1)
Projected deficit/(surplus)	(10,469)	(15,321)
Projected deficit/(surplus) at end of next year	(11,014)	(15,322)

Note 33 Contingent Assets & Liabilities

Contingent Assets

There are no known contingent assets.

Contingent Liabilities

There are no known contingent liabilities.

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Note 34 Cash Flow notes

Note 34a Reconciliation of Revenue Surplus to Net Cash Flow

Reconciliation of I&E Surplus to Net Cash Flow from revenue activities	RBC	
	31st March 2023 £000s	31st March 2024 £000s
Adjustments for non-cash movements		
Depreciation and Impairments	1,135	1,359
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	-	13
Revaluation losses charged to Revenue	212	(161)
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	31	362
Pension Fund Adjustment	1,357	(10)
Adjustments between accruals and cash accounting		
(Incr)/Decr in Long Term Debtors	30	4
(Incr)/Decr in Inventories	(60)	20
(Incr)/Decr in Debtors	(1,779)	1,154
Incr/(Decr) in Creditors	(6,955)	(715)
Less cash (Outflows)/Inflows from agency operations	(369)	(836)
Incr/(Decr) in Grant Receipts in Advance	112	1,369
Incr/(Decr) in Provisions	(1,027)	(81)
Incr/(Decr) in Pension Fund Prepayment	(900)	
Adjust net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	(8,213)	2,478
Adjustments for investing and financing activities		
Additions to PPE & intangible assets	2,038	3,509
Proceeds from the sale of PPE	(85)	(572)
Other income	(453)	(1,446)
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	1,500	1,491

Note 34b Net Change in Liquid Resources

Net change in liquid resources	31 st March 2023 £000s	31 st March 2024 £000s	Movement £000s
Cash in Hand	1	1	-
Cash at Bank	6,211	7,708	1,497
Net Book Value at 31st March	6,212	7,709	1,497

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Note 35 Accounting Standards Issued, but not yet adopted

The Council is required to disclose the impact on an accounting change required by a new accounting standard that has been issued on or before 1 January but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

The following standards have also been issued/amended but are not yet adopted:

- IAS1 (amendments in January 2022 and October 2022) – Provides clarifications for classification of liabilities as current or non-current in relation to settlement deferral, lending conditions and settlement by issuing equity instruments. The second amendment relates to information disclosures in instances where there is a right to defer settlement of a liability for at least 12 months which is subject to compliance with covenants.
- IFRS 16 Leases – including Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16) issued in September 2022. The amendments to IFRS 16 add additional measurement requirements for sale and leaseback transactions.
- IAS 12 (amendment issued in May 2023) – This relates to international tax reform.
- IAS7 and IFRS 7 (amendments issued in May 2023) – Requires additional disclosures in relation to supplier finance arrangements.

IFRS 16 Leases will lead to a substantial change in accounting practice for lessees, the current distinction between finance and operating leases will be removed. Instead, lessees are required to recognise assets and liabilities for all leases, with a term of more than 12 months (unless the underlying asset is of low value) i.e. the lessee will recognise a right-of-use asset representing its right to use the leased asset; and a lease liability representing the lessee's obligation to make lease payments for the asset.

CIPFA deferred implementation of IFRS 16 Leases until 1 April 2024.

These changes are not anticipated to have a material impact on the Council's accounts.

Note 36 Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in preparing this Statement of Accounts are:

- Estimates for depreciation of assets in any one year depend upon the forecast life of the assets. The asset life of buildings is determined by a qualified valuer at each revaluation date and in the case of vehicles, equipment and intangible assets by Council staff.
- Estimates for impairment of assets are performed by a qualified valuer at the end of each year to reflect any abnormal changes in property values between full formal reviews within the 5-year rolling revaluation programme.
- Following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in April 2013, Local Authorities are liable for a share of the cost of successful appeals by businesses against their rateable value in 2023/24 and earlier financial years. A provision has been calculated based on information provided by Analyse Local who use the latest Valuation Office Agency (VOA) ratings list of appeals and an analysis of successful appeals to date. The Council's share of the business rate appeals provisions at 31 March 2024 was £1,091k.

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Note 37 Events after the Balance Sheet date

This DRAFT Statement of Accounts was authorised for release by the Chief Finance Officer on 5th June 2024. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statement or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31st March 2024, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.



Note 38 Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future, or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2024

for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	The Council's fixed assets are valued on the balance sheet in accordance with the statement of asset valuation principles and guidance notes issued by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures all Plant, Property and Equipment required to be measured at fair value is revalued within a five year cycle. All assets reviewed had a valuation date of 1 April 2023. Any material changes after the valuation date have been accounted for.	The Council's property assets that are vulnerable to uncertainty are those valued under Current Value and Fair Value. There is the possibility that these values may change and as an illustration a 1% variation in these valuations could affect the assets values by £354k. The Council will continue to review their current valuation programme and reflect any changes in future valuation reports.

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<p>Pensions Liability</p>	<p>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 in pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p> <p>During 2023/24 the Council's actuaries advised that the net liability had decreased due to the re-measurement of assets and liabilities and the fund is now in surplus at £16.5k (at 2022/23 it was a £10.5k surplus).</p>	<p>Sensitivity to the factors contributing to this estimate is shown in Note 32. Small changes have major impacts on the pension liability. A 0.1% per annum increase in the discount rate assumption would result in a decrease in the pension liability of c£4.5m. A one year addition to the members' life expectancy would result in an increase in the pension liability of £1.9m</p>
<p>Business Rates - NNDR</p>	<p>Since the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme effective 1 April 2013, Local Authorities are liable for refunding ratepayers who have successfully appealed against the rateable value of their properties on the rating list. A provision has been recognised for these liabilities up to and including 31 March 2024. The estimate has been calculated using the Valuation Office (VAO) ratings list of appeals and with support from LG Futures. The costs will be shared between Central Government, Rossendale Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.</p>	<p>The Council's share of the business rate appeals provision is £1,091k, this has increased from £877k in the previous year.</p>

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is an agent's statement that reflects the statutory obligation for billing authorities to maintain a separate collection fund. The statement below shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to the collection from taxpayers and distribution to local authorities and the Government of council tax and non-domestic rates.

COLLECTION FUND	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000	Council Tax £000	Business Rates £000
Income				
Council Tax	45,199	-	47,177	-
Non Domestic Rates	-	10,583	-	12,618
Apportionment of Previous Year (Surplus)/Deficit				
Central Government	-	1,132	-	599
Rosendale Borough Council	(64)	906	(40)	479
Lancashire County Council	(325)	204	(209)	108
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	(51)	-	(33)	-
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	(16)	23	(10)	12
Total Income	44,743	12,848	46,885	13,816
Expenditure				
Precepts paid out				
Central Government	-	5,646	-	7,132
Lancashire County Council	31,164	1,016	32,798	1,284
Rosendale Borough Council	5,985	4,517	6,238	5,705
Lancashire Police Authority	4,866	-	5,237	-
Lancashire Fire Authority	1,590	113	1,713	142
Whitworth Town Council	58	-	60	-
Charges to the Collection Fund				
Write off of uncollectable amounts	253	29	469	156
Increase/(Decrease) in Bad/Doubtful Debts impairment allowance	683	(137)	220	(146)
Increase/(Decrease) in Provision for Appeals	-	(1,989)	-	535
Interest	-	-	-	1
Cost of Collection Allowance	-	96	-	97
NDR Transitional Protection Payments	-	(418)	-	(1,663)
Renewable energy	-	178	-	231
Total Expenditure	44,599	9,051	46,735	13,474
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	144	3,797	150	342
Surplus/(Deficit) Brought Forward	(132)	(4,335)	12	(538)
Surplus/(Deficit) Carried Forward	12	(538)	162	(196)
Allocated to				
Central Government	-	(200)	-	(29)
Lancashire County Council	12	(72)	118	(41)
Rosendale Borough Council	-	(259)	22	(123)
Lancashire Police Authority	-	-	16	-
Lancashire Fire Authority	-	(7)	6	(3)
	12	(538)	162	(196)

Collection Fund

Collection Fund Note 1 Council Tax Base

Council Tax derives from charges raised according to the value of residential properties, which have been classified into nine valuation bands (A-H) for this specific purpose. Individual charges are calculated by estimating the amount of income required to be taken from the Collection Fund by the Council for the forthcoming year and dividing this by the Council Tax base i.e. the equivalent number of Band D dwellings.

The basic amount of Council Tax for a Band D property rose in 2023/24 from £2,118.81 to £2,207.92 following increases by all preceptors.

The council tax base has been calculated as follows:-

Band	Ratio to Band D	Total No. Properties	Total equiv No. after Discounts & Exemptions	2023/24 Band D Equivalent	2022/23 Band D Equivalent
Special	5/9		42.3	23.5	24.2
A	6/9	16,348.0	11,570.0	7,713.3	7,605.3
B	7/9	5,107.0	4,210.3	3,274.7	3,250.7
C	8/9	4,322.0	3,827.2	3,402.0	3,360.4
D	1	3,441.0	3,195.0	3,195.0	3,149.9
E	11/9	2,002.0	1,878.0	2,295.4	2,273.2
F	13/9	703.0	667.6	964.3	958.1
G	15/9	455.0	423.4	705.7	695.2
H	2	40.0	27.0	54.0	54.5
		32,418	25,840.6	21,627.8	21,371.5
Less adjustments for anticipated changes to the base and losses on collection				(802.8)	(791.5)
Band D equivalent number of properties				20,825.0	20,580.0

Collection Fund Note 2 Provision for Rating Appeals

Provision for Rating Appeals	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Balance as 1st April	-	4,182	-	2,193
Provision made in year	-	150	-	884
Provision utilised in year	-	(2,139)	-	(350)
Balance at 31st March	-	2,193	-	2,727
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	-	877	-	1,091

Collection Fund Note 3 Provision for Bad Debts

Bad Debts Provision	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s
Balance as 1st April	5,469	1,563	6,152	1,428
Write-offs during year for previous years	(253)	(29)	(469)	(155)
Contribution to provisions during year	936	(106)	689	9
Net increase/(decrease) in provision	683	(135)	220	(146)
Balance at 31st March	6,152	1,428	6,372	1,282
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	836	516	859	513

Collection Fund

Collection Fund Note 4 Arrears

Arrears	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax	Business Rates	Council Tax	Business Rates
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance as 1st April	7,100	1,577	8,774	1,519
Change in year	1,674	(58)	155	(153)
Balance at 31st March	8,774	1,519	8,929	1,366
Balance at 31st March - Rossendale only	1,193	584	1,204	546

Collection Fund Note 5 RBC's Shares

RBC's Shares	2022/23		2023/24	
	Council Tax	Business Rates	Council Tax	Business Rates
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Within Debtors				
Arrears	1,193	584	1,204	546
Less Provision for Bad Debts	(836)	516	(859)	513
	357	1,100	345	1,059
Within Creditors				
Advance Receipts	(142)	(182)	(60)	(263)
Within Provisions				
Provisions for Rating Appeals	-	1,673	-	1,091

Collection Fund Note 6 National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Under the current Business Rate model Rossendale Borough Council retain 40% of the business rates collected locally.

Non-domestic rates are organized on a national basis. Central Government specifies an amount, for 2023/24 this is 51.2p in the pound, or 49.9p for small businesses (51.2p or 49.9p in 2022/23) and, subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying the rateable value of their property by that amount. The rateable value for business premises in Rossendale increased to £41,482k by March 2024, up from £36,253k in March 2023, this is mainly due to the national revaluation which was implemented in April 2023.

Since 2016/17 Rossendale Borough Council is entitled to keep 100% of the business rates from renewable energy installations. In 2023/24 renewable energy element of the business rates scheme was £231k, compared to £178k in 2022/23.

The net business rates collected within Rossendale (after provision for bad debts and appeals) were £12,072k compared with £12,680k in 2022/23. This reduction is mainly due to the transitional protection ratepayers have received to alleviate the impact of the 2023 revaluation. This usually tapers out over the period of the new rating list. The Council will be compensated by Government for the transitional protection awarded.

Collection Fund

Collection Fund Note 7 Lancashire Business Rates Pool

Since 1st April 2016 Rosendale Borough Council has been a member of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool.

In a Business Rate Pool, tariffs, top-ups, levies and safety nets are combined. This can result in a significantly lower levy rate or even a zero levy rate meaning that more or all of the business rate growth can be retained within the pool area instead of being payable to the Government.

The Lancashire Business Rates Pool, includes most but not all of the local authorities in Lancashire.

The business rates income allocations in 2023/24 are shown in the table below:

Lancashire Business Rates Pool - Income Allocations for 2022/23 and 2023/24	
District Authorities	40%
Lancashire County Council	9%
Lancashire Combined Fire Authority	1%
	50%
Central Government	50%
Total	100%

As part of the pool arrangements, one authority must be designated as lead authority, which in the case of the Lancashire Business Rates Pool is Ribble Valley Borough Council. As part of this arrangement a fee of £20,000 is payable, charged equally to all members of the pool by Ribble Valley Borough Council in their role as lead.

The retained levy in the Lancashire Business Rates Pool has been distributed as follows:

- Lancashire County Council is paid 10% of the overall retained levy
- Each district within the pool retains 90% of their retained levy.

Collection Fund

Lancashire Business Rates Pool Members 2023/24	Authority Type	Tariffs and Top-ups in respect of 2023/24	Retained Levy on Growth 2023/24	10% retained Levy Payable to/received by LCC	Net Retained Levy 2023/24
		£	£	£	£
Burnley Borough Council	Tariff	6,644,696	1,181,762	(118,176)	1,063,586
Chorley Borough Council	Tariff	7,526,179	1,188,279	(118,828)	1,069,451
Fylde Borough Council	Tariff	8,475,639	552,646	(55,265)	497,381
Hyndburn Borough Council	Tariff	4,852,009	1,865,276	(186,528)	1,678,748
Pendle Borough Council	Tariff	4,490,118	701,771	(70,177)	631,594
Ribble Valley Borough Council	Tariff	5,115,654	1,128,955	(112,896)	1,016,059
Rosendale Borough Council	Tariff	3,482,202	553,863	(55,386)	498,477
South Ribble Borough Council	Tariff	12,432,624	1,732,651	(173,265)	1,559,386
West Lancashire Borough Council	Tariff	10,139,515	1,505,307	(150,531)	1,354,776
Wyre Borough Council	Tariff	8,048,002	1,109,293	(110,929)	998,364
Lancashire County Council (LCC)	Top-Up	(162,376,050)		1,151,981	1,151,981
Central Government	-	91,169,412		-	-
Total			- 11,519,803	-	11,519,803

Collection Fund Note 8

Council Tax for all Precepting Bodies 2023/24

Precepting Bodies	2022/23	Change	2023/24							
	Band D		Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Rosendale	290.80	2.99%	199.66	232.94	266.21	299.49	366.04	432.60	499.15	598.98
LCC	1,334.53	1.99%	909.77	1,061.40	1,213.03	1,364.66	1,667.92	1,971.18	2,274.43	2,729.32
LCC - Adult Social C	179.76	2.00%	140.03	163.37	186.71	210.05	256.73	303.41	350.08	420.10
Fire	77.27	6.47%	54.85	63.99	73.13	82.27	100.55	118.83	137.12	164.54
Police	236.45	6.34%	167.63	195.57	223.51	251.45	307.33	363.21	419.08	502.90
Total (excl parish)	2,118.81	4.21%	1,471.94	1,717.27	1,962.59	2,207.92	2,698.57	3,189.23	3,679.86	4,415.84
Whitworth Parish	26.87	1.00%	18.09	21.11	24.12	27.14	33.17	39.20	45.23	54.28
Total (incl parish)	2,145.68	4.17%	1,490.03	1,738.38	1,986.71	2,235.06	2,731.74	3,228.43	3,725.09	4,470.12

Glossary

Accounting Policies - The rules and practices adopted that determine how transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements

Accruals - The concept is that income is recorded when it is earned rather than when it is received and expenses are recorded when goods or services are received rather than when the payment is made.

Agency Services - Services provided by the Council, as an agent on behalf of the responsible body, where the principal reimburses the Council for the cost of the work carried out.

Auditor's Opinion - The opinion required by statute from the Council's external auditors, indicating whether the statement of accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority.

Budget - A statement of the Council's spending plans for revenue and capital expenditure over a specified period of time.

Business Rates - From the 1st April 2013 non-domestic rates, or Business Rates, were localised. In the past all business rates were collected locally but then paid over to central government and each authority was paid a share of the national pool based upon their population and circumstances.

Capital Adjustment Account - The Account accumulates (on the debit side) the write-down of the historical cost of noncurrent assets as they are consumed by depreciation and impairments or written off on disposal. It accumulates (on the credit side) the resources that have been set aside to finance capital expenditure. The same process applies to capital expenditure that is only capital by statutory definition (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute). The balance on the account thus represents timing differences between the amount of the historical cost of noncurrent assets that has been consumed and the amount that has been financed in accordance with statutory requirements.

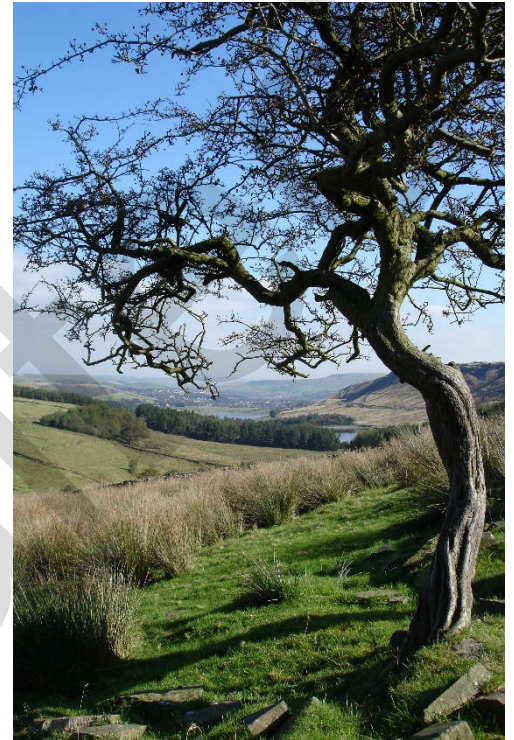
Capital expenditure - Spending on the acquisition or maintenance of assets either directly by the Council or indirectly in the form of grants to other persons or bodies. Section 40 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 defines 'expenditure for capital purposes'. Expenditure that does not fall within the definition must be charged to a revenue account.

Capital Financing Costs - The annual cost of borrowing (principal repayments and interest charges), leasing charges and other costs of funding capital expenditure.

Capital Grants Unapplied - Government grants and other contributions are accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipt have been complied with. This reserve holds the balance of grants unapplied at year-end.

Council Tax Base - The number of properties in each band is multiplied by the relevant band proportion in order to calculate the number of Band D equivalent properties in the area. The calculation allows for exemptions, discounts, appeals and a provision for non-collection.

Capital Receipts - Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets, such as land or buildings, or the repayment of capital grants or advances.



Glossary

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) - CIPFA is one of the leading professional accountancy bodies in the UK and the only one which specialises in the public sector. It is responsible for the education and training of professional accountants and for their regulation through the setting and monitoring of professional standards. Uniquely among the professional accountancy bodies in the UK, CIPFA has responsibility for setting accounting standards for a significant part of the economy, namely local government.

Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code) - The Code incorporates guidance in line with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). It sets out the proper accounting practice to be adopted for the statement of accounts to ensure they give a 'true and fair' view of the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the Council.

Collection Fund - The Collection Fund is a separate statutory fund which Billing Authorities have to maintain. It shows the transactions in relation to collection from taxpayers of National Non-Domestic Rates and the Council Tax, and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to Precepting Authorities and the General Fund.

Collection Fund Adjustment Account - Holds that portion of the Collection Fund cumulative balance attributable solely to Rossendale Borough Council.

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

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, is the Government department responsible for housing, communities, local government in England and the levelling up policy

Creditor - An amount owed by the Council for goods received, or services rendered to it within the accounting period, but for which payment has not been made.

Debtor - An amount of income due to the Council within the accounting period but not received at the balance sheet date.

Deferred Capital Receipts - Capital receipts to be received by instalments over agreed periods of time.

Depreciation - The measure of the wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in the useful economic life of a fixed asset.

DWP - The Department of Work and Pensions funds the Housing and Council Tax Benefits payable to borough residents and also funds the administration of those benefits.

Earmarked Reserves – The Council holds a number of reserves earmarked to be used to meet specific, known or predicted future expenditure.

Events after the Balance Sheet Date - These are events, favourable or adverse, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts are authorised for issue.

External Audit - The independent examination of the activities and accounts of Local Authorities to ensure the accounts have been prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and proper practices and to ensure the Council has made proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources.

Glossary

Fair Value – Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Financial instruments - Financial instruments are cash, evidence of an ownership interest in an entity, or a contractual right to receive, or deliver, cash or another financial instrument. Financial instruments can refer to both receivables (including debtors and other investments) and payables (including creditors and other liabilities or borrowings).

General Fund - This is the main revenue account of the Council covering day to day spending on services other than the provision of housing. Credited to the fund are charges made by the Council, specific Government and other grants and receipts from the Collection Fund.

Governance Framework - Authorities have a responsibility to ensure that their business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. 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 and engages with and leads the community. The principles of this framework were laid down by the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

Government Grant - Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in the form of cash or transfers of assets to an authority in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the authority.

Heritage Assets - These assets are held due to their historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities. They are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations, which are held and maintained for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

Impairment - A measure of abnormal consumption of the economic benefit of an asset over and above the normal annual depreciation.

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

Intangible Assets - Intangible assets are non-financial assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by the Council through custody or legal rights, such as software. Intangible assets are capitalised at cost and depreciated to the revenue account over their useful economic life.

Internal Borrowing - Whilst capital resources cannot be used to fund revenue works, revenue reserves can be used to support the costs of capital projects, either permanently, or temporarily. Temporary revenue funding is known as Internal Borrowing and these funds are repaid over the life of the asset in a process called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). When the Council has the revenue reserves to do this it is usually a cheaper option than external borrowing.

Joint Venture - A joint venture is a joint arrangement whereby the parties who have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the net assets of the arrangement.

Leasing - A method of utilising assets where a rental charge is paid for a specified period of time, instead of outright purchase.

Glossary

Loans outstanding - The total amounts borrowed from external lenders for capital and temporary revenue purposes but not repaid at the balance sheet date.

Materiality - Materiality is a concept within auditing and accounting relating to the importance of an amount, transaction, or discrepancy. Information is material if its omission or misstatement could influence the economic decision of users taken on the basis of the financial statements and depends on the size of the item or the particular circumstances of its omission or misstatement.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) - MRP is the minimum amount which must be charged to an Authority's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for credit liabilities, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

National non-domestic rates (NNDR) – NNDR is a tax levied on business properties and sometimes known as Business Rates. This tax is set nationally by the Government. Sums based on rateable values are collected by billing authorities and shared between major preceptors.

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

Net Debt - The authority's borrowings less cash and liquid resources. Where cash and liquid resources exceed borrowings, reference is made to net funds rather than net debt.

Operational assets - Assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Council in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility.

Precept - The levy made by precepting authorities on billing authorities, requiring the latter to collect income from Council Tax payers on their behalf, for example Lancashire County Council is a precepting authority which requires Rossendale Borough Council to collect an amount from each householder within the borough.

Prior Period Adjustment - Prior period adjustments are material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors.

Provision - An amount set aside in the accounts for liabilities which are likely or certain to be incurred but the exact amount and dates are not currently known.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) - An arm of Central Government which is the major provider of loans to finance long term funding requirements for Local Authorities

Related Parties - Related parties are Central Government, other Local Authorities, precepting and levying bodies, subsidiary and associated companies, Elected Members, and all senior officers. For individuals identified as related parties, the following are also presumed to be related parties:

- members of the close family, or the same household
- partnerships, companies, trusts or other entities in which the individual, or member of their close family or the same household, has a controlling interest.



Glossary

Reserve - Amounts set aside in one year's accounts which can be spent in later years. Reserves are often earmarked for specific purposes, including the financing of future capital expenditure, replacement or renewals and the funding of future defined Council initiatives.

Revenue Expenditure - Spending on day-to-day items including employees' pay, premises costs and supplies and services.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS) - Expenditure that does not result in creation of a non-current asset, but can be classified as capital for funding purposes. Such expenditure is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and an adjustment made in the Movement in Reserves Statement to enable the expenditure to be funded from capital resources rather than impact on the Council Tax. Examples include works on property owned by other parties, renovation grants and capital grants to other organisations.

Abbreviations used within the Statement of Accounts

CIPFA Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

CPI Consumer Price Index

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

FRS Financial Reporting Standard

GAAP Generally Accepted Accounting Principles

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities

IAS International Accounting Standards

IFRIC International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee

IFRS International Financial Reporting Standards **IPSAS** International Public Sector Accounting Standards

LASAAC Local Authority Accounts Advisory Committee

LGPS Local Government Pension Scheme **NDR** Non-Domestic Rates

PSAA Public Sector Audit Appointments

PWLB Public Works Loan Board

RSG Revenue Support Grant

SeRCOP Service Reporting Code of Practice

SSAP Statements of Standard Accounting Practice

TMPs Treasury Management Practices

Subject:	Corporate Risk Register Update Quarter 4 2023/24 (October - December)	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Audit and Accounts Committee	Date:	31 st July 2024
Report of:	Head of Finance	Lead Member:	Resources
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Contact Officer:	Kimberly Haworth	Telephone:	01706 212467
Email:	kimberlyhaworth@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 That the Audit and Accounts Committee note the Council’s Corporate Risk Register as detailed in this report.
- 1.2 That members note the risk consequence, mitigation action and level of risk as detailed in Appendix 1.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Quarter 4 (Q4) Corporate Risks Register Update is reporting for months January, February and March 2024.
- The report includes updates for the Council’s 9 Corporate Risks.
- Overall, the Council’s performance is strong but the financial pressures for the Rosendale Leisure Trust and the Council are creating cost pressures which the Council must monitor closely as the financial year progresses.
- The report concluded 2 Corporate Risks rated as ‘red’ on the RAG status.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council details its approach to managing risk in its Risk Management Strategy. This was updated in March 2016.
- 3.2 The strategy details the Council’s risk monitoring and reporting framework. The Council has identified 9 Corporate Risks and these are monitored via the quarterly performance management reporting schedule using a RAG rating dashboard to report the risk status. These are reported to both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 3.3 If a potential issue was identified during the periodic monitoring of the risk, the responsible officer would be required to identify the risk and note the actions needed to mitigate the level of risk.

4. DETAILS

- 4.1 The Council has reviewed and continues to monitor the Corporate Risk Register.
- 4.2 The Councils Corporate Risks are categorised at the end of Q4 as follows:

	Quarter 4 2023/24
Low	5
Medium	2
High	2

4.3	Corporate Risk 1	Likelihood	Impact	Overall	Status
	Stability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy	B	1	B1	RED

The Council's 2022/23 outturn performed better than the estimated position detailed within the February 2023 Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This has slightly improved the Council's reserve balances however, based on the February 2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy significant savings/income generation are required for the Council to maintain the minimum level of reserves by the end of the current forecast. Officers continue to maximise savings/efficiencies wherever possible, although further saving opportunities without affecting service delivery are minimal.

The Council has a continued a freeze on non-essential expenditure and officers continue to review and maximise income generation opportunities. All vacant posts are evaluated by the Corporate Management Team prior to recruitment.

The Empty Homes scheme continues to have an adverse impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and officers have continued to deliver and manage the scheme closely.

4.4	Corporate Risk 9	Likelihood	Impact	Overall	Status
	Financial Sustainability of Council Owned Leisure Assets	B	1	B1	RED

An external assessment has been carried out on the financial sustainability of Council-owned leisure assets by Grant Thornton.

The assessment made a number of recommendations that were agreed by Full Council in May 2023. This is now a focus of action. An established cross-party working group monitors the delivery of the recommendations and associated action.

5. RISK

5.1 The Council's Corporate Risk Register continues to be monitored by the Corporate Management Team on a regular basis.

6. FINANCE

6.1 Financial implications and risks arising are identified within this report.

7. LEGAL

7.1 There are no immediate legal considerations attached to the recommendations within this report.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Effective risk management is very important to the council, and the council is committed to improving on an on-going basis how it manages and mitigates risk. A very important part of this process is robust and transparent scrutiny and taking timely, corrective action to improve risk management.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 The Corporate Risk Register is dynamic. The updates to the risks demonstrate active mitigation of the existing risks. The Committee will want to explore the implications of each corporate risk in the appendices.

Background Papers	
Q4 Corporate Risk Register	Appendix 1

Corporate Risk Register

Risks are those things which might present a barrier to us delivering the things we have undertaken to achieve. Each year the Council reviews the potential risks it is facing and looks at what it might do to minimise the occurrence of such risks. This information is then regularly monitored and reviewed.

We profile our risks using a matrix (shown below) which is based on our making two judgments about each potential risk faced by the Council. The definition of the likelihood and impact can be found in the Council's Risk Management Strategy 2016.

The Council's Risk Matrix

Likelihood	A					
	B					
	C					
	D					
	E					
	F					
		5	4	3	2	1
	Impact					

Likelihood

How likely is it that the risk may occur (rated A-F, A being the most likely)

Impact

How serious might the consequences of the impact be (rated 1-5, 1 being the highest consequence). Therefore, a risk rated A1 is the highest risk rating and a risk of F5 is the lowest risk rating.

Risk RAG (Red, Amber and Green) rating status indicators	
Risk Status	Status description
GREEN	The likelihood and impact of the risk is low
AMBER	The likelihood and impact of the risk is medium
RED	The likelihood and impact of the risk is high

Risk 1 – Sustainability of the Medium Term Financial Strategy

Responsible Officer - Karen Spencer

Description

The Council's latest Medium Term Financial Strategy update published February 2022 indicates an underlying funding gap of c£600k per annum from 2023/24 onwards. The Council must take appropriate action in order to balance its annual expenditure against its available annual income and other revenue resources. The Council has a legal obligation to publish an annual balanced budget; this means its budget expenditure must equal its available income and any available reserves. Council reserves are limited and equate to only circa 3 years given the anticipated funding gap. Therefore additional income must be identified or annual costs reduced in future years. The current cost of living crisis may also add to the pressure on the Medium Term Financial Strategy through pay award, utility costs, contract inflation and Council Tax/NNDR collection rates.

Risk Consequence

If the Council is not able to prepare a balanced budget there would be legal ramifications, but would ultimately impact on the level of services the council is able to deliver to Rossendale residents and would result in major reputational damage.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
B	2	B2	RED

Mitigation

The Medium Term Financial Strategy does not indicate a significant narrowing of the gap in the next four years. New income generating opportunities will need to be identified to generate additional revenue, along with improved efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. Departments across the council will need to be challenged to become more effective.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Q4 Update

The Council's 2022/23 outturn performed better than the estimated position detailed within the February 2023 Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This has slightly improved the Council's reserve balances however, based on the February 2024 Medium-Term Financial Strategy significant savings/income generation are required for the Council to maintain the minimum level of reserves by the end of the current forecast. Officers continue to maximise savings/efficiencies wherever possible, although further saving opportunities without affecting service delivery are minimal.

The Council has a continued a freeze on non-essential expenditure and officers continue to review and maximise income generation opportunities. All vacant posts are evaluated by the Corporate Management Team prior to recruitment.

The Empty Homes scheme continues to have an adverse impact on the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and officers have continued to deliver and manage the scheme closely.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
B	1	B1	RED

Risk 2 – Major Disaster affecting the Delivery of Council Services**Responsible Officer - Clare Law****Description**

The Council has statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and to carry out emergency planning and business continuity management activities to minimise the impact of a civil emergency or business interruption on people living, working and visiting the borough.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have robust contingency plans in place could result in the failure to deliver Council services, such as, the collection of residential and trade waste, burial services and payment of suppliers and benefits.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	1	C1	AMBER

Mitigation

A robust Council Emergency and Business Continuity Plan is in place. Service continuity plans are updated and tested regularly through a quarterly Emergency Planning meeting. The plans are embedded with the Corporate Management Team as critical working documents to support the continued delivery of essential council services. All managers have a copy of the overall plan and their service plan and keep them under review. The Council is a member of Lancashire County Council Local Resilience Forum. Officers attend meetings and undertake regular training exercises. The council plans are available on the Resilience Direct website. Mutual aid agreements are in place with all Local Authorities across Lancashire.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Q4 Update

The Council's Local Flood Plan has been refreshed to ensure it is up to date and officers have continued to work with Lancashire County Council to update the Lancashire Flood Plan.

The streamlined out of hours' emergency contact process has been reviewed and is working well. Arrangements with Lancashire County Council and the Local Resilience Forum are kept up to date and accessible. Work remains ongoing with the Lancashire County Council Emergency Planning Team to update Rest Centre information and contacts. Emergency Planning Team meetings continue to be held quarterly. Officers continue to attend Local Resilience Forum meetings with other Agencies to ensure the Lancashire response to major incidents is robust. Work has been undertaken with East Lancashire's Counter-terrorism Officer to update the Rossendale risk register and Officers are also working with Lancashire County Council to strengthen emergency communication mechanisms. Officers continue to attend training to ensure they are up to date with arrangements for emergency response across Lancashire.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Risk 3 – Incident resulting in Death or Serious Injury or HSE Investigation**Responsible Officer - Clare Law****Description**

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), the Council has a duty of care towards the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and others who may be affected by our work. In the event of a RIDDOR reportable accident, there is a risk of a Health and Safety Executive investigation and potential for a civil claim for damages.

Risk Consequence

Failure to comply with current legislation and demonstrate compliance may result in harm to staff and others, financial loss and enforcement action.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	2	D2	AMBER

Mitigation

A robust Council Emergency and Business Continuity Plan is in place. Service continuity plans are updated and tested regularly through a quarterly Emergency Planning meeting. The plans are embedded with the Corporate Management Team as critical working documents to support the continued delivery of essential Council services. All managers have a copy of the overall plan and their service plan and keep them under review. The council is a member of Lancashire County Council Local Resilience Forum. Officers attend meetings and undertake regular training exercises. The Council plans are available on the Resilience Direct website. Mutual aid agreements are in place with all Local Authorities across Lancashire.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Q4 Update

Work has continued to implement the Health and Safety Action Plan, with a focus on premises safety. The safety compliance requirements for premises have been formalised and are being effectively monitored. The programme of workplace inspections for 2023/24 has been completed, with a further 3 inspections carried out during Q4. Health and safety risk management remains behind schedule as it is dependent on the Risk Management Strategy being agreed.

No further contact has been made from the Health and Safety Executive regarding the two reported cases of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome and the ongoing management of vibration in Operations continues and aims to progressively risks to staff. 24 health and safety reports were received during Q4, none of which were reportable under the RIDDOR Regulations. Incidents are reported via JCC and within Operations there is a focus on the discussion of incidents, action taken and lessons learned at the regular Health & Safety Committee meetings.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Risk 4 – Changes to Government policy on the delivery of the Council’s services**Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington****Description**

Like all local authorities the Council is a statutory body that is subject to changes being consulted upon and or implemented by central government that might affect how we operate and serve our residents/businesses.

Risk Consequence

The risk that the Council fails to react and be prepared for any changes being proposed or implemented by central government.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	2	E2	GREEN

Mitigation

The Council is a member of the Local Government Association and District Councils Network who keep us informed of government policy and consultations and lobby on behalf of councils to mitigate the impact of any change. The Council is also signed up to receive daily emails from Local Government Information Unit who provide daily government news and other Local Government Information Unit policy briefings. The Chief Executive and Leader of the Council meets regularly with our two MPs. The Council’s Corporate Management Team monitor and assess government’s position on funding to be distributed to local authorities and other Government announcements that impact funding.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	2	E2	GREEN

Q4 Update

The Council continues to be a member of the Local Government Association and District Councils Networks. The Chief Executive regularly attends the North West Chief Executive, and Lancashire Chief Executive meetings, both having representation from the Local Government Association.

‘Horizon Scanning and Policy’ is an agenda item on the Corporate Management Team’s weekly meeting and promotes ongoing discussions in relation to recent policy announcements, funding opportunities and other relevant information from government departments to determine any appropriate action required.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	2	E2	GREEN

Risk 5 – Sustainable Workforce

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

There is a requirement to have a sustainable workforce to deliver the Council services to residents and customers.

Risk Consequence

Failure to have a fully resourced, trained staff could result in the failure to deliver statutory and non-statutory service in a safe and professional manner to residents and customers.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	3	D3	AMBER

Mitigation

The Council has robust HR policies and procedures, an agreed Authorised Establishment, performance management framework and Service Area Business Continuity Plans in place to mitigate any staffing challenges such as loss of staff due to the impact of an epidemic or pandemic. HR will work with managers to develop workforce succession planning. The Council provides an attractive benefit package including final pension scheme, flexible working, generous annual leave, a purchase leave scheme, free onsite parking, family friendly policies, discounted gym memberships and a cycle scheme to attract and retain staff.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	3	E3	GREEN

Q4 Update

The number of employee leavers remains within our performance measure target. All vacant posts have successfully been recruited, with the exception of the HGV Technician and Programme Manager (in Property Services).

The level of sickness absence remains high but has improved in comparison to Q3. At the end of Q4, 5 staff remained on long-term absence. The most common reason for sickness absence remains as 'other musculo skeletal', closely followed by 'back and neck problems'. To address this, the Corporate Management Team has agreed to provide physio sessions to support a faster return to work for long term employees with 'musculo skeletal absences'. Short-term sickness absence has reduced compared to Q3 (1.35 days per full-time equivalent). The main reason for short term sickness absence (5.08 per full-time equivalent) continues to be 'infections, colds, flu' (0.18 days per FTE were Covid-19 cases although, government advice is not to test therefore more absence could be attributed to Covid-19).

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	3	E3	GREEN

Risk 6 – Insufficient data and cyber security**Responsible Officer - Andrew Buckle****Description**

Cyber security presents one of the most challenging areas for both the public and private sectors. With the proliferation and severity of attacks constantly increasing this represents a major threat.

Risk Consequence

Cyber-attack resulting in a complete loss of all systems coupled with malware being spread across the entire network. Data breach resulting in information loss causing reputational damage and resulting in a financial penalty due to non-compliance with statutory requirements such as General Data Protection Regulation, Payment Card Industry Data Security.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	1	C1	AMBER

Mitigation

To protect against a data breach the Council, host all council data in Tier 3 Data Centres located in different geographical regions and are backed up daily. The Council's Data Centres hold the following accreditations: ISO27001:2013 and the Payment Card Industry Data Security. The Council adopts a Risk Insight approach to determine the treat Landscape and more importantly its evolution. The Council has received notification of meeting the Public Services Network which means the Councils' infrastructure met all the security requirements to allow connection to the Public Services Network. A cyber security training is to be provided for all staff.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	1	D1	AMBER

Q4 Update

As part of the ongoing compliance and audit regulations Penetration Testing was successfully conducted in December and January 2023-24. This is required as part of the yearly Public Services Network compliance audit and forms part of the Rossendale Defence in Depth and ongoing approach to data and cyber security. The Council has met and satisfied all of the requirements set out by the Public Services Network and have been awarded security compliance.

As part of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Working Pensions a review of all data sources and an assessment around legal gateways has been carried out. The documentation will be passed to the Monitoring Officer for checking, approval and signature.

Cyber security training and phishing email exercises have been sent to all network users to provide key information around security and how to deal with any potential email security threats.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
D	1	D1	AMBER

Risk 7 – Poor communications and public relations

Responsible Officer - Clare Law

Description

Good communication and public relations is essential to inform, maintain and develop relationships with residents, customers and partners to provide effective and efficient Council services.

Risk Consequence

Failure to communicate and respond to issues as they develop and inadequately or inappropriately communicating could lead to a major loss of reputation for the Council on a local, regional and national level. A loss of reputation can damage staff morale, trust between the Council and residents and impair the relationship between the Council and its partners meaning projects and services delivery is damaged.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	B	1	B1	RED

Mitigation

Communication methods are in place to support face to face, mail or electronic communications with a developed website and social media channels to provide 24/7 communication service. The Council has an experienced public relation and communications function to support officers to deal with communications in a timely manner and promote the work of the Council.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	D	1	D1	AMBER

Q4 Update

Viva PR has continued to deliver the agreed communications including updates to the Council's website. The Corporate Management Team receive a weekly update, which includes horizon scanning and a monthly in person update to CMT.

A quarterly newsletter has been developed and will be available to residents, staff and members via the website. The newsletter will also encourage people to subscribe as a way of capturing data and increasing the Council's communion channels.

The Council has been nominated for 2 Local Government Chronicle awards for the 'Check before you Chuck' campaign and the Rossendale Works programme. 20 positive press releases, including stories on the regeneration work, have resulted in over 100 pieces of media coverage helping to promote the Council externally. Viva PR continue to act as first point of contact for the media and always respond in a timely manner ensuring good working relationships with local and regional media.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	E	1	E1	GREEN

Risk 8 – Non – Delivery of Corporate Programmes**Responsible Officer - Rob Huntington****Description**

The Council has agreed the 6 corporate programmes for 2023/24 to support the delivery of Corporate Plan.

Risk Consequence

Failure to deliver the corporate programmes would have a detrimental impact on the delivery of the Council's Valley Plan 2021-25, Our Place, Our Plan, and result in a reputational risk to the Council's commitment to the residents. The failure to deliver the corporate programmes could potentially have a negative impact on the council's revenue budgets (by failure to deliver income generating projects) and delivery of the medium term financial strategy, and the associated economic and social benefits may not be realised.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
C	2	C2	AMBER

Mitigation

Each corporate project has a Project Sponsor (member of the Corporate Management Team), a Project Manager and Finance Officer. Each corporate programme will have a robust project plan and live risk register. The Programme Sponsor will be responsible for the strategic overview of the corporate programme, and the Programme Manager will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the corporate programme. The Council's Programme Board meets quarterly to review the progress of the corporate programmes. The Programme Sponsor will be responsible for highlighting any concerns to the Corporate Management Team throughout the life of the corporate programme.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Q4 Update

A revised programme to support the delivery of the Valley Plan 2021-25 (Our Place, Our Plan) has been implemented, with appropriate governance and programme sponsorship in place.

The Programme Board now reports on the Council's overarching Programmes, rather than individual projects. Projects are monitored at an operational level.

The previous Programme Board meeting was 12th May 2024. Within the meeting, two programmes were reported within the 'red' RAG status. The Capital Regeneration programme was reported as 'red' due to ongoing communication issues with Lancashire County Council and the Properties programme was reported as 'red' due to staff shortages. Mitigations for both projects were discussed at the Programme Board and fed back to programme managers.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)

Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
E	2	E2	GREEN

Description

National lockdowns due to Covid-19 resulted in Council owned leisure facilities closing for extended periods. During closure no income was received and outside of lockdown periods, income was significantly reduced. The cost of living crisis will have a significant negative impact on utility and salary costs for the Trust. This has impacted the financial sustainability of the Trust.

Risk Consequence

If the Council owned leisure assets are to be sustained in the longer term, the operators of the facilities have little recourse to additional funding to survive other than through the Council. This financial impact was managed in 2021/22 through additional government grants and Council support, however the real impact is likely to be felt in 2022/23 and continue through 2023/24.

Initial risk assessment RAG status (without mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED

Mitigation

A report on the impact of all facilities has been produced by KKP and recommendations to minimise impact have been implemented. Senior Council officers are attending the Trust Board to ensure we work together to minimise costs and an intensive monitoring process is in place. Funding through a Covid-19 specific Sport England Fund has been received though this is limited in its amount and did not cover retrospective losses. Constant monitoring of future business plans and work in partnership to maximise income and reduce costs continues.

Risk assessment RAG status (after mitigation)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED

Q4 Update

An external assessment has been carried out on the financial sustainability of Council-owned leisure assets by Grant Thornton.

The assessment made a number of recommendations that were agreed by Full Council in May 2023. This is now a focus of action. An established cross party working group monitors the delivery of the recommendations and associated action.

Q4 risk assessment RAG status (current)	Likelihood	Impact	Overall Risk	Status
	A	2	A2	RED

Subject:	Annual Fraud Report 23/24	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:			
Report of:	Fraud & Compliance Officer	Lead Member:	Resources		
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forward Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Special Urgency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	Yes/No	Attached:	No	
Contact Officer:	Carol Walker		Telephone:	01706 252582	
Email:	carolwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk				

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 This report provides an update to committee on the work of the Fraud and Compliance Officer for 2023/2024.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report updates the Committee on the work undertaken in the previous financial year in relation to fraud and compliance activities, including the success that has been achieved in identifying fraud.
- This work has resulted in a financial saving to the Council and partner organisations.
- The Fraud and Compliance function provides assurance that if major fraud is attempted, there are systems in place to identify and prevent it.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty under section 151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs. There is a duty to have effective controls and procedures in place to prevent, detect, deter and investigate fraud and error in Council Tax Support, Council Tax and Business Rates. The responsibility for Housing Benefit fraud investigation transferred to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on 1st May 2015, along with the Council's Fraud Investigation Officer at that time. Local authorities retained the responsibility investigate Council Tax Support fraud, Council Tax exemptions, discounts and liabilities fraud and any Business Rate exemption and liability fraud. The Council made a decision to employ a Fraud and Compliance Officer, to prevent, detect, deter and investigate fraud within the Revenues area.

4. DETAILS

The objectives of the Fraud and Compliance function is to:

- Protect public funds.
- Undertake fraud prevention measures.
- Detect and stop fraud, thus making financial savings to the Council.
- Conduct investigations, implement sanctions and recommend appropriate follow on action in line with the Investigation, Sanction & Prosecution Policy, which is updated periodically.
- Ensure that investigations comply with the appropriate regulations.
- Increase fraud awareness.

4.1. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

4.1.1. The Fraud and Compliance Officer acts as Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for:

- The provision of information on Housing Benefit investigations to the DWP.

- Liaising with the Police and other local authorities/agencies by dealing with requests for information under the Data Protection Act and other legislation.

4.1.2. This is work which would otherwise have been allocated to the benefit assessment team.

4.1.3. The Council is an active member of NAFN (National Anti-Fraud Network). NAFN's key services include:

- Acquiring data legally, efficiently and effectively from a wide range of information providers.
- Acting as the hub for the collection, collation and circulation of intelligence alerts.
- Providing best practice examples of process, forms and procedures.

4.1.4. The Council works closely with Lancashire and Greater Manchester local authorities and meets regularly with other counter fraud practitioners to discuss common counter fraud issues and best practice.

4.2. COVID-19

4.2.1. During the last year the Fraud and Compliance function has received no new referrals in respect of Covid related fraud and attempts thereof.

4.2.2. Following investigation, the Fraud and Compliance Officer has made a total of 37 recommendations for the withdrawal of a covid grant/s. It is likely that work around decisions to withdraw the grants, recovery of thereof and ongoing disputes will continue in the medium term. Once complete, I will report further.

4.2.4 During 2023/24, no Covid cases were closed. There are no direct financial implications for Rossendale in respect of this work, which is carried out on behalf of central Government.

4.2.5 The police's National Investigation Service (NATIS) are investigating the organised and cross boundary fraud activities targeting Local Authorities. To date there has been no feedback from NATIS regarding any Rossendale cases referred.

4.3. NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE

4.3.1. The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise conducted by the Cabinet Office, to assist in the prevention and detection of fraud. Data is collected from around 1,200 participating organisations across public and private sectors including government departments. Data matching involves comparing sets of data electronically, such as the payroll or benefit records, against other records held by the same or another body to see how far they match. The data matching focuses on the identification of potentially fraudulent claims.

4.3.2. In February 2023, the NFI released its biannual set of data matches to all Councils for review and they will from time to time update these adding extra matches. This first release contained 98 matches relating to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support over 15 report types. Following the initial release, a further 5 reports with a total of 78 new matches for checking.

4.3.3. Checks comparing the matches against Council records are undertaken. Any Housing Benefit fraud identified is referred to the Department for Work and Pensions for investigation. The Fraud and Compliance function will investigate Council Tax Support fraud.

4.3.4. The Fraud and Compliance Officer has checked all reports to date, of these 17 matches have been referred to the DWP and 25 matches are/have been being reviewed by benefits or

investigated. Two of the cases are being jointly worked on with a Criminal Investigator at the Department for Work and Pensions.

4.3.5. During 2023/24, 5 matches have been closed with a positive outcome, resulting in adjustments of CTS totalling £5690.17 and a Housing Benefit overpayment of £514.48. 12 cases have been closed with no fraud identified and 5 cases are ongoing.

4.4. FRAUD AWARENESS TRAINING

4.4.1. A mandatory fraud awareness e-learning training course is completed annually by all employees. All new council employees and members have to complete the e-learning fraud awareness course, as part of their induction to the Council and received a fraud awareness leaflet.

4.4.2. Fraud awareness sessions occur on a rolling basis for Revenues, Benefits and One Stop Shop staff. These sessions include:

- The security of claims (including staff declaring an interest in any claims/properties)
- What is fraud within the differing areas of Revenues and Benefits
- Fraud in the 'hidden economy' incorporating what to look out for
- A general Question and Answer session.

4.4.3. Fraud Awareness training for Revenues, Benefits and One Stop Shop staff was conducted in December 2023 and January 2024 and a handy guide for spotting warning signs of fraud was written and issued to staff at the training sessions.

4.5. SURVEILLANCE

4.5.1 Surveillance is only authorised in appropriate cases where considered necessary and proportionate, in line with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA). During 2023/24 no cases were identified for surveillance.

4.6. SPECIAL EXERCISES

4.6.1 No special exercises were conducted during 2023/24.

4.7. PERFORMANCE AND STATISTICS

4.7.1. During 2023/24 146 allegations of fraud were received from various sources such as anonymous referrals, the Council's online fraud referral form, the HB/CT processing team, the Business Rates team etc. The number of referrals increased in all areas except for business rates where they declined.

Fraud Area	Number of Referrals
Council Tax Support	86
Housing Benefit	19
Council Tax [single person discount/exemptions etc.]	67
Business Rates [grant fraud/small business rate relief fraud etc.]	5

4.7.2. These referrals were received from

Source	Number of Referrals
Anon Referral	11
Assessment Team	23
Council Tax Team	6
DWP LAIEF	1
Email	4

LA Staff [Internal]	3
NFI	9
NNDR Team	2
One Stop Shop	5
Online Referral Form	39
Other	3
Other LA Staff	1
SAT Team	10

4.7.3. The types of fraud relating to these allegations

Allegation	Number of Referrals
C/Tax - Other	13
C/Tax - Property Not Listed For Rating	5
Ctax - Exemption fraud	1
C/tax - Liability Fraud	11
C/tax - SPD Fraud	40
CTS - Change in H/H Composition	7
CTS - Living Together	22
CTS - Not Resident	4
CTS - Other Fraud	11
CTS - Undeclared Capital	6
CTS - Undeclared COC (other)	3
CTS - Undeclared Income	11
CTS - Undeclared Land/Property	5
CTS - Undeclared Non-Dependant	11
CTS - WWIR	7
HB - Change in H/H Composition	4
HB - Living Together	3
HB - No rent liability	2
HB - Not Resident	3
HB - Other Fraud	3
HB - Undeclared Capital	2
HB - Undeclared COC (other)	1
HB - Undeclared Non-Dependant	1
NNDR - Sublet part of unit	1
NNDR - Undeclared business premises	4

4.7.4. During the 2023/24 year 38 cases were referred to the DWP for their consideration.

4.7.5. The DWP's Criminal Investigation Team issued 23 requests for information in relation to their investigations linked to Housing Benefit fraud. There were 11 requests from the DWP's Compliance Team for further information in relation to their non-criminal investigations. These requests have now returned to pre-pandemic numbers.

4.7.6. Following the Fraud and Compliance Officers involvement/investigations, the following overpayments/adjustments were identified

Area	Value	Number of cases
Council Tax Support adjustment	£40,478.25	17
Single Person Discounts withdrawn	£1329.10	4
Housing Benefit overpayment	£43,976.67	4

4.7.7. Five £70 Council Tax Support penalties and three £50 Housing Benefit penalty were applied following fraud investigations.

4.7.8. An additional methodology to identify counter fraud performance is also in place. This is because when a claim for an allowance, discount, reduction, benefit or exemption ends or

reduces as a result of an intervention by the Fraud and Compliance function, the value of the intervention is actually not just the amount of any overpayment that has occurred. It is recognised that there is also a “future” saving, resulting from preventing further incorrect payments being made. In these cases, the weekly amount of reduced entitlement that is applied following a counter fraud intervention is multiplied by 52. It is reasonable to believe that the award would have continued for an average of one year, had no intervention taken place. This was agreed as an appropriate performance measure by the Lancashire and Greater Manchester Fraud Investigators Group.

4.7.9. The weekly figure for the Council is £197.39, giving estimated “future” savings from 2023/24 activity of £10,264.28. It should be noted that “future” savings can only be estimated, but do help demonstrate another benefit to the Council of undertaking counter fraud work. This saving is only calculated against Council Tax Support.

4.7.10. The “Analyse Local” System is used to identify properties that are missing from the rating list or are undervalued. Typically the cases identified through Analyse Local are those in remote locations, unreported alterations to existing sites and internal changes which have an effect on rental value. They tend to be scenarios which are not picked up through the general property inspection regime. During 23/24 the use of Analyse Local to assist in business rates forecasting generated a total additional rateable value of £17,010. Including backdating, the estimated rate yield from these cases is £15,009.22.

4.8. RECOVERY

4.8.1. Capita actively recover any Housing Benefit overpayments, Council Tax Support adjustments, discounts and exemption removals raised because of fraud activities.

4.8.2. Fraudulent Housing Benefit overpayments attract a 40% subsidy, this means that any monies collected over 60% of the overpayment, is additional income for the Council. If 100% of the overpayment is recovered then the Council would retain 140% of the original overpaid.

4.8.3. Fraudulent overpayments are not separately recorded from other recoverable overpayments such as council error. In 2023/24 £192,438.68 of recoverable overpayments were raised and £151,088.81 collected at a collection rate of 79.6%. Ongoing overpayment collection is reported quarterly as a key performance indicator. Of note, these figures exclude overpayments raised and collected during quarter two, due to a DWP exercise which distorted the figures.

4.8.4. Similarly, no separate recovery figure for council tax and NNDR adjustments is available. In year collection rates for all council tax was 95.75% in 2023/24 with 98.60% for NNDR.

4.9. OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY FRAUD PREVENTION ACTIVITY

4.9.1. The Exchequer Team continue to verify any changes to bank details they receive before amending details on their system. They never use the contact details supplied on the change request notification to verify the change, but will check for another contact on the internet etc.

4.9.2. NAFN issued intelligence alerts relating to criminals targeting various areas of Local Authority business, such as procurement impersonation fraud, corporate impersonation fraud, bank mandate fraud and staff salary mandate fraud, these are passed to the relevant teams to make them aware of impending threats.

4.10 SOCIAL MEDIA & ROSSENDALE BC WEBSITE

4.10.1. The Council's Facebook page and website have been used to highlight scams to our residents.

4.11. JOINT WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

4.11.1. The Council currently has six joint working cases with DWP and one closed case which was not suitable to progress to prosecution following interview. All investigations are complex and are therefore time consuming. These cases involve both Fraud Investigators obtaining evidence, conducting a joint interview under caution, then if the case is suitable for prosecution, preparing it jointly for the Crown Prosecution Service [CPS]. The investigation of cases is to a criminal standard therefore it is resource intensive, due to the amount of work required in collating and preparing the evidence, contacting witnesses in respect of witness statements and completing the relevant paperwork required for the CPS.

4.12. FRAUD TRENDS

4.12.1 There are currently a number of linked investigations relating to Council Tax liability fraud. Landlords are using lost ID's and the ID's of European citizens who have returned to their country of origin following changes rules following Brexit, to create fake tenants/tenancy agreements. The landlords are presenting the ID and tenancy agreement to Council Tax, who create a Council Tax liability. The tenants subsequently do not contact the Council nor are any Council Tax payments made. The investigations are on-going at this stage.

4.13. CONCLUSION

4.13.1. This report has been developed to provide performance information in relation to the activities undertaken by officers and to demonstrate the joint working with other agencies on either a mandatory or voluntary commitment basis.

4.13.2. This work has resulted in fraud being identified and repayments to the Council and partners being made.

4.13.3. An element of the work programme is determined by the number of fraud referrals received. There would normally be scope within the workload for other proactive exercises to be undertaken, but due to the number of joint working complex cases and the NFI work no targeted exercises took place. It is anticipated that proactive exercises will be conducted during 2024/25.

4.13.4. Now joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions has resumed, it is anticipated that the offers of joint working from DWP will increase. To date seven of the eight joint working cases have been instigated by the Local Authority. This in turn will move joint working in a different direction to previous years. It is hoped that any successful prosecutions attract publicity, as this acts as a deterrent.

4.13.5. To summarise, as a result of actions by the Council's Fraud and Compliance function during 2023/24 there have been -

- £40,748.25 Council Tax Support adjustments created.
- £43,976.67 Housing Benefits overpayments raised.
- £1,329.10 Single Person Discounts were withdrawn.

5. RISK

5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

In common with all other public bodies, Rossendale Borough Council is potentially vulnerable to fraud, either internally by its employees, or externally from members of the public. The Council has an on-going duty to protect public funds. This report, summarises the work of the

Fraud and Compliance function and provides a key source of assurance for the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of its counter fraud arrangements.

6. FINANCE

6.1 The financial implications of failing to protect the Council are potentially substantial. The Council's strategy for tackling fraud provides an assurance that public funds are being protected from abuse. Fraud leaves the Council with less to spend on services for residents and costs taxpayers' money.

7. LEGAL

7.1 The work outlined herein supports good governance and demonstrates effective financial stewardship and strong public financial management. It is supported through other policies and procedures to include the Council's Whistleblowing policy.

8. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any policy implications are included in the body of the report. No equality implications.

9. REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 To note the work undertaken in the previous financial year in relation to fraud and compliance activities, including the success that has been achieved in identifying fraud.

No background papers

Subject:	Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Audit & Accounts Committee	Date:	31 July 2024
Report of:	Head of Internal Audit (Internal Audit Service)	Lead Member:	Resources
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required: No	Attached:	No
Contact Officer:	Mark Baskerville, Audit Manager	Telephone:	01772 538615
Email:	mark.baskerville@lancashire.gov.uk		

1 RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Committee are asked to consider the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Committee are asked to consider the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24. The Annual Report provides an independent, objective opinion on the adequacy of design and the effectiveness of operation of the Council's systems of governance, risk management and internal control.
- 2.2 Overall, I can provide moderate assurance over these systems for 2023/24, based on the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Service in the year.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the relevant standard setter for internal audit in local government in the United Kingdom. CIPFA has published Public Sector Internal Audit Standards ('PSIAS'), which encompass the mandatory elements of the Global Institute of Internal Auditors' International Professional Practices Framework, including its Definition of Internal Auditing, Code of Ethics, and its International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. These documents are therefore mandatory for internal audit in local government in the United Kingdom, and they are supplemented within PSIAS by additional public sector interpretation and guidance. CIPFA has also published a Local Government Advisory Note setting out sector-specific requirements for local government within the United Kingdom. The Internal Audit Service therefore operates in accordance with this mandatory definition, code, standards and advice.
- 3.2 The Annual Report of the Head of Internal Audit meets these requirements and is attached at Appendix A.

4 DETAILS

- 4.1 This paper reports progress with the delivery of each audit on the 2023/24 annual audit plan

5 RISK

- 5.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- Failure to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) would undermine the ability to provide the Council with the necessary level of assurance in relation to their governance, risk management and internal control arrangements;

- The report enables the Leader and Chief Executive to report in the Annual Governance Statement.

6 FINANCE

6.1 Any financial implications are commented upon in the report.

7 LEGAL

7.1 Any legal implications are commented upon in the report.

8 POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Reported findings have been discussed and agreed, including management responses to the recommendations, with respective Service Managers and Heads of Service prior to reporting.

9 REASON FOR DECISION

9.1 To support the Audit and Accounts Committee in fulfilling its responsibility to monitor Internal Audit performance.

No background papers.

Appendix A

Rossendale Borough Council

**Internal Audit Service Annual Report
Year ended 31 March 2024**



1 Introduction

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report summarises the work that the council's The Service (the Service) has undertaken during 2023/24 and the key themes arising in relation to internal control, governance and risk management across Rossendale Borough Council (the council).

The role of internal audit

- 1.2 The Service is an assurance function that provides an independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the council's control environment. The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors (CIIA) require the Head of Internal Audit to provide an opinion on the council's control environment and a written report to those charged with governance, timed to support the annual governance statement. This report gives my opinion based on the work the Service performed during 2023/24. Rossendale Borough Council outsource the provision of a complete audit service to Lancashire County Council.

Interim progress reports

- 1.3 We have provided summaries of findings from audits completed throughout the year in progress reports submitted to each Audit and Accounts Committee meeting, and this report also includes progress with delivery of the 2024/25 audit plan agreed by the committee in March 2024.

Acknowledgements

- 1.4 I am grateful for the assistance provided the staff of Rossendale Borough Council in the course of our work.

2 Summary assessment of internal control

Overall opinion

- 2.1 I can provide **moderate** assurance overall on the adequacy of design and effectiveness in the operation of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control. This is the same opinion as I gave in 2022/23. In forming my opinion, I have considered the work undertaken by the Service throughout the year as well as the work of external assurance providers and information available from less formal sources than planned audit engagements.
- 2.2 Internal Audit's work covered the full range of the council's services and established that, as would be the case in any normal organisation, there are some areas of the council's business where improvements need to be made, but there are plans and agreed management actions in place to address these.
- 2.3 Annex A to this report provides extracts from final reports not previously reported, and we will provide full reports to members if they wish. Annex B describes Internal Audit's scope, responsibilities and assurance, and Annex C explains the assurances we provide.

Key issues and themes

- 2.4 Delivery of some specific planned audits plan as affected to a degree by limited capacity to support audit work and these audits took longer to complete than might otherwise be the case. However, we have completed all but one planned audit to at least draft report stage. We agreed to defer the audit of contract procedure rules audit to 2024/25 when sufficient capacity would be available to support audit delivery. Our assurance opinion reflects the fact that systems and processes are generally working effectively and we gave positive assurance opinions, substantial or moderate, on all audits completed at the time of this report.

- 2.5 In most of the areas audited we were satisfied that policy and procedures were in place but were often overdue for review and revision. The council's customer contact processes are working effectively though we agreed some improvement actions to monitor and assess the quality of call responses and to support collaboration between services involved. We also carried out an evaluation of council compliance with the Best Value Duty, concluding that it complied with all but one of the seven themes – the need for an established transformation function - and we agreed improvement actions to address this. Lack of compliance has been a common theme in other areas, for example increasing numbers of retrospective orders indicated a need for more oversight, staff guidance and training to ensure staff are aware of and comply with the correct processes. We agreed an action on our previous audit which has not yet been implemented and this has been the case in other audits, for example on debt management. We acknowledge that the council's difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff has adversely impacted progress to implement agreed actions as well as the capacity to sustain compliance with operational controls and to support audits. The council's awareness of this issue is evidenced in that it is recorded in the council's performance management reports and the 2023/24 Qtr. 3 report which records the number of employee leavers as in line with the national average. The Risk Register for the same period on sustainable workforce highlighted as 'Amber' the impact of not having a fully resourced, trained staff.
- 2.6 The table at 3.1 records the number of the assurance opinions given on the audits completed in each audit plan theme. It shows that we issued an equal number of substantial and moderate opinions, with no limited or no assurance opinions, although this may change once the four draft audit reports are finalised.
- 2.7 It should be noted that this opinion does not imply that Internal Audit has reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the Council and is not an absolute assurance of the effectiveness of internal control arrangements and the management of risk. Neither this report nor the work of Internal Audit should be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound internal control practices. The purpose of this opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Council which underpin the assessment of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control, in the Annual Governance Statement.

Management's responses to our findings

- 2.8 We have discussed the issues we raised during the year with service managers and members of the Senior Management Team and agreed action plans to address the need for improved controls. Follow up work during 2023/24 indicates that risks identified in previous years are largely being addressed and that work is in hand to implement some agreed actions although others had not been implemented. The senior management team also receive regular reports on implementation of audit actions.

The council's control framework

- 2.9 Our work has been organised in accordance with the Service's planning principles and an understanding of the council's controls at the start of the year, which was set out as follows:

A framework for governance, risk management and control						
Governance and democratic oversight						
Corporate governance framework	Decision-making	Oversight and scrutiny	Policy setting			
Business effectiveness						
Risk management	Performance monitoring and management	Organisational design	Financial governance and planning	Working in partnership with others		
Service delivery						
Growth, environment, transport & community services			Children's services & education	Adult services, health & wellbeing		
Economic development & planning	Programmes & project management	Community services	Children's services	School improvement & services	Adult Services	Public health
Service support						
Legal services	Skills, learning & development	Core business systems	Property management	Programme management	Business intelligence	Customer access
Business processes						
Financial systems & processes		Procurement	Facilities management		Human resources	
Budget monitoring		Contract monitoring & management	Information management		Payroll processing	
Investment			Business continuity		ICT systems	

3 Summary of assurance provided by the Service

3.1 The table below summarises the assurances we provided on 2023/24 audits completed to the end of June 2024, which contributed to our annual assurance opinion, including comparative figures from previous years. This excludes follow up work from previous audits. The table at 3.2 reports the status of each audit on the annual plan

Year	Final Reports Issued	Assurance provided					N/A
		●	●	●	●		
2023/24	12	5	5	0	0	2	
	100%	42%	42%	0%	0%	16%	
2022/23	16	4	10	1	-	1	
2021/22	19	5	11	-	-	1	
2020/21	11	4	3	-	-	3	

3.2 The table below reports the status of each audit on the 2023/24 audit plan, and the assurance opinion given for audits that are completed.

Audit Title	Status	Assurance
Governance and democratic oversight		
Contract procedure rules	Deferred	N/A
Business effectiveness		
Flexible working from home	Complete	● Substantial
Best Value Duty – Statutory Framework	Complete	● Substantial
IT application Xpress Elections System (MIAA)	Complete	● Moderate
CCTV systems (MIAA)	Cancelled	N/A
Service delivery		
Project management	Draft	
Land charges	Complete	● Moderate
Service support		
Customer contact	Complete	● Substantial

Audit Title	Status	Assurance
Business processes		
Payroll	Complete	● Substantial
Housing benefits and council tax support	Complete	● Substantial
Accounts receivable	Draft	
Income collection/ banking	Draft	
General ledger, budget setting and monitoring	Draft	
Accounts payable	Complete	● Moderate
Council tax	Complete	● Moderate
Business rates/ NNDR	Complete	● Moderate

Stage of audit process	Number	Percentage
Complete/ final report	10	62.5%
Draft report	4	25%
Progressing	0	0%
Not yet started	0	0%
Deferred/ Cancelled	2	12.5%
Total number of audits	16	100%

4 Progress against the 2024/25 internal audit plan

4.1 The table below reports progress with delivery of audits on the 2024/25 audit plan. Since the last Internal Audit progress report was provided to the Audit and Accounts Committee in March the Service has started work on delivery of this year's audit plan. Six audits are at the planning stage with initial meetings senior managers held to agree the scope and approach. The remaining audits have been scheduled in for delivery through the year. We have also allocated two further auditors to provide additional flexibility and resource to support plan delivery.

Control Area	Audit Progress	Assurance
Governance and democratic oversight		
Contract procedure rules	Q4 Start	
Procurement Act 2023	Q2 start	
Subject Access/ Freedom of Information	Q4 start	
Business effectiveness		
Risk Management	Q3 start	
IT Audit - Scope to be confirmed	Not started	
Service delivery		
Public Protection Unit	Q3 start	
Waste, Cleansing and Recycling Improvement	Planning - Q2	
Service support		
Expense claims	Planning - Q3	
Recruitment	Q3 start	

Business processes		
Payroll	Planning - Q2	
Council tax	Planning - Q2	
Business rates/ NNDR	Planning - Q2	
Housing benefits	Planning - Q2	
Accounts payable	Q4 start	
Accounts receivable	Q4 start	
General ledger and budget setting	Q4 start	
Income collection/ banking	Q4 start	

5 Implications for the annual governance statement

- 5.1 In preparing its annual governance statement the council should consider this annual assurance opinion in relation to its control environment, risk management processes and corporate governance. The council should therefore reflect the progress made in delivering the actions set out in the council's improvement plan, describing the impact of completed actions on corporate governance and its plans to implement the remaining actions.

6 Organisational independence

- 6.1 The Service has access to and support from the council's senior management team and can operate independently within the organisation, so is properly able to fulfil its responsibilities. In accordance with its Charter the Service remains independent of the council's other functions and, except for its support to management in relation to counter fraud work, no member of the Service has any executive or operational responsibilities.
- 6.2 The Service's work programme and priorities are determined in consultation with the senior management team and the Audit and Accounts Committee but remain decisions for the Head of Internal Audit who, with the Audit Manager, has direct access to and freedom to report in their own names and without fear or favour to all officers and members. During the year, there have been no matters arising which have impacted on the independence of the Service and there have been no inappropriate scope or resource limitations on internal audit work.
- 6.3 The Service has a stable and experienced Audit team and has seen little staff turnover in recent years but a vacancy for a Trainee Auditor will be advertised shortly. The most recent notable change occurred with the establishment of an Investigation Service in 2022/23.

7 Internal audit performance

Client satisfaction

- 7.1 Internal Audit invites feedback on the quality of service provided by issuing a 'satisfaction questionnaire' at the end of each audit. This is an important process in terms of identifying how the audit was received by the service area and of identifying aspects of the audit process that can be improved. Responses from auditees indicated that, overall, they were satisfied with the way we conducted our work with them. There were no common themes in the responses received that highlighted particular areas for Service improvement.

8 Internal Audit quality assurance and improvement

- 8.1 The Service has established and regularly reviews a quality assurance and improvement programme. PSIAS requires that all aspects of internal audit activity are considered by a combination of ongoing internal monitoring, periodic self-assessment or internal assessment by others with sufficient knowledge, and independent external review at least once every five years.

Type of review	Internal review		External review
Frequency	Ongoing	Periodic	At least 5-yearly
Audit assignment quality	✓		✓
Professional and operational framework		✓	✓

- 8.2 Following this framework, the Service's quality assurance and improvement programme consists of internal ongoing monitoring of audit assignment quality, periodic internal assessment of the professional and operational framework, and external review.

External review

- 8.3 The findings of the last external quality assessment (EQA) undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors were reported to the committee in April 2023. This confirmed that the Internal Audit Service 'generally conforms' to the full range of standards set out in the International Professional Practice Framework. Another external review is due to be completed in 2028/29, with a self-assessment planned for 2024/25 the findings of both will be reported to this committee.

Internal review


- 8.4 The Service has designed procedures and an audit methodology that conform to PSIAS and are regularly reviewed. Every auditor in the team is required to comply with these or document reasons for non-compliance, and to demonstrate compliance on every assignment. Audit managers assess the quality of each audit as it progresses, and a post-audit file review process is undertaken. These reviews indicate that there is good evidence of compliance with our audit methodology and input from the audit managers to support the work of the auditors.

9 Extracts from Audit Reports

- 9.1 Extracts of assurance summaries, findings and agreed actions from final audit reports not previously reported are shown below in Annex 1 to this report.


Extracts from Internal Audit reports

Accounts Payable


Overall assurance rating	Audit findings requiring action			
 Moderate	Extreme 0	High 0	Medium 1	Low 1


See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

The expected key controls are well designed and operating effectively with the qualification that we were concerned at the number of retrospective orders which continue to be raised, bypassing the requisition and purchase order approval process. We raised an action to address this issue initially in our 2020-21 audit and all subsequent reports. We are raising this action again, to review transactions and determine how prevalent the issue is and take action to identify and challenge those individuals or services responsible for significant non-compliance. We confirmed guidance is available and training is provided when new officers are given access to the system. The council should also consider a specific key performance indicator, to raise the profile of this issue through the quarterly performance monitoring reports to senior managers and members. Despite this issue, which typically impacts the finance services ability to promptly pay suppliers, the 30-day trades terms key performance indicator was achieved in the most recent report, quarter 3 2023-24. Separation of duty arrangements are sufficient between requisition, purchase order, invoicing, payment and reconciliation. Invoices are generally matched with purchase orders and goods received notes prior to payment with some known exceptions, such as for utility bills. Expenditure is correctly coded and payments are reviewed and approved prior to processing by the Head of Finance. The creditor control account reconciliation had been consistently completed, with a persistent -£60k known variance. We propose that the council instruct their system provider Civica to address this issue and enable fully balanced reconciliations.

Agreed actions from 2023-24 audit	Priority
Compliance with established procurement rules should be promoted through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of reminders to officers who continually raise retrospective orders, supported by training on the purchase order process for non-compliant officers; 	Action ref 4.1 

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodically compiling a report of all retrospective orders raised and the services that use them for submission to heads of service and the Corporate Management Team, to inform senior managers of the extent and impact of repeated non-compliance with the established process; and Consideration should be given to monitor and report the prevalence of retrospective purchase orders as a key performance indicator (KPI). 	
The council should raise a request with the system provider Civica to investigate and resolve incorrect debits that are preventing balancing of key control accounts.	Action ref 4.2 

Agreed action from 2022-23 audit report	Status	Priority
<p>Compliance with established procurement rules should be promoted through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The issue of reminders to officers who continually raise retrospective orders, supported by training on the purchase order process for non-compliant officers; Periodically compiling a report of all retrospective orders raised and the services that use them for submission to heads of service and the Corporate Management Team, to inform senior managers of the extent and impact of repeated non-compliance with the established process; and Consideration should be given to monitor and report the prevalence of retrospective purchase orders as a key performance indicator (KPI). 	We were told by the Senior Finance Officer that this action has not been implemented. We found a third of sampled invoices during this review were retrospective purchase orders.	<p>Not implemented</p> 

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit, Risk & Governance Committee. The audit covers the period April 2023 to March 2024 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The Finance Service administers the creditor database, processes invoice and reconciles spending to the general ledger. The council uses Civica financial software in conjunction with an imaging software package to create and automatically match invoices to purchase orders and goods received notes once completed by services.

2.3 Financial Information

For the period April 2023 to March 2024, the council raised 7187 invoices with a total approximate value of £33m excluding County Council precepts and central government business rate payments.

2.4 Previous audit


An internal audit of Accounts Payable was last carried out in March 2023. This resulted in a moderate assurance opinion being issued with one medium risk action regarding retrospective purchase orders being agreed.

2.4 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- The Council is charged for goods it did not order and/ or receive;
- Incorrect/ inaccurate or duplicate/ fictitious payments are made from the Council's bank account;
- Creditor data held on the system is inaccurate or unauthorised changes are made to the system;
- Inaccurate postings are made to creditor accounts;
- Invoices are not paid within agreed trade terms leading to interest charges and financial loss.





Land Charges

Overall assurance rating	Audit findings requiring action			
 Moderate	Extreme	High	Medium	Low
	0	0	2	2

See Appendix A for Rating Definitions

The council provides a fully electronic service for the submission of local land charge search requests including an electronic payment facility. Guidance for Land Charges Officers is available in the Local Land Charges Book supported by the Land Charges Institute which has an established group of members providing support and help with queries. Whilst the Land Charges Officer was clear on the processes around the financial administration of local land charge searches, documented procedure would be beneficial for new and temporary staff supporting the function. The Local Land Charges pages on the council website provide information and guidance for service users including how to apply though this only refers to the National Land Information Service (NLIS) facility including a link to the NLIS Hub, and there is no mention of other methods for submitting search applications, including the InfoTrack and TM Online Portal, which would be useful for customers and service users. The Fees and Charges Schedule which includes local land charge search fees was reviewed in February 2023 as part of the 2023/24 Council Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and subsequently approved by Cabinet and Full Council. Details of the local land charge search fees are set out online on the council website. A sample of search requests were found to have been correctly charged in accordance with the approved fee charges schedule and these were properly supported by a BACS statement and payment confirmation or invoice.

The Land Charges Team maintains the Local Land Charges Register which includes adding and removing charges. Audit testing of ten financial land charges found that formal Notices and invoices requesting payment were issued to property owners by the relevant department. However, invoices for three of these were no longer due but the charge remained on the register, a formal process needs to be put in place to ensure the accuracy of the local land charges register. Recovery action for three others has not progressed due to the landlord absconding and therefore further action is required with the use of National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) data and credit check agencies to locate individuals and chase payment or take legal action. A financial monitoring report is presented to senior management and members on a quarterly basis. The financial monitoring report from March 2024 highlighted only a £2.8k variance on the Land Charges budget line, which relates to staffing costs, though overall corporate management outturn is showing an expected favourable variance of £96.3k. Local land charges income is showing an adverse variance of £26k which relates to sundry debts held on the Local Land Charges Register, expected to be recovered when the property is sold. Action has been taken to appoint a Legal Services Officer to proactively chase outstanding debts whilst further work is required around developing a coordinated approach to debt recovery action including training for managers and the use of credit check agencies.

Agreed actions from the audit	Priority
Proper procedures setting out the payment options available for each type of search request and how these are administered and processed should be put in place and made accessible to staff.	
The Land Charges pages on the council website are updated to reflect the options available to submit land search requests including a link to each provider.	
Management should contact Civica Financial Services to establish if there is a facility to separately identify land charges related payments so that the Land Charges Team can be informed of the need to remove the charge from the register. If this is not possible, the Land Charges Officer should be requested to confirm debts are unpaid prior to issuing responses to land search requests to ensure information supplied is accurate.	
Management should develop an approach to debt recovery which fosters involvement from the Finance, Legal Teams as well as the service issuing the notice and ensure proper debt recovery information and training is available to managers to support debt recovery action. A plan of action should be agreed in respect of debts with a significant value including the use of credit check agencies and NAFN to locate absconded individuals.	

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit & Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period April 2023 to February 2024 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

Land Charge searches fall into several categories including the Official LLC1 Search, CON29 Standard Enquiries and Part 2 CON29 Enquiries. A local land charge search is undertaken as part of the conveyancing process when a property or piece of land is changing hands or is being valued. The objective of the search is to uncover any restrictions or legal obligations, such as conditional planning consents, listed buildings or tree preservation orders. The process for transferring responsibility for land charges searches to the Land Registry has been ongoing since 2018 and this is due to complete in 2024. The council has signed up to the collaboration process with the Land Registry and steps to transfer the land charges register is in progress. This does not, however, cover all the different searches that are performed by local authorities, and the council will retain responsibility for applying, amending and cancelling charges in the register. Requests for searches are usually received into the council from Solicitors firms representing home buyers through the online portal, though there has been a significant increase in the use of personal search companies. Requests are usually accompanied by electronic payment of the applicable land search charges which are checked and reconciled by the Land Charges Team in conjunction with Finance.

2.2 Financial information

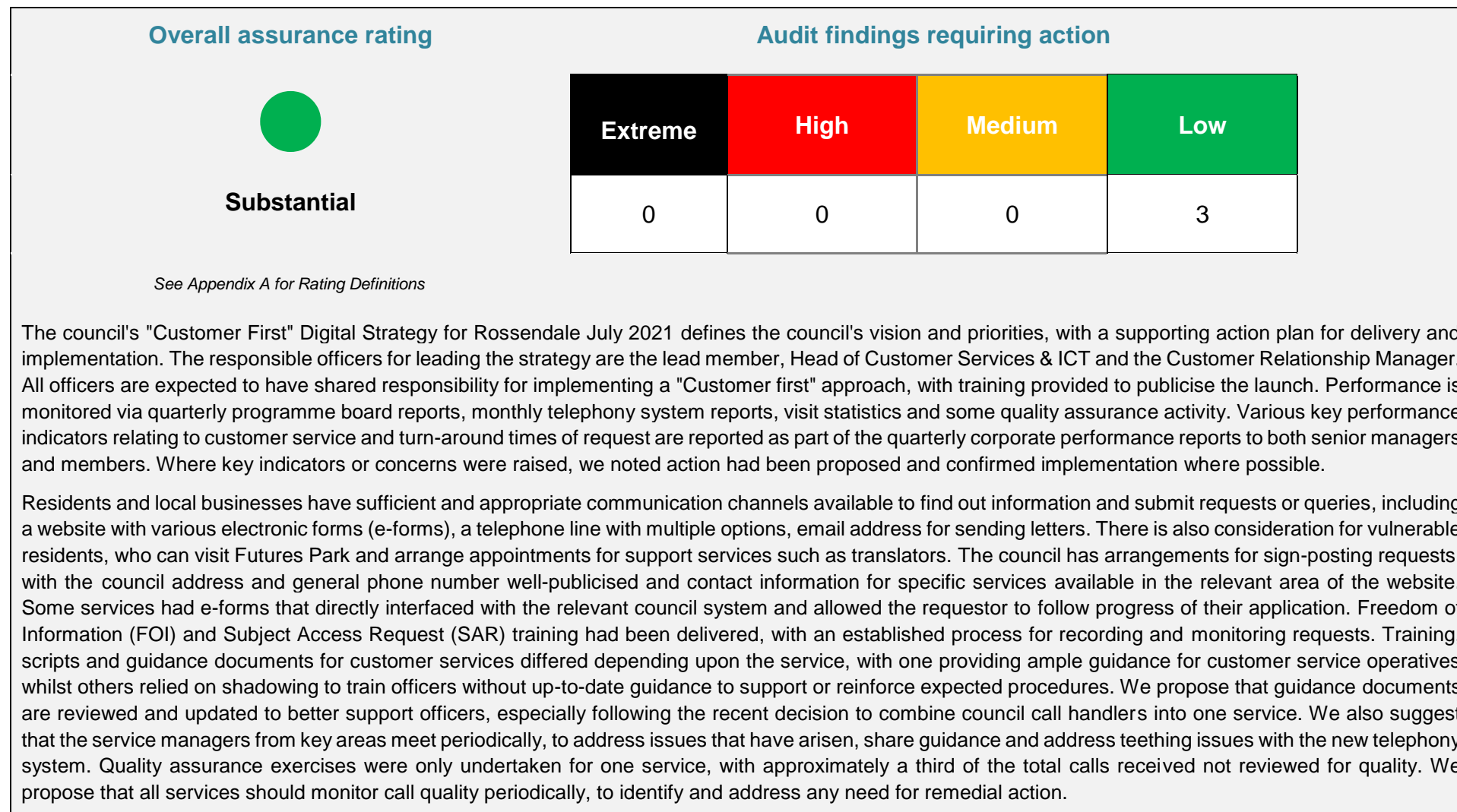
A total of 455 searches were completed in the 2023/24 financial year to the date of audit testing, generating £29,529 in income.

2.3 Scope of Audit

In this audit we reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Policy and guidance;
- Land search fees;
- Financial land charges; and
- Financial monitoring.

Customer Contact



Agreed actions from the audit	Priority
The Corporate Support and One Stop Shop manager should meet either monthly or quarterly, to discuss issues, share guidance and knowledge and establish together a consistent approach to call handling. A representative from ICT should attend meetings where issues relate to system improvements or defects.	●
The guidance and procedure notes for common Corporate Support and Licensing request should be reviewed and updated.	●
A quality assurance monitoring process should be established for calls presented to the Corporate Support service. A sample of calls should be listened to, with an assessment based on how the call was handled and the outcome. The officer dealing with the call should receive recommendations for areas to improve if applicable.	●

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit & Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period April 2023 to March 2024 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

The council approved and implemented the "Customer First" Digital Strategy for Rossendale July 2021, which outlines the council's approach to customer contact, with various projects to improve digital services and the customer experience. The strategy is long-term and runs to 2029, with the four key themes Digital Customer, Digital Workforce, Digital Infrastructure and Digital Security. The strategy uses the phrase "Customer First" as a focal point, with the explanation that the council intends to encourage digital options whilst avoiding becoming "digital only" to not exclude vulnerable residents.



The strategy is supported by capital funding which was last approved in 2022-23 financial year and carried forwards into 2023-24. The current expected expenditure (including commitments) as of Q3 2023/24 is £171k.





2.3 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed and tested the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls and processes established by management to mitigate the key risks relating to the following areas:

- Strategy;
- Channels & Ease of Access;
- Sign posting & Training;
- Complaints & Compliments;
- Partners & Performance.

Best Value Duty

Overall assurance rating	Audit findings requiring action			
 Substantial	Extreme	High	Medium	Low
0	0	0	0	5
<i>See Appendix A for Rating Definitions</i>				
<p>The council complies with the seven best value themes except for two characteristics which we considered were not applicable and one in Theme 1 with which we considered the council was non-compliant. The council has developed a consistent approach to continuous improvement, with appropriate governance arrangements and oversight by members. All officers and managers agreed that the council leadership is effective, both through management and elected members, and promotes and demonstrates the highest ethical standards with shared values and ways of working. The council has a satisfactory framework of key financial controls which is audited annually and the Chief Finance Officer and Head of Legal Services are appropriately positioned as the Section 151 officer and Monitoring Officer respectively. The council has the expected financial strategies and quarterly budget monitoring reports, with a treasury management strategy and medium-term financial position statements, which covers the prudential framework, investment and Capital strategy and minimum revenue provision.</p> <p>The council is non-compliant with the characteristic requirement of an established transformation function and should consider whether this would be beneficial to identify and implement cultural and structural change in future. Senior officers should also consider joining the Co-production Practitioners Network and review Local Government Association guidance regarding co-production of service delivery. We do not consider the council non-compliant with the co-design characteristic, although this is an area that could be improved. The Audit & Accounts Committee includes one independent member, but Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) guidance for local authority audit committees recommends at least two co-opted independent members. An annual report of the Committee's work programme to Full Council should be implemented and the task and finish group regarding financial concerns should be rescheduled. We were told briefing sessions are not well attended by members, with some citing dry content and unengaging delivery as a potential reason. The council should consider whether these briefing sessions can be improved, whilst monitoring attendance by members to encourage party leaders to challenge non-attendance.</p>				
Agreed actions from the audit				Priority
<p>The council should consider whether an established and formalised transformation function would be beneficial to planned restructure and other service improvement programmes.</p> <p>We acknowledge that given the size and resource constraints, this may not be feasible or justify a full-time position.</p>				

The council should appoint an additional co-opted member to Audit & Accounts Committee to comply with Chartered Institute of Public Finance best practice guidance.	
Consideration should be given to providing guidance or training to support officers in their presentations at briefings sessions. Attendance at briefing sessions should be monitored and shared with party leaders to challenge non-attendance.	
The council should consider implementing an annual A&A committee report for full council and ensure the next meeting for the financial task and finish group is scheduled in the 2024/25 financial year.	
Senior officers should consider joining the Co-production Practitioners Network and review Local Government Association guidance regarding co-production of service delivery.	

2.1 Background

This audit has been undertaken in accordance with the 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan as approved by the Audit & Accounts Committee. The audit covers the period April 2023 to March 2024 and has been conducted in conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

2.2 Context

As part of the Local Government Act 1999, local authorities have a duty to deliver best value in its governance arrangements, leadership, service delivery and demonstrate continuous improvement. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DfLUHC) published guidance in July 2023, outlining seven best value themes with associated characteristic to enable councils to self-assess compliance and identify areas for improvement. The council's corporate management team (CMT) have asked the internal audit service to administer this self-assessment on their behalf.

The DfLUHC and other central government departments, such as Department for Education (DfE), can issue non-statutory and statutory notices if a council is considered to be failing to meet Best Value Duty standards. The most severe notice, under section 15 of the act, could result in the Secretary of State appointed commissioner intervening, establishing an improvement plan and taking direct control of the local authorities' functions.

2.3 Scope of Audit

In this audit we have reviewed the council's compliance with seven key themes identified by DfLUHC and the associated characteristics. This assessment was carried out with a view to either confirm compliance or identify non-compliance and areas that could be improved. We obtained views from all senior managers and a sample of members. The key themes were continuous improvement; leadership; governance; culture; use of resources; service delivery and partnerships & community engagement.

Annex B

Scope, responsibilities and assurance

Approach

- 1 The Internal Audit Service operates in accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, 2017. The scope of internal audit work encompasses all the council's operations, resources and services including where they are provided by other organisations on its behalf.

Responsibilities of management and internal auditors

- 2 It is management's responsibility to maintain systems of risk management, internal control and governance. Internal audit is an element of the internal control framework assisting management in the effective discharge of its responsibilities and functions by examining and evaluating controls. Internal auditors cannot therefore be held responsible for internal control failures.
- 3 We have planned our work so that we have a reasonable expectation of detecting significant control weaknesses. We have reported all such weaknesses to management as they have become known to us, without undue delay, and have worked with management to develop proposals for remedial action.
- 4 Internal audit procedures alone do not guarantee that fraud will be detected. Accordingly, our examinations as internal auditors should not be relied upon solely to disclose fraud or other irregularities which may exist, unless we are requested to carry out a special investigation for such activities in a particular area.
- 5 Internal audit's role includes assessing the adequacy of the risk management processes, key internal control systems and corporate governance arrangements put in place by management and performing testing to ensure those controls were operating effectively for the period under review.

Basis of our assessment

- 6 My opinion on the adequacy of control arrangements is based upon the result of internal audit work undertaken and completed during the period in accordance with the plan approved by the Audit and Accounts Committee. Sufficient, reliable and relevant evidence has been obtained to support the recommendations made.

Limitations to the scope of our work

- 7 Other than as set out in the audit plan for the year there have been no limitations to the scope of the audit work.

Limitations on the assurance that internal audit can provide

- 8 There are inherent limitations as to what can be achieved by internal control and consequently limitations to the conclusions that can be drawn from our work as internal auditors. These limitations include the possibility of faulty judgement in decision making, of breakdowns because of human error, of control activities being circumvented by the collusion of two or more people and of management overriding controls. Further, there is no certainty that internal controls will continue to operate effectively in future periods or

that the controls will be adequate to mitigate all significant risks which may arise in the future.

- 9 Decisions made in designing internal controls inevitably involve the acceptance of some degree of risk. As the outcome of the operation of internal controls cannot be predicted with absolute assurance any assessment of internal control is judgmental.

Access to this report and responsibility to third parties

- 10 This report has been prepared solely for Rossendale Borough Council. It forms part of a continuing dialogue between the Internal Audit Service, the chief executive, Audit and Accounts Committee and management of the council. It is not therefore intended to include every matter that came to our attention during each internal audit assignment.
- 11 This report may be made available to other parties, such as the external auditors. However, no responsibility is accepted to any third party who may receive this report for any reliance that may be placed on it and, in particular, the external auditors must determine the reliance placed on the work of the Internal Audit Service.

Audit assurance and residual risks

Note that our assurance may address the adequacy of the control framework's design, the effectiveness of the controls in operation, or both. The wording below addresses all these options and we will refer in our reports to the assurance applicable to the scope of the work we have undertaken.

- **Substantial assurance:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated.
- **Moderate assurance:** the framework of control is adequately designed and/ or effectively operated overall, but some action is required to enhance aspects of it and/ or ensure that it is effectively operated throughout.
- **Limited assurance:** there are some significant weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that put the achievement of its objectives at risk.
- **No assurance:** there are some fundamental weaknesses in the design and/ or operation of the framework of control that could result in failure to achieve its objectives.

Classification of residual risks requiring management action

All actions agreed with management are stated in terms of the residual risk they are designed to mitigate.

- **Extreme residual risk:** critical and urgent in that failure to address the risk could lead to one or more of the following: catastrophic loss of the county council's services, loss of life, significant environmental damage or significant financial loss, with related national press coverage and substantial damage to the council's reputation. *Remedial action must be taken immediately*
- **High residual risk:** critical in that failure to address the issue or progress the work would lead to one or more of the following: failure to achieve organisational objectives, significant disruption to the council's business or to users of its services, significant financial loss, inefficient use of resources, failure to comply with law or regulations, or damage to the council's reputation. *Remedial action must be taken urgently.*
- **Medium residual risk:** failure to address the issue or progress the work could impact on operational objectives and should be of concern to senior management. *Prompt specific action should be taken.*
- **Low residual risk:** matters that individually have no major impact on achieving the service's objectives, but where combined with others could give cause for concern. *Specific remedial action is desirable.*



Audit Progress Report

Rossendale Borough Council

July 2024

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02 National publications

01

Audit progress

Audit progress

Purpose of this report

This report provides the Audit and Accounts Committee with information about progress in delivering our responsibilities as external auditors for the Council.

Prior to the calling of the general election on 4 July 2024, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC') had consulted on proposed arrangements which would implement a 30 September 2024 backstop date for all audits for the 31 March 2023 financial year and earlier, where these are not yet complete. Similar dates were being considered to bring the backstop date forward each year for the next five years. These considerations have been on hold during the election period, we are uncertain as to when a conclusion will be reached. We had agreed with management, prior to the general election being called, to conclude our planning work on all open audit years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 by the end of September 2024, this remains our intention.

At the March 2024 Audit and Accounts Committee we provided our Value for Money (VFM) commentary for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23. We are unable to finalise our conclusions on Value for Money for 2018/19 and 2019/20 until we issue our audit opinion, as this falls under the previous Code arrangements. We plan to bring our draft conclusions on the VFM arrangements in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to the September Audit and Accounts Committee. Following this we plan to bring our commentary on the 2023/24 VFM arrangements to the Audit and Accounts Committee in November 2024.

Forvis Mazars

We are delighted to introduce you to Forvis Mazars: our new global Top 10 network. Launching on 1 June 2024, Forvis Mazars has been designed for and around our clients. As a network of just two firms, and operating in over 100 countries, Forvis Mazars has been built with the scale, capacity, and expertise to support our clients' needs worldwide.

There are no changes to your engagement team, and no changes to the audit approach your team adopts. Our branding and our email addresses will be updated to reflect the new network, but otherwise we do not expect any changes of substance to affect our engagement with the Council.

Further information on Forvis Mazars can be found here: [Forvis Mazars Accountants - Audit, Tax and Advisory Services - United Kingdom](#)

02

National publications

National publications

	Publication/update	Key points
Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy ('CIPFA')		
1	CIPFA Bulletins	CIPFA have issued two Bulletins to provide further guidance on the financial reporting requirements.
2	Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2024/25	Code of Practice for 2024/25 financial statements
3	IFRS16 Leases: A Guide for Local Authority Practitioners 2023 Edition	Guidance for Local Authorities in implementing IFRS16, lease accounting
National Audit Office ('NAO')		
4	NAO insight: Digital transformation in government: a guide for senior leaders and audit and risk committees	The NAO has published a guide for senior leaders and audit and risk committees on Digital transformation in government. The guide can support those tasked with overseeing large-scale digital change to understand the core issues and pitfalls to avoid.
5	NAO report: Non-executive appointments	Non-executive directors ('NEDs') make an important contribution to the running of government. However, the government must do more to ensure the best quality of candidates are recruited.
6	Whole of Government Accounts 2021-22	The NAO has completed its audit of the Whole of Government Accounts 2021-22
7	NAO report: Use of artificial intelligence in government	The NAO has published a report considering how effectively the government has set itself up to maximise the opportunities and mitigate the risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in providing public services
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities ('DLUHC')		
8	Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Consultation	This consultation seeks views on amending the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as part of a package of cross-system measures to clear the backlog and put the system on a sustainable footing. The consultation closed on 7 March 2024.
Other		
9	Forvis Mazars – Preparing for the Procurement Act 2023	The Procurement Act 2023 is set to transform the procurement procedures for public sector bodies. Our latest article provides an in-depth overview of the new Procurement Act.
10	Forvis Mazars – Understanding the new 'Failure to Prevent Fraud' Offence in a Public Sector context	The UK Government has recently announced a new corporate criminal offence – the 'failure to prevent fraud' offence – within the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.
11	Office for Local Government (Oflog): consultation on draft Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027	Consultation on corporate plan for the new Office for Local Government

National publications

CIPFA

1. CIPFA Bulletins

Bulletins issued by CIPFA, with the assistance of CIPFA panels, provide practitioners with topical guidance on specific issues and accounting and reporting developments. CIPFA has issued the following Bulletin's in recent months:

CIPFA Bulletin 17 Closure of the 2023/24 Financial Statements

This bulletin covers the closure of accounts for the 2023/24 year and provides further guidance and clarification to complement the 2023/24 Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom: Guidance Notes for Practitioners (Code Guidance Notes). It addresses, where relevant, frequently asked questions and other issues that have arisen since the publication of the 2023/24 Code Guidance Notes.

Link: [CIPFA Bulletin 17 Closure of the 2023/24 Financial Statements](#)

CIPFA Bulletin 16 Local audit delays and the publication of the annual governance statement

CIPFA Bulletin 16 Local audit delays and the publication of the annual governance statement is intended to provided clarity to those authorities with at least one set of unaudited financial statements for prior years, and their external auditors, on the update of the annual governance statement ('AGS').

Link: [CIPFA Bulletin 16 Local audit delays and the publication of the annual governance statement](#)

National publications

CIPFA

2. Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK 2024/25

CIPFA has published its 2024/25 Code of Practice. This 2024/25 edition of the Code has been developed by CIPFA/LASAAC and has effect for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2024.

The Code specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of a local authority. The Code applies to local government organisations across the UK including local authorities, police bodies, fire services and other local public service bodies.

This edition of the Code introduces mandatory adoption of IFRS 16 Leases. Other amendments include:

- a suggestion that narrative reporting could reflect on the risk that a Section 114 notice might be issued
- recent changes to the IFRS treatment of sale and leaseback arrangements
- specifying the treatment on initial application of IFRS 16 where service concession arrangements provide for variable payments that depend on an index or rate.

<https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/c/code-of-practice-on-local-authority-accounting-in-the-united-kingdom-202425-online>

3. IFRS16 Leases: A Guide for Local Authority Practitioners 2023 Edition

This publication provides guidance on IFRS 16 Leases for 2022/23, which is applicable to those authorities deciding to voluntarily implement the requirements of Appendix F of the Code (which includes the specifications applicable to those entities implementing IFRS 16 as of 1 April 2022). It will also be of interest to those intending to apply as of 1 April 2023 and those mandatorily implementing as of 1 April 2024.

This guidance on IFRS 16 provides comprehensive coverage of the proposed requirements for lessees. Although there have not been significant changes to the requirements for lessors, the guidance also includes extensive commentary on this area.

<https://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/publications/i/ifrs-16-leases-a-guide-for-local-authority-practitioners-2023-edition>

National publications

NAO

4. NAO insight: Digital transformation in government: a guide for senior leaders and audit and risk committees

The NAO has published a guide for senior leaders and audit and risk committees on Digital transformation in government. The guide can support those tasked with overseeing large-scale digital change to understand the core issues and pitfalls to avoid. The guide identifies seven areas where the more persistent obstacles stand in the way of successful digital transformation in government and have grouped them into three themes:

- constraints of the existing environment;
- under-estimating the scope of early work; and
- lack of skills and leadership.

[Digital transformation in government: a guide for senior leaders and audit and risk committees](#)

5. NAO report: Non-executive appointments

Non-executive directors ('NEDs') are crucial to the effective running of government. They are individuals who sit on governing boards of government departments and arm's-length bodies, including non-departmental public bodies and government companies, to provide external expertise. They provide strategic leadership, scrutinise performance, promote transparency and take a long-term perspective.

NEDs make an important contribution to the running of government, providing an independent perspective, expertise, and challenge where needed. However, the government must do more to ensure the best quality of candidates are recruited. This includes fixing the often long and drawn-out appointments and re-appointments process, which poses risks to the quality and diversity of boards, as well as to the governance of those organisations when vacancies are not filled.

[Non-executive appointments](#)

National publications

NAO

6. Whole of Government Accounts 2021-22

The NAO has completed its audit of the 2021-22 Whole of Government Accounts. The Whole of Government Accounts consolidates the accounts of central and local government and public corporations such as the Bank of England, to provide a picture of the UK's public finances.

<https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/whole-of-government-accounts-2021-22/>

7. NAO report: Use of artificial intelligence in government

The NAO has published a report considering how effectively the government has set itself up to maximise the opportunities and mitigate the risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in providing public services. The primary focus for this report is the role of the Cabinet Office and DSIT in supporting the adoption of AI in the public sector. Specifically, the report looks at:

- the government's strategy and governance for AI use in public services (Part One).
- how government bodies are using AI and how government understands the opportunities (Part Two).
- central government's plans for supporting the testing, piloting and scaling of AI; and progress in addressing barriers to AI adoption (Part Three).

<https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/use-of-artificial-intelligence-in-government/>

8. Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Consultation

The external auditing of local bodies is vital in supporting democratic accountability and providing assurance for local people and their elected representatives. The consultation sought views on amending the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as part of a package of cross-system measures to clear the backlog and put the system on a sustainable footing. The draft statutory instrument covers the core elements of the proposed amendments to the Regulations. The Joint Statement, agreed with system partners, provides vital context and explains the cross-system proposals and how the various elements are intended to interact.

The consultation ran from 8 February 2024 to 7 March 2024. Documents relating to the consultation are still available for download at the link below, which is also the place where the outcome to the public feedback will be available.

[Addressing the local audit backlog in England: Consultation](#)

National publications

Other

9. Forvis Mazars – Preparing for the Procurement Act 2023

The Procurement Act 2023 is set to transform the procurement procedures for public sector bodies in the UK by:

- enhancing transparency in procurement processes, requiring greater disclosure of information about procurement opportunities;
- improving efficiency by introducing new measures such as electronic procurement platforms; and
- promoting fairness to ensure all suppliers have equal access to government contracts.

Our latest article provides an in-depth overview of the new Procurement Act, including when it will be implemented, key provisions and how public sector organisations can prepare.

[Preparing for the Procurement Act 2023](#)

10. Forvis Mazars – Understanding the new ‘Failure to Prevent Fraud’ Offence in a Public Sector context

The UK Government has recently announced a new corporate criminal offence – the ‘failure to prevent fraud’ offence – within the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.

Fraud is currently the most common crime in the UK, and this new offence is designed to drive a cultural shift, encouraging organisations to improve their prevention procedures and reduce instances of fraud. It strengthens existing powers to fine and prosecute organisations for fraud committed by their employees and agents, closing loopholes that have allowed organisations to avoid prosecution in the past.

This new offence holds large organisations, both in the public and private sectors, accountable for fraudulent activities committed by their employees or agents.

[‘Failure to Prevent Fraud’ in the Public Sector](#)

National publications

Other

11. Office for Local Government (Oflog): consultation on draft Corporate Plan 2024 to 2027

Oflog consulted on its draft Corporate Plan 2024-2027. The consultation ran from 15 February 2024 to 14 March 2024. The Corporate Plan proposes how Oflog will deliver its strategic objectives set out in the remit letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Oflog will publish its final Corporate Plan later this year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/office-for-local-government-oflog-consultation-on-draft-corporate-plan-2024-to-2027>

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10. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Statement of purpose

1. The Audit and Accounts Committee is a key component of Rossendale Borough Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
2. The primary purpose of the committee is to provide independent assurance to the members (being those charged with governance) of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the Council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.
3. The committee's members should therefore behave objectively and independently in their deliberations and decisions.

Governance

The committee will:

4. Review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, and consider annual governance reports and assurances.
5. Review and recommend the local code of corporate governance for adoption by the Council.
6. Review the annual governance statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account the head of internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control.
7. Consider the Council's arrangements to secure value for money, and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
8. Consider the Council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
9. Consider the Council's arrangements for discharging its duties in relation to promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.
10. To make recommendations to the Cabinet, Council and other organisations where appropriate.

Risk management and control

The committee will:

11. Monitor the effective development and operation of the risk management framework and processes across the Council.
12. Monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the Committee.
13. Consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
14. Review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the Council from fraud and corruption.
15. Monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions and resources, including any instances of whistleblowing.

Internal audit

The committee will:

16. Consider the internal audit charter approved by Lancashire County Council.
17. Approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including the Internal Audit Service's resource

requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.

18. Approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
19. Make appropriate enquiries of both management and the head of internal audit to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
20. Consider reports from the head of internal audit on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of any other external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - a. Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
 - b. Regular reports on the results of the Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
 - c. Reports on instances where the Internal Audit Service does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the annual governance statement.
21. Consider the head of internal audit's annual report:
 - a. The statement of the level of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement.
 - b. The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion, which will assist the committee in reviewing the annual governance statement.
22. Consider summaries of specific internal audit reports as requested.
23. Receive reports outlining the action taken where the head of internal audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Council or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
24. Contribute to the Audit Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

External audit

The committee will:

25. Consider the appointment of the Council's external auditor proposed by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited and assess whether there are any valid reasons for the Council to object.
26. Support the external auditor's independence through consideration of its annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited.
27. Approve the letters of representation required by the external auditor and consider the external auditor's annual letter, audit opinion, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
28. Consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
29. Comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
30. Commission additional work from the external auditor as necessary.

Financial reporting

The committee will:

31. Review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, it will consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the

Council.

32. Consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Accountability arrangements

The committee will:

33. Report to those charged with governance on the committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks; financial reporting arrangements; and internal and external audit functions.