



Essex County Council

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

10:30	Monday, 28 June 2021	Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
--------------	---------------------------------	---

For information about the meeting please ask for:

Andy Gribben, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Telephone: 033301 34565

Email: democratic.services@essex.gov.uk

Essex County Council and Committees Information

All Council and Committee Meetings are held in public unless the business is exempt in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members of the public will be able to view and listen to any items on the agenda unless the Committee has resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting as a result of the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

ECC Guest Wifi

For members of the public, you can now access free wifi in County Hall.

- Please log in to 'ECC Guest'
- Follow the instructions on your web browser

Attendance at meetings

Most meetings are held at County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1LX. [A map and directions to County Hall can be found on our website.](#)

Access to the meeting and reasonable adjustments

County Hall is accessible via ramped access to the building for people with physical disabilities. The Council Chamber is accessible by lift located on the first and second floors of County Hall. However, access and space for the public is extremely limited due to COVID secure requirements.

Induction loop facilities are available in most Meeting Rooms. Specialist headsets are available from Reception.

Accessing Documents

If you have a need for documents in, large print, Braille, electronically or in alternative languages and easy read please contact the Democratic Services Officer before the meeting takes place. For further information about how you can access this meeting, contact the Democratic Services Officer.

The agenda is also available on the Essex County Council website, www.essex.gov.uk. From the Home Page, click on 'Running the council', then on 'How decisions are made', then 'council meetings calendar'. Finally, select the relevant committee from the calendar of meetings.

Audio recording of meetings

Please note that in the interests of improving access to the Council's meetings, a sound recording is made of the public parts of many of the Council's Committees. The Chairman will make an announcement at the start of the meeting if it is being recorded.

We are experimentally streaming some meetings on the [ECC Democracy YouTube Channel](#). You may wish to see if this meeting is being streamed but please remember that this is an experimental service. There is also an [audio broadcast accessible via our website](#).

If you are unable to attend and wish to see if the recording is available, you can visit the ECC Democracy YouTube Channel or, for the audio recording check the [Calendar of Meetings](#) any time after the meeting starts. Any audio available can be accessed via the box in the centre of the page, or the links immediately below it.

Should you wish to record the meeting, please contact the officer shown on the agenda front page.

		Pages
1	Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest	4 - 4
2	Appointment of Vice-Chairman	
3	Minutes and Matters Arising To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2021 and identify matters arising	5 - 13
4	Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2021 To receive a report (AGS/12/21 and appendix) from Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance, Essex County Council	14 - 42

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| 5 | Draft Statement of Accounts 2020-2021 and the Draft Annual Governance Statement
To receive a report (AGS/13/21) from Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology, Essex County Council and Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, Essex County Council | 43 - 262 |
| 6 | Members Gifts and Hospitality Register April 2020 - May 2021
To receive a report (AGS/14/21 and appendix) from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, Essex County Council | 263 - 268 |
| 7 | Annual Report of the work of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee 2020-21
To receive a report (AGS/15/21 and appendix) from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, Essex County Council | 269 - 285 |
| 8 | Work Programme
To receive a report (AGS/16/21) from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, Essex County Council | 286 - 288 |
| 9 | Date of the next meeting
To note that the next scheduled meeting will be held on Monday 27 September 2021 at 10:30am at County Hall, Chelmsford and will be preceded by a private meeting for AGS members only | |

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

Agenda item 1

Committee: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

Enquiries to: Andy Gribben, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. The membership of the committee as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership

(Quorum: 3)

Councillor L Barber
Councillor M Hedley
Councillor M Hoy
Councillor D King
Councillor L Mackenzie
Councillor A McGurran
Councillor A McQuiggan
Councillor M Platt
Councillor L Shaw
Councillor C Siddall
Mr Atta Ul Haque

Chairman

Independent member (non-voting)

Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, that was held remotely on Monday, 22 March 2021

[A YouTube recording of the meeting is to be found online.](#)

Present:

Members:

Councillor G Butland	
Councillor A Davies	
Councillor A Hedley	Chairman
Councillor A Jackson	
Councillor R Mitchell	
Councillor Dr R Moore	
Councillor M Platt	
Councillor A Turrell	
Mr Atta Ul Haque	Independent member appointed to the committee

Also Present:

David Eagles	BDO LLP (external auditor)
Barry Pryke	BDO LLP (external auditor)

ECC Officers:

Samantha Andrews	Investment Manager (Essex Pension Fund)
Joanna Boaler	Head of Democracy and Transparency
Paula Clowes	Head of Assurance
Paul Crick	Director for Performance, Investment and Delivery Place and Public Health
Christine Golding	Chief Accountant
Andy Gribben	Senior Democratic Services Officer (clerk to the meeting)
Carolyn Peters	Citizen Services Manager
Juliet Pirez	Head of Libraries
Elizabeth Sippings	Citizen Services Manager
Paul Turner	Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)

1. Welcome and Introduction

Councillor Hedley welcomed those attending the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

2. Remote working

Councillor Hedley reminded everyone that although members are attending the meeting remotely, they should remain engaged in the meeting, refrain from responding to emails and texts during the meeting and put all devices on silent mode.

Members were reminded to keep their microphone on mute for the duration of the

meeting unless they wished to speak and to address all remarks through the Chairman.

Councillor Hedley also informed members that the meeting was to be broadcast live over the internet and would then be publicly available on the County Council's website and on YouTube after the meeting. More details were set out in the agenda. He also asked those persons watching via YouTube that if they chose to use the YouTube subtitle function the Council could not accept responsibility for their accuracy.

3. Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received, and it was noted that:

1. The membership of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee was as shown in the report.
2. Apologies had been received from Councillors Channer and Smith and it was noted that Councillor Erskine, a substitute member of the committee, regretted he was unable to attend as an observer.
3. Declarations of interests were made by Councillors Davies, Hedley and Platt as they were members of the Essex Pensions Board.

The Chairman, Councillor Hedley reminded members that any interests must be declared during the meeting if the need to do so arose.

4. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 30 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. Update on Libraries Audit Recommendations

Introduced by Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance, members received an update relating to the Limited Assurance Libraries Stock Control Audit Review from Juliet Pirez, Head of Libraries, Essex County Council and assisted by Carolyn Peters and Elizabeth Sippings. They shared with members a presentation on the Library Service Stock fees and charges.

Members were informed of:

- Data cleanse opportunities and improved stock management,
- Stocktake Protocol, New Stock and Stock Disposal,
- Supplier Selection Criteria,
- Driver Protocols and Insurance Checks,
- System Access Checks,

- Online and Cash Payments,
- Business Continuity Arrangements for LMS,
- Data Policy and Decision Making and
- Libraries Dashboard Report and Waived Debt reporting.

A copy of the internal audit report (for information only) had been sent by email to Members of the committee.

The members of the committee asked questions. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting.](#)

Resolved:

The update was noted.

6. Update on Energy Invoices Audit Recommendations

Introduced by Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance members of the committee received an update relating to the Limited Assurance Energy Invoices Audit Review from Paul Crick, Director for Performance, Investment and Delivery Place and Public Health, Essex County Council. He shared with members a presentation on the Energy Audit Update.

Members were informed of:

- Mite Contract,
- Energy Auditing,
- Example of Wave reporting,
- Reconciliation of Various Site Lists,
- Acquisitions and Disposals List,
- End to End Process Documentation,
- Contractual Agreement,
- Tolerances and
- Quarterly Meeting Minutes.

A copy of the internal audit report (for information only) had been sent by email to Members of the committee.

The members of the committee asked questions. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting.](#)

Resolved:

The update was noted.

7. External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter 2019/20

The committee received report AGS/01/21 and Appendix from Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and presented by Christine Golding, Chief Accountant. She introduced David Eagles and Barry Pryke, representing the council's external auditors BDO LLP, who explained that the report provides a summary of the matters already communicated to the Council in relation to the 2019/20 audit of the Council.

The members of the committee asked questions, specifically seeking an assurance that the audit completion certificate would be issued soon. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting](#).

Resolved:

The Committee noted the report and referred it to the next available meeting of the Full Council.

8. Arrangements for the closure of the 2020/2021 Accounts

Members of the committee received report AGS/02/21 from Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and presented by Christine Golding, Chief Accountant which set out the arrangements for closing the Council's accounts for 2020/21. Members were asked to note that the government have again extended the statutory timetable for production and publication of the Statement of Accounts. the closure of accounts final audited accounts and publish.

The members of the committee asked questions. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting](#).

Resolved:

1. The Committee noted the arrangements in place for closure and approval of the Council's Accounts for 2020/21 and
2. The Committee agreed, as a consequence of changes to the statutory timetable for production and publication of the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, to:
 - cancel the meetings it currently has scheduled for 7 June and 26 July 2021,
 - schedule a new meeting on 28 June 2021 to receive the draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 and
 - note the intention to present the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts to the Committee for approval on 27 September 2021.

9. 2020/21 External Audit Plans for Essex County Council and the Essex Pension Fund

The committee received report AGS/03/21 and Appendices 1 and 2 from Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and presented by Christine Golding, Chief Accountant. She invited David Eagles, and Barry Pryke, representing the council's external auditors BDO LLP, to present the plans for the Council and for the Essex Pension Fund.

In relation to the changes to the statutory timetable for the 2020/21 Accounts, David Eagles regretted that he was unable to be confident that the external auditors would be in a position to meet the end of September deadline. He advised members of the committee that the external auditors had been unable to undertake any preparatory work, meaning that the whole of the audit would have to be undertaken at the final audit stage. BDO LLP had made representations to MHCLG to extend the deadline beyond 30 September, but to no avail. Consequently, achieving the end of September deadline will be challenging.

The chairman reminded members of the committee that the Redmond Report had highlighted resourcing shortfalls but the target date for the closure of the accounts remained.

Barry Pryke advised the members of the committee the council plans key parts of the report relating to the Council. Members were informed of:

- The scope of the audit,
- Independence and fees summary,
- Components in the group,
- The proposed audit timeline,
- An overview of identified risks and
- Other Matters.

Barry Pryke advised the members of the committee the council plans key parts of the report relating to the Essex Pension Fund. Members were informed of:

- Materiality,
- Fees and
- An overview of the audit risks.

The members of the committee asked questions relating to both the External Audit Plans for Essex County Council and the Essex Pension Fund. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting](#).

Resolved:

1. That the Committee note the content of BDO's report and
2. That the Committee asks BDO to present a further report to its June 2021 meeting, setting out any significant changes to their audit strategy for 2020/21, and their risk assessment and planned approach to the Use of Resources.

10. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - review of activity on use of Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)

The committee received report AGS/04/21 from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance.

Resolved:

That the Committee note that no applications for directed surveillance or the use of a CHIS had been made by anyone at ECC since the last report in March 2020.

11. Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress report

The committee received report AGS/05/21 and Appendices 1-4 from Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance that highlighted the key issues being:

- That there were no 'No Assurance' audits within the reporting period,
- One 'Limited Assurance' audit which members will have noted that they had received an update on that matter earlier in the meeting and
- As from 1 March there were six 'Major internal audit recommendations that were overdue and they were to be found in the appendices to the report.

Additionally, the report sought approval for the changes to the current Internal Audit Plan the majority of which were to defer audits into next year's Audit Plan.

Resolved:

1. That the progress in audit and counter fraud activity be noted and
2. the changes to the 2020/2021 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan, as outlined in appendix 4 to the report were approved.

12. Updating of Risk Management Strategy 2021

The committee received report AGS/06/21 and appendix from Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance who asked members to note that in the previous year there had been a full refresh of the strategy and the update before members was to note a minor amendment. relating to 'issues' are now recorded on the Strategic Risk Register in exceptional circumstances; of which there had been many in the current year because of the pandemic.

Resolved:

To approve the report in the form appended to the report.

13. Approval of annual Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan for 2021/22

The committee received report AGS/07/21 and appendix from Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance that proposed a more flexible approach to audit planning to allow for any pandemic related unforeseen service or resourcing shortfalls.

However, to improve transparency around decisions to employ flexibility, the risks included in the plan have been given a rating. This rating identifies those audits that must be delivered for the Chief Audit Executive opinion and others where there may be more flexibility.

The members of the committee asked questions. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting](#).

Resolved:

That the 2021/22 Flexible Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan be approved in the form at appendix 1 to the report.

14. Audit Committee Effectiveness

The committee received report AGS/08/21 and appendices 1 and 2 from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance who informed members that the report was an update of the implementation of the effectiveness review undertaken in March 2020.

Paul Turner asked members to note that the table of the review's recommendations were all showing as 'green' other than the annual skills audit. He explained that the skills audit had proved to be difficult to implement at the same time as the other recommendations and he hoped that members may agree that it was too late to undertake it before the forthcoming County elections. It was also likely to be affected by subsequent changes to the membership of the committee.

Resolved:

1. To note the progress against the action plan at set out in appendix 2 to the report,
2. that the Skills and Knowledge Assessment should take place after the annual meeting of the Council in May 2021 and
3. to hold an AGS Members training workshop after the election to provide both induction for new members and refresher training for existing members.

15. LGA Model Code of Conduct

The committee received report AGS/09/21 and appendix from Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance who reminded members that there had been a hope that all councils would be able to sign up to the proposed LGA Code of Conduct.

Paul Turner informed members of the committee that other Monitoring Officers from other councils in Essex were agreed that, specifically, the paragraphs relating to the Declarations of Interest were not workable and most councils were not proposing to adopt it unless their current code is worse.

He suggested that the situation should be kept under review and if the LGA Code were to be improved a further report could be brought to this committee seeking approval for a recommendation to be taken to Full Council for adoption.

The members of the committee asked questions. The questions asked and the responses may be found online on the [YouTube recording of the meeting](#).

Resolved:

That the Committee continues to monitor the evolving picture with respect to the LGA Model Code of Conduct but does not recommend adoption of the LGA code at this time.

16. Annual Review of Internal Audit Charter

The committee received report AGS/10/21 and appendix from Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance. Members were advised that it was a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards that there be charter to outline the purpose and role of the Internal Audit service. The Charter was to be reviewed annually and the key changes were contained within the report.

Resolved:

That the updated Charter is adopted in the form presented at appendix 1 to the report.

17. Dates of Future Meetings

The members of the committee noted the meeting dates for the 2021-22 municipal year as set out below:

- previously agreed 7 June 2021 to be amended to 28 June 2021
- previously agreed 26 July 2021 to be cancelled
- 27 September 2021
- 15 November 2021
- 17 January 2022
- 21 March 2022

18. Work Programme

The committee received report AGS/11/20 presented by the Director, Legal and Assurance that detailed the planned ongoing programme of work.

Members were reminded that the work programme was subject to regular revisions and change.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

19. Date of the Next Meeting

The committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on Monday 28 June 2021 at 10.30am at a venue yet to be determined or virtually via ZOOM (to be advised) and will be preceded by a private meeting for AGS members only.

20. Conclusion

The Chairman, Councillor Hedley, in conclusion,

- expressed his thanks to officers for all their hard work in the current difficult circumstances,
- thanked the external auditors for their forbearance and patience and reiterated his hope and expectation that they would be able to meet their deadlines,
- congratulated Mr Atta Ul Haque for his recent appointment to the committee as an Independent Member and for his detailed and pertinent questions and
- expressed his appreciation to all the members of the committee, particularly Councillors Maddocks, Jackson and Turrell who were retiring from the Council and would be particularly missed.

In response, members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee congratulated Councillor Hedley on his chairmanship.

Chairman

Report title: Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report 2020/21	
Report to: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	
Report author: Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	
Date: 28 June 2021	For: Noting
Enquiries to: Paula Clowes – Head of Assurance paula.clowes@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit service in accordance with proper practices. The UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards requires that the Chief Audit Executive (Head of Assurance) must deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The annual internal audit opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's control environment (framework of governance, risk management and control).
- 1.2. The Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report (see Appendix 1) also provides oversight of Internal Audit & Counter Fraud activity for 2020/21.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. That the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report and the opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's internal control environment be noted.

3. Summary of the issue

- 3.1. The overall internal audit opinion of the internal control environment (framework of governance, risk management and internal control) for 2020/21 is one of **Satisfactory** assurance, which means that although there are some weaknesses which may put individual system/process/service objectives at risk of achievement, there is an overall satisfactory system of internal control, appropriately designed to meet the Council's objectives, and controls are generally being applied consistently.

- 3.2 Although the opinion remains the same as the previous two years, it should be noted that there has been a degradation in audit findings as more Limited Assurance reports have been issued this year than in the previous years. This may be due to the ECC response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but the Internal Audit team will closely monitor the situation during the delivery of the 2021/22 audit plan.
- 3.3 The full Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual report including the Chief Audit Executive's rationale for the opinion is attached at appendix 1.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. There are no financial implications as the Internal Audit activity for 2020/21 was met within existing resources, approved by the Audit Committee in March July 2020.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1. Internal audit is a key way in which councillors can be assured that the Council is using its resources effectively and that the Council is discharging its fiduciary duties concerning taxpayers' money. It helps services to design systems which have appropriate controls and also helps identify and respond to breaches if they occur. This report seeks to update the Committee on the activities of the Council's Internal Audit and Counter Fraud service for the purposes of providing further assurance.

6. Staffing and Other Resource Implications

- 6.1. There are no staffing or resource implications.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 7.2. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 7.3. Equality and diversity matters have been considered in the production of the progress report.

8. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Annual Report 2020/21

9. Background Papers

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

Essex County Council

Internal Audit and Counter Fraud

Annual Report

2020/21



Including the Annual Opinion of the Chief Audit Executive

June 2021

Distribution:

- Audit Governance and Standards Committee
- Leader of the Council
- Cabinet Member for Finance Resources and Corporate Affairs
- Chief Executive
- Executive Director for Corporate Services and S151 Officer
- Corporate Leadership Team

Introduction

Purpose of Annual Report

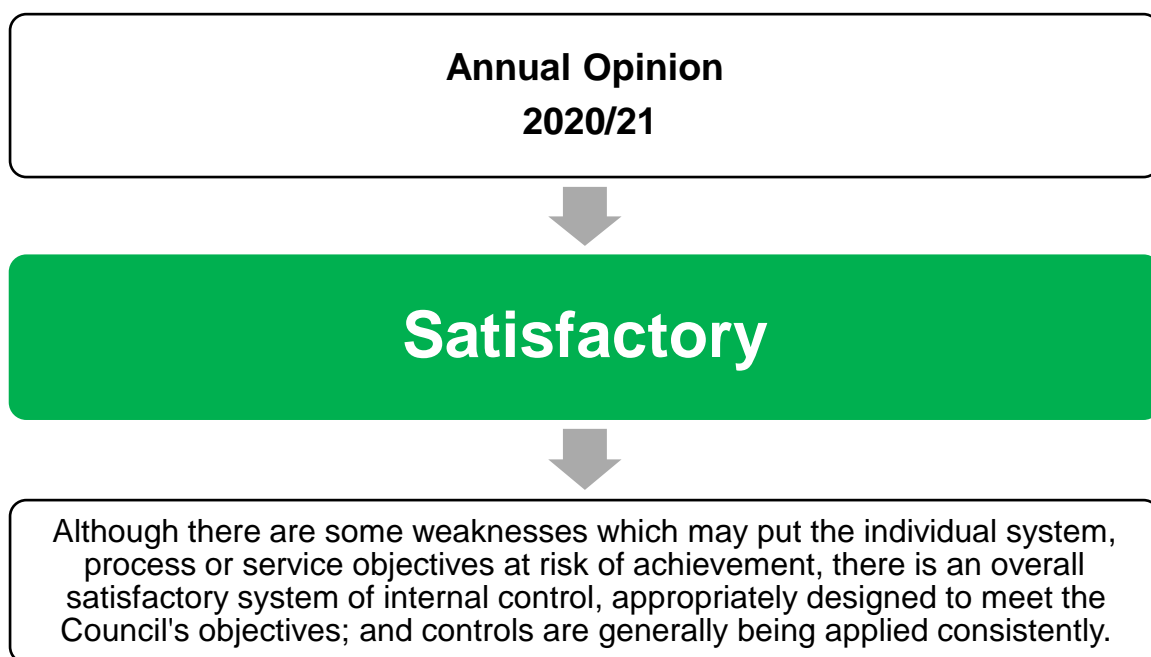
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit service in accordance with proper practices. The UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) requires that the Chief Audit Executive must deliver an Annual Internal Audit Opinion and report that can be used by the organisation to inform its Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Internal Audit Opinion must conclude on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's control environment (framework of governance, risk management and internal control).

The Audit, Governance and Standards (AGS) Committee, as those charged with governance, are collectively responsible for ensuring adequate controls are in place across the Council and so, whilst the work of Internal Audit and Counter Fraud is a key element of the assurance framework required to inform the Annual Governance Statement, there are also a number of other sources within the Council from which the Section 151 Officer and Members should gain assurance, for example Service Assurance Statements and audits/inspections by external bodies.

Annual Opinion

In March 2020 the (AGS) Committee reviewed the 2020/21 risk-based Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to ensure that internal audit and counter fraud activity continued to be appropriately focused, a revised Plan was presented and approved by the AGS Committee in July 2021. Progress reports on delivery and outcomes have been provided to the AGS Committee quarterly throughout the 2020/21 financial year.

This annual report provides an oversight and summary of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud activity undertaken in the financial year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. My audit opinion is based on, and restricted to, the work we have performed during the year. The opinion does not imply that Internal Audit and Counter Fraud have reviewed and commented on all risks and assurances related to the Council. I have considered whether there has been any impact of Covid-19 in my ability to reach this year's annual opinion; however, I am satisfied that I have sufficient evidence to reach an unqualified opinion.



The assurance opinion of “Satisfactory” is the same as the prior two years’ opinions, demonstrating that the control environment has broadly remained stable which is commendable given the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequent and unique challenges the Council has faced during this time. However there has been an increase in the number of Limited Assurance opinions given to individual Internal Audit reviews (10 in 2020/21 compared to 2 in 2019/20) and this will need careful monitoring in 2021/22 to ensure it is not a continuing trend.

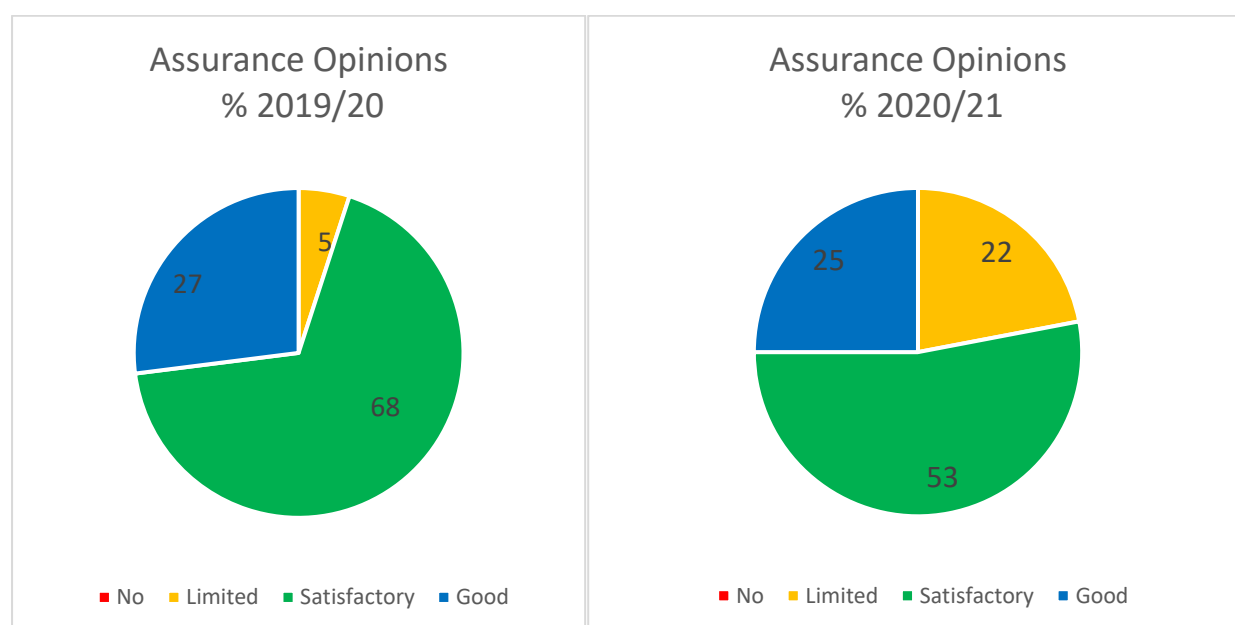
Covid-19 Pandemic

The start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 and consequent lockdowns resulted in the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team and many of the Council's staff unexpectedly having to adjust to working from home rather than being office based. Our original Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan for the 2020/21 financial year was revised in light of the pandemic and presented for approval at the July 2020 meeting of the AGS Committee. Some internal audit work was put on hold or delayed purposely so that we did not distract front line service delivery whilst the Council reassessed its risks and mitigations and responded to the pandemic. This included Adult Social Care, Childrens Services and Technology Services. Some audit work was cancelled, such as the majority

of our school site visits and for all other reviews in progress or planned, we reassessed the risks and scope and included testing around the impact of Covid-19 where appropriate. Some specific work was also undertaken relating to Covid-19 and the Council's statutory duties arising from the requirements of the Coronavirus Act 2020. Although some delays have been inevitably experienced in getting audit reviews completed on time and to budget, I am pleased to report that sufficient coverage has occurred to enable me to give an overall opinion that is unrestricted.

Assurance Opinions

The pie charts below show the range of individual assurance opinions given over the past two financial years (expressed as a percentage) on which we have based our overall annual opinion:



A summary of our audit opinions on finalised and draft reports is detailed below and an explanation of the basis of our opinions, assurance and risk ratings for these reviews is included in Appendix 2. In addition, a full breakdown and reconciliation of the 2020/21 Internal Audit Plan can be found in Appendix 1.

Overview of Internal Audit Activity from 1 April 2020

No Limited		
	IT asset management*	Major incident management – follow up
	Adult Social Care Debt	IT disaster recovery
	Essex Countywide Traveller Unit*	Wells Park School
	Energy invoice processes	Libraries – stock control, fees and charges
	Country Parks stock control *	Accounts receivable
Satisfactory	Country Parks – income from car parking and events	Oracle Integrated Assurance - Change management
	Schools - income	Supplier resilience
	Deferred payments / deprivation of assets	Procurement – request for quote process
	Whistleblowing	Fleet vehicles
	Expenses (staff)	Members' Locality Fund
	Essex Pay	Health and safety
	Meaningful lives matter (adult social care)	General ledger, journals and virements
	Employee relations process	Risk management
	IT strategy	Childrens residential framework
	Quality Assurance Framework (Adult Social Care)	Oracle Integrated Assurance - Account reconciliations
	Payroll	Cyber security
	Remote working resilience*	Office 365 implementation
	Access Support Unit	Strategic workforce planning
Good	Essex Pension Fund - administration	Essex Pension Fund - investments
	Unaccompanied asylum seeking children	Accounts payable
	Treasury management	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)
	Better Care Fund	Approvals Management Engine (Scheme of Delegation)
	Budgetary control and financial management	

* Those reports marked with an asterisk are currently in draft (i.e. not finalised) but the overall opinion is not expected to change.

Those reports in bold are not yet issued in draft and are an indicative opinion.

Oracle Integrated Assurance – Assurance Opinions

Included in the above Table of Audit Opinions is the Oracle Integrated Assurance review which received an overall opinion of Satisfactory Assurance. This can be further broken down into the following key fundamental processes:

Process	2019/20 Opinion	2020/21 Opinion
Accounts Payable (AP)	Good	Good
Accounts Receivable (AR)	Limited	Limited
General Ledger/Journals and Virements	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Account Reconciliations	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Payroll	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Cash Receipting and Banking	Included in AP and AR	Included in AP and AR
Expenses	Good	Satisfactory
Approvals Management Engine (AME)	Good	Good
Change Management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Accounts Receivable has received a Limited Assurance opinion for the last three financial years. Whilst there has been close oversight of debt management and a sustained focus on improving collection processes and outcomes, supported by senior management and Members, it has been acknowledged by management that income recovery processes require further improvements as, in particular, the current IT systems do not have some key functionality to provide consistent, timely and easy to produce assurance over the end-to-end debt collection process and to be able to demonstrate full compliance with the Debt Collection Strategy. A move to a new Accounts Receivable system anticipated in late 2021 as part of a wider Council move to Oracle Fusion may help to solve these issues in the longer term.

Risk Management

The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (Standard 2120) require the internal audit activity to evaluate the effectiveness and contribute to the improvement of risk management processes. Internal Audit gathers the information to support this assessment during multiple engagements including a specific risk management assignment.

The internal audit review of the Council's risk management arrangements received an overall opinion of **Satisfactory Assurance**. It concluded that processes are embedded to facilitate review, challenge, approval and reporting of risk at various levels of management, including Political/Corporate Leadership Teams (PLT/CLT), Functional Leadership Teams (FLT) and the Senior Management Team (SMT). In addition, the review acknowledged and recognised that controls were adjusted within the year to account for the changing risk environment. For example, during the height of the pandemic a specific Covid-19 risk register was compiled and regularly monitored by management.

No Assurance and Limited Assurance Audits

I have not issued any No Assurance opinions in the 2020/21 financial year.

Ten reviews have received an overall opinion of Limited Assurance (compared to two in 2019/20 and nine for 2018/19).

The AGS Committee require that for audit reviews that receive a Limited or No Assurance opinion, that a representative from the relevant service area attend a committee meeting to provide an overview of the issues raised and progress made against them. In 2020/21 representatives from the services attended to discuss the following Limited Assurance reports:

- Library Service - stock control
- Accounts receivable
- Energy invoice processes

In addition to the above the following Limited Assurance opinions have been given in 2020/21:

IT Major Incident Management

A Limited Assurance report was issued in March 2019 regarding IT major incident management. The follow up review concluded in May 2020 that limited progress had been made in implementing the original recommendations; three recommendations had been implemented but a further three Major recommendations still required further action to fully implement. As at 10 June 2021 our recommendation tracking system indicates that one of these recommendations has now been implemented and the other two are receiving regular updates and progress is being made to fully implement them so they can then be closed.

IT Disaster Recovery

In September 2017, Internal Audit issued an adverse report on IT Disaster Recovery (DR). Due to a range of commercial, business and technical challenges, the required actions to mitigate some of the Major and Critical risks identified were delayed and although Technology Services (TS) initially indicated that these would be implemented during 2020/21, Covid-19 then caused further delays as Council staff moved to mass home working. The Audit, Governance, and Standards Committee have received regular updates from TS on progress and the residual risks in respect of disaster recovery that the Council faces until the required actions are complete.

A follow up review has recently been undertaken which indicates a Limited Assurance opinion.

IT Asset Management

This review identified control weaknesses in the areas of:

- IT infrastructure planning - no forward plan is currently in place
- Deficiencies in processes for capturing the leavers information, asset tagging, recording of warranty information, decommissioned assets and lost or stolen assets
- Lack of hardware audits and key performance indicator (KPI) reporting.

Adult Social Care Debt

A major recommendation was made around the timeliness of referring debt cases to Legal Services or the Deputyship Team increasing the risk of debt accumulating to significant sums with less likelihood of recovery. Moderate recommendations were made relating to timeliness of financial assessments, management information and reporting; and effective communications with the service user or their representative to prevent debts from accumulating to unmanageable levels and non-payment of monies due.

Essex Countywide Traveller Unit

Two major issues were raised for site management and site risk assessments where there is no formal management or maintenance programme in place to ensure any reparations are completed on time or as part of long-term planning. The current site risk assessments are not completed routinely or consistently to ensure any identified risks can be mitigated through necessary action.

Wells Park School

The major issues identified related to the decision making and governance arrangements around the procurement of goods and services which may leave the school exposed to legal challenge where the school are unable to demonstrate that public monies are used efficiently, effectively and transparently.

Country Parks - Stock Control

Major recommendations have been made to address weaknesses in controls around stock control and monitoring, stock write off and discounting of perishable goods in the cafeterias and gift shops owned and managed by ECC.

Grants

We provide audit services in relation to certifying some grant claims where this is a requirement of the grant terms and conditions and/or we are a designated First Level Controller. Grants audited in 2020/2021 include:

- Troubled Families:
Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) payment by results scheme to help troubled families turn their lives around. The DCLG require that 10% of claims are internally audited throughout the year.
- Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK):
In 2020/21 we continued to maintain oversight of this programme through the monitoring and review of performance reports and the annual return which is also reviewed by Finance and signed-off by the S151 Officer.
- School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) Grant – payment of bursaries to newly qualified teachers. A qualified opinion was submitted.
- Interreg – Professional framework For Innovation in Tourism (final claim)
- Interreg – Co-creation and implementation of innovative, participative climate adaptation solutions in densely-built areas (final claim)
- Interreg BLUEPRINT to a Circular Economy – 1st claim submitted
- Interreg (LECSEA) Local Energy Communities for the 2 Seas Region
- Interreg EMPOWER
- SELEP Growth Hub
- Bus Service Operators Grant
- Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant
- DfT Blue Badge New Criteria Implementation (No 31/2936)
- Department for Transport Integrated Capital Grant Claim
- DfT Travel Demand Management Grant

Unplanned Reviews

During the year we carried one unplanned internal audit review. Unplanned reviews usually arise in response to a previously unidentified risk or concern.

VAT Output

Internal Audit was contacted in October 2020 regarding a suspected error with the accounting treatment for VAT for the room hire for wedding ceremonies. The service had conducted an initial enquiry into their income transactions and requested a further in-depth review to fully understand the position regarding potential errors in VAT identification, accounting and reporting to HMRC.

The review was extended to cover the following areas: Essex Country Parks, Essex Outdoor Centres, Essex Records Office and Essex Arts and Culture. The review covered a four-year period and concluded that ECC had underpaid VAT on income and a voluntary declaration was made to HMRC.

Projects and Programmes

Internal Audit and Counter Fraud have been involved in supporting a number of key corporate projects during the year, to help ensure that appropriate control systems are in place during design, transition and implementation, and that these controls are proportionate to financial cost and risk. These projects include:

The Corporate Systems Programme

This is an ongoing programme to move the Council's core financial systems (including Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, General Ledger and Human Resources) to Oracle Fusion Cloud in late 2021.

The Programme entered the Orchestrate Phase at the end of March 2021. This covers systems integration testing, key user training, user acceptance testing preparations and data migration 3. It is expected to exit Orchestrate and enter the Prepare Phase in early June 2021.

At the time of writing this report the overall status of the Programme is rated as Amber. However, there is no suggestion at this stage that planned go live in October 2021 will be delayed or compromised.

Social Care Platform Programme

This is an ongoing programme which involves an interim procurement with the current provider, system improvements and a data transformation project; and a longer term procurement of the Council's social care case management software, which records all the Council's adults' and childrens' cases on one platform. The interim procurement has been completed and the Programme is currently concluding the Discovery Phase of the longer term procurement. Implementation is not expected until 2023.

Direct Payments Monitoring Team

The Council's Design Authority approved the setting up of a new direct payments monitoring team for Adult Social Care in 2019 and this was set up in 2020. The team are key to ensuring direct payment funds are being spent correctly in accordance with care and support plans, that service users have a better experience of direct payments and that the Council are legally compliant with the Care Act.

Internal Audit & Counter Fraud supported the design of the new team and their induction, particularly fraud awareness training. Towards the end of their first year of operation, a healthcheck review was undertaken to review the design and operating effectiveness of the team.

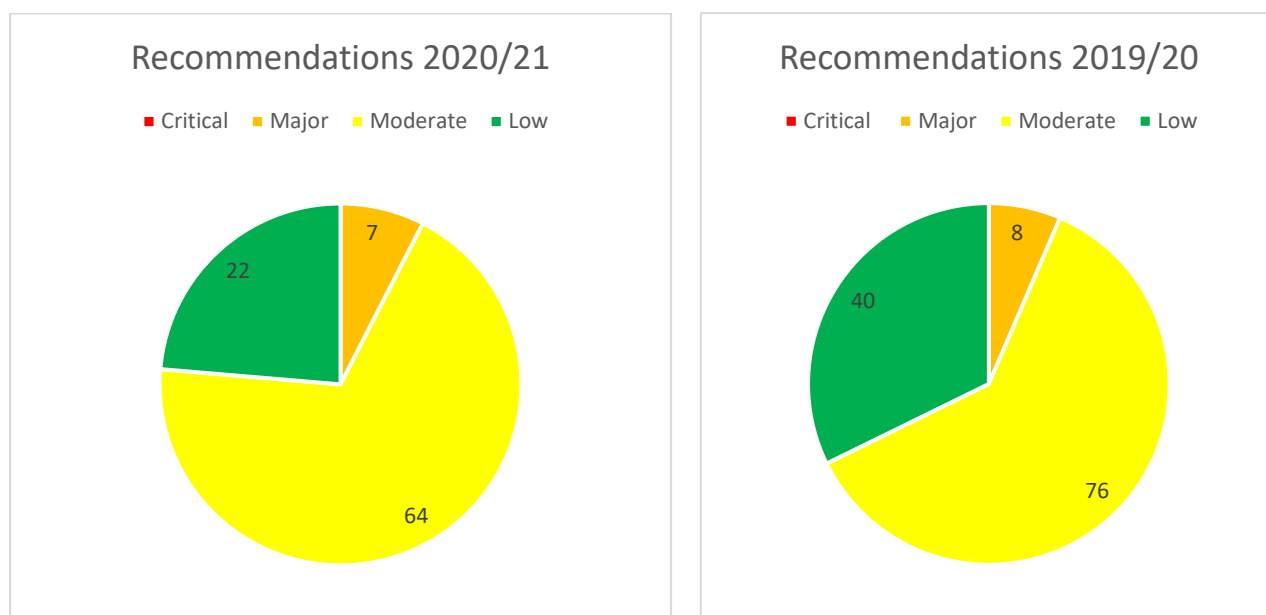
Income System

Internal Audit supported the project to replace the Council's cash management system (PARIS) with a new payments system, Capita Pay360 in early 2020. In addition, Internal Audit are currently carrying out a risk based review of the effectiveness of these arrangements.

Internal Audit Recommendations

One measure of the effectiveness of Internal Audit is the extent to which recommendations made by them are subsequently implemented. Tracking of Internal Audit recommendations takes place regularly, with monthly emails being sent to Recommendation Owners to request status updates which they provide directly via a web-based system.

Recommendation Ratings issued * in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20



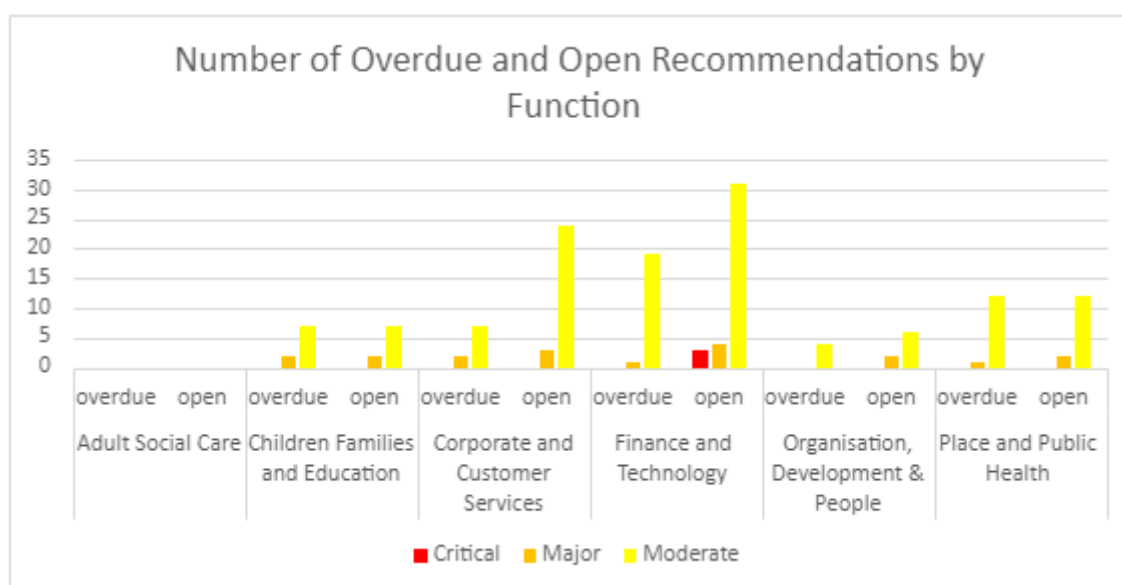
*figures are based on finalised reports issued during the period 1 April to 31 March to enable easy comparison between years. Some Limited Assurance internal audit reviews for 2020/21 are still in draft or finalised after 31 March 2021 so will not be reflected in the above charts.

Number of Open and Overdue Recommendations by Function

The Audit Governance and Standards Committee closely monitor outstanding recommendations and where unsatisfactory updates or lack of progress is noted may choose to invite recommendation owners and their senior managers to committee meetings to explain; in the 2020-21 financial year there no invitations of this nature were required .

Summary reports on outstanding and overdue recommendations are also presented to the Corporate Leadership Team via a Quarterly Organisational Health report and the Corporate Governance Steering Board receive quarterly key performance indicators on overdue recommendations.

The below chart shows the position on open and overdue Internal Audit recommendations by Function as at 31 March 2021. Note that the position can change regularly as final Internal Audit reports with new recommendations are issued and historic open recommendations become implemented and closed. Note that Adult Social Care (ASC) did not have any outstanding recommendations at the end of the 2020/21 financial year. This is partly due to the considerable efforts by the ASC Function to implement outstanding recommendations from prior years but also due to a reduced level of Internal Audit activity in this area in 2020/21 due to the Function's emergency Covid response. All recommendation owners receive monthly reminders to access the online system that tracks all Internal Audit recommendations and are able to provide status updates, including where appropriate, revised target dates with reasons, should implementation not be possible by the original target date.



NB Overdue recommendations are shown based on their *revised* target implementation date which may not necessarily be the *original* agreed target date.

Overview of Counter Fraud Activity

ECC has a dedicated Counter Fraud Team who work alongside the Internal Audit Team and report to the Head of Assurance. The Counter Fraud Team are responsible for detecting and investigating a range of fraud matters that impact the council including those committed by residents, staff and contractors. In addition, a programme of data analytical and data matching work is completed by the Counter Fraud Team.

Referrals

Referrals come from a range of sources including ECC staff and managers, internal and cross organisation data-matching (including the National Fraud Initiative), external bodies, and the general public. Not all referrals lead to cases being set up and some referrals are forwarded to third parties, e.g. the respective district, borough or city council within Essex, for their investigation.

The table below demonstrates the source of referrals, compared with those received last year.

Source of Referral	2019/20	2020/21
Web referrals	42	38
Blue Badge - Parking Enforcement Officers	36	3
Blue Badge - Other authorities	20	5
Blue Badge - Members of Public	59	58
Internal - Employees	83	55
Total Referrals	240	159

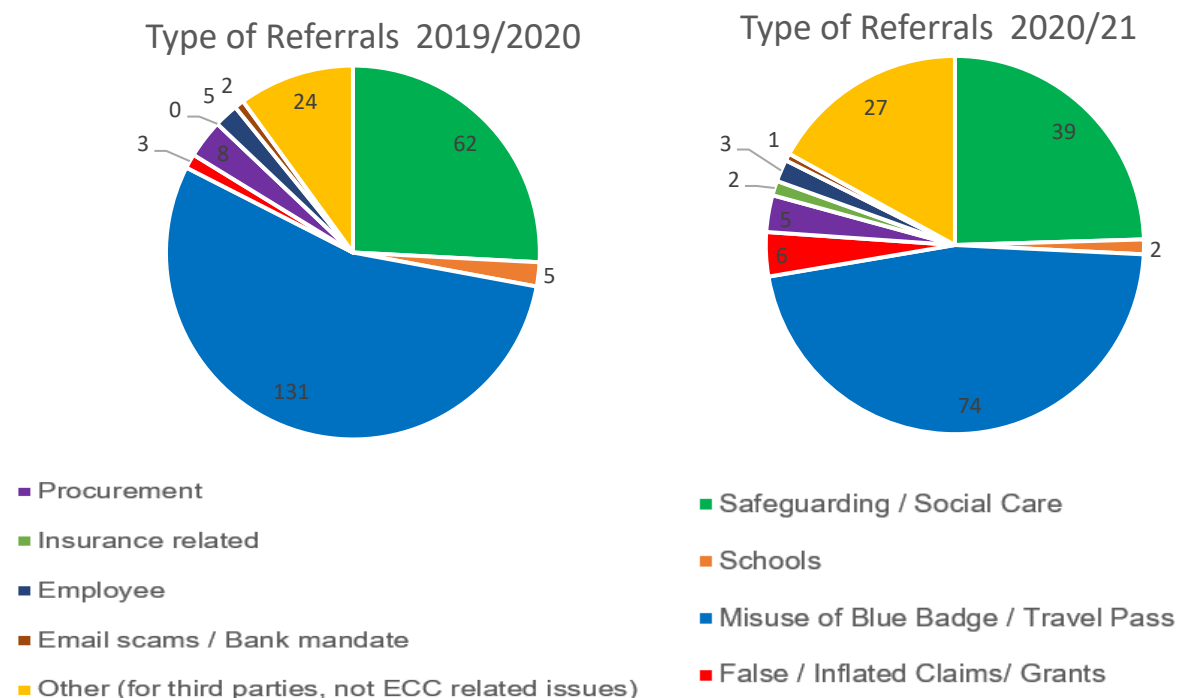
The charts below show the type of referrals received and provides a comparison with the previous year. During 2020/21 we have seen a decrease in the total number of referrals. This is mainly as a result of the pandemic, the lack of face to face social care reviews and the lack of blue badge enforcement during this period.

Covid-19 Pandemic

Although the overall level of referrals for the year was lower than previous years, we have seen an increase in the number of suspicious grant claims that have been forwarded to Essex County Council by providers in order to secure Covid-related funding, either via the Covid-19 Response Fund or the Infection Control Fund. The Counter Fraud Team have worked closely with the Essex County Council Procurement Team regarding the review, scrutiny and processing of grant claims and have provided fraud awareness training in this area. Where weaknesses have been identified in the control environment, recommendations have been made to strengthen the procedures.

In the event that suspicious invoices and supporting evidence have been identified by the Procurement Team, these have been forwarded to the Counter Fraud Team for further review and investigation. The Counter Fraud Team are currently investigating several cases in this area which may progress to prosecution.

Type of referrals received 2019/20 vs 2020/21



Programme of Data Matching & Analytical Work

National Fraud Initiative (NFI) Fraud Hub / NFI Mandatory biennial exercise – In March 2020, ECC subscribed to the NFI Fraud Hub to enhance the national data matching currently in place. Data sets are now submitted for matching against mortality lists on a fortnightly basis. This increased level of data submission / investigation of resultant matches will reduce the risk of erroneous payments being made and remedial action to recover instances of overpayment.

The mandatory NFI data matching exercise was completed in October 2020, with matches returned from the Cabinet Office during January and February 2021. Investigation is currently underway to review the matches.

Returned matches include payroll to payroll matches between ECC and other authorities, where dates overlap. Following further investigation into the returned matches, two issues were identified and required remedial action. In one case, an employee worked for ECC and also for another authority at the same time (the employee has resigned from ECC and faces disciplinary action from the other authority). In the other case, a prospective employee was paid by ECC but did not start work. Paperwork had been submitted to payroll ahead of the anticipated start date and had been actioned. Monies overpaid to the prospective employee are in the process of being recovered.

Essex Council Tax Data Matching Initiative - ECC is supporting an Essex-wide data matching project that involves all councils providing data to ensure that income received from council tax is maximised. ECC provides data sets to support the data matching which is now undertaken on a monthly basis and the Counter Fraud Team provides support to districts in dealing with the output. Total cumulative savings recorded as at 01 March 2021 (from July 2017) are £2,101,594.

Internal Data Matching / Data Analysis - the Counter Fraud team now includes a Data and Intelligence Specialist. Data matching / analytical work has been completed in the following areas:

- **Payroll and expenses** – data matching completed to identify potential erroneous, duplicate or fraudulent or unusually high payments;
- **Payroll** – a review of payroll deductions (as a result of a discrepancy in the calculation of payroll deductions)
- **Adult social care** – a review was completed predominantly to cleanse data between the social care case management system and the payment system. The latest review resulted in some 79 records being highlighted for update.
- **Adult social care** – an analysis of care packages to identify where domiciliary and residential care packages overlap and may not have been fully closed down on the system;
- **Adult social care direct payments** – a review was undertaken to identify significant increases in the care packages over the last few months/ years;
- **Creditor payments** – a review to identify whether one-off payments have been made to dormant providers (as a result of an issue identified as part of the Covid grant payments to providers).

Counter Fraud Outcomes

There are a range of potential outcomes after a case has been investigated. Clearly not all matters that come to our attention will have been caused by fraudulent activity. However, when evidence shows wrongdoing or criminal activity we will apply appropriate sanction whether that is disciplinary, prosecution or recovery of monies (or a combination of these). The table below shows our sanction activity during 2020/21 and financial recovery.

Sanction Activity	2020/21
Prosecution	0
Disciplinary Action	0
Monies Recovered	£272k
In Recovery	£117k
Future Losses Prevented	£266k

The chart below compares our counter fraud outcomes with the previous year. Outcomes are fairly consistent with previous years although we have seen a slight decrease in the number of blue badges seized and misuse letters issued which is consistent with the decrease in the number of referrals in this area.

Additionally, due to the restrictions in place during the pandemic, face to face interviews were postponed until they were able to be conducted in a Covid-safe environment. In instances that a case had progressed to prosecution, court cases have been delayed. Court hearings are planned to be held during 2021/2022.

Counter Fraud Outcomes 2019/20 vs 2020/21

Outcome Type	Outcome Type 2019/2020	Outcome Type 2020/2021
Prosecution	3	0
Dismissal / Disciplinary Action	3	0
No fraud established	26	21
Referred to third party	0	4
Blue Badges – Misuse letter issued	21	8
Blue Badges - Seized	37	5
ASC - Financial recovery	14	13
ASC - PB terminated	5	8
ASC - Payment stopped / reduced	0	3
Other - Payment prevented / recovery of funds	2	1
Other	27	11

Current Prosecution Cases

Due to the Covid pandemic, face to face interviews were postponed for the majority of the year. These have now been re-instated and we have 3 cases pending potential prosecution action. One case is awaiting a court date.

The Covid pandemic has seen an increase in suspected fraudulent grant claims being submitted to ECC by providers for funding via the Covid-19 Response Fund and Infection Control Fund. These are in the process of being investigated.

Effectiveness of Internal Audit and Counter Fraud

Compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

The Head of Assurance must confirm annually that the internal audit function conforms with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). In line with the PSIAS and reflected in our quality assurance and improvement programme, external assessments must be conducted at least once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor from outside the organisation. Our last external assessment was carried out by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) in February 2018 and concluded that “the service is highly regarded within the Council and provides useful assurance on its underlying systems and processes.”

A self-assessment was carried out in March 2021, as part of our on-going quality assurance process, which concluded that in all material aspects the internal audit function complies with the Standards.

Compliance with the Fighting Fraud & Corruption Locally (FFCL) Strategy

In September 2020 the Council’s counter fraud arrangements were assessed against the Fighting Fraud & Corruption Locally (FFCL) checklist. The checklist is aligned to the FFCL Strategy and the 5 pillars of activity that the Council should focus their efforts, i.e.:

- Govern
- Acknowledge
- Prevent
- Pursue
- Protect

The results of the assessment provide an indication of the Council’s position in relation to the robustness and effectiveness of their fraud arrangements and culture. Of the 37 principles we are fully compliant on 33 and partially compliant on the remaining 4, working towards full compliancy.¹

¹ Full report on compliancy available upon request.

As a result of the assessment, and having considered all the principles, I am satisfied that the organisation has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud.

Independence and Objectivity

I can confirm that during the 2020/21 financial year that the internal audit activity has been free from interference in determining the scope of internal auditing, performing work and communicating results.

In addition, I have achieved organisational independence by reporting functionally to the AGS Committee. Examples include the Committee approving the Internal Audit Charter and the Risk Based Internal Audit Plan and the Section 151 officer approving whether services in Assurance should be subject to internal audit during a particular year.

Qualifications of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team

As the Head of Assurance I have assessed the qualifications of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team and I can confirm that all staff hold an appropriate professional qualification or are qualified through extensive experience.

Customer Satisfaction

Feedback is received through Customer Satisfaction Surveys issued at the end of each Internal Audit review. The survey canvasses the auditee's opinion on the following areas:

- Professionalism of Internal Audit staff
- Scope of the audit
- Execution of the audit
- Accuracy / timeliness of reporting
- Value of the audit

In 2020/21, we had a very low completion rate with only 7 surveys returned, however, **100%** of customers who completed the survey, expressed satisfaction with all aspects of the service they received. Any concerns raised by auditees are followed up by the Strategic Audit Manager.

Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan 2020/21 - Reconciliation

✓ = completed i.e. final and/or draft report issued





Internal Audit Activity	Status as at 11 June 2021
Finance and Technology	
Key Technology Related Project Delivery – Microsoft Teams	Terms of reference agreed. Fieldwork due to commence in June 2021
IT Strategy	✓
Management of Third Party Providers for Technology Based Services and IT Performance	Cancelled
The Corporate System Project	Ongoing support and advice provided
Remote Working Resilience	✓
IT Disaster Recovery and Data Back Up Processes	✓
Cyber Security	✓
Social Care Platform Programme	Ongoing support and advice provided
IT Asset Management	✓
Broadband Delivery UK	Annual claim to be signed off in June 2021
Essex Pension Fund – funding and investments	✓
Essex Pension Fund - administration	✓
Modern Day Slavery	Initial scoping commenced but deferred to 2021/22 due to Procurement activity in that area
Access Support Unit	✓
Budgetary Control and Financial Planning	✓
SELEP	✓
Contract Management	Carried forward to 2021/22 due to services emergency Covid response
Procurement – Request for Quotes process	✓
Key Financial Systems	✓
Treasury Management	✓
Income System	Fieldwork nearing completion
Financial Management Code	✓

Internal Audit Activity	Status as at 11 June 2021
	Included in budgetary control review
Financial Assessment Process (social care)	✓ Included in Adult Social Care Debt audit.
Social Care Provider Resilience during Covid-19 - Additional Funding Awards	Work spans more than one financial year and is in progress
Corporate and Customer	
Risk Management	✓
Business Continuity	Initial scoping commenced but agreed to defer to 2021/22 due to Covid-19
Delivering Good Governance in Local Government	Light touch review undertaken
Health and Safety	✓
Libraries - Stock Control and Fines	✓
Members' Locality Funds	✓
Corporate Reporting	Deferred to 2021/22 when new ECC Strategy will be finalised.
Supporting the outcome of the Audit, Governance and Standards Effectiveness Review	✓
Children Families and Education	
Troubled Families	✓
Schools - Establishment Reviews	Reduced number of schools visited due to Covid-19
Schools Thematic Review - Procurement	Commenced but not finalised. Delayed due to Covid-19
Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)	✓
School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) Grant	✓
Direct Payments (Children & Families)	✓ No formal report issued. However regular updates and engagement has occurred throughout the year with the service on progress relating to previous recommendations made.
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	✓ Light touch review undertaken of Council's preparedness for an Ofsted / CQC reinspection
Foster Carers - Expense Claims	✓

Internal Audit Activity	Status as at 11 June 2021
	Advice and guidance provided as part of new system implementation
Social Care Platform Programme	Ongoing advice and guidance provided
Childrens Residential Framework	✓
Social Care Payments	✓ Combined with the Childrens residential framework audit
Organisation Development and People	
Whistleblowing Arrangements	✓
Recruitment - Permanent Staff	Fieldwork commencing in 2021/22. Delayed due to Covid-19
Temporary Workers and Interims	Fieldwork commenced in 2021/22. Deferred due to Covid-19
Use of Consultants	Deferred to 2021/22
Wellbeing Audit	Deferred to 2021/22
Employee Relations Processes	✓
Essex.gov.uk Website and Social Media	Fieldwork commencing in 2021/22. Delayed due to Covid-19
Place and Public Health	
Essex Housing	Some engagement in 2020/21 but full audit to take place in late 2021
Major Capital Projects	Light touch review undertaken – no formal report issued.
Test and Trace	In progress, not yet signed off
Use of Fleet Vehicles	✓
Essex County Traveller Unit	✓
Highways Contract	✓ High level assurance piece of work carried out
Environmental Audit	Fieldwork underway
Country Parks – stock control	✓
Covid-19 Bus Services Support Grant for Local Transport Authorities 2020-21	✓
Adult Social Care	
Continuing Health Funding	✓
Quality Assurance Framework	✓
Direct Payments (Adults)	✓
Safeguarding	Some assurance gained via the Quality Assurance Framework audit. No further review currently planned. Agreed this approach with S151 Officer in February 2021

Internal Audit Activity	Status as at 11 June 2021
Meaningful Lives Matter	✓
Management Information / Key Performance Indicators	Delayed due to Covid-19. Business Intelligence specialist providing support in this area to Adult Social Care.
Better Care Fund	✓
Social Care Platform Programme	Ongoing support and advice provided
Digitalisation Project	Carried forward to 2021/22. Engagement with service area commenced
Financial Assessment Process	Delayed due to Covid-19.
Adult Social Care Debt	✓

Explanation of Assurance and Risk Priority Levels

Assurance level		Assessment Rationale	
Good		There is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the objectives of the system/process and manage the risks to achieving those objectives. Recommendations will normally only be of Low risk rating. Any Moderate recommendations would need to be mitigated by significant strengths elsewhere.	
Satisfactory		Whilst there is basically a sound system of control, there are some areas of weakness, which may put the system/process objectives at risk.	
Limited		There are significant weaknesses in key areas of the system of control, which put the system/process objectives at risk. Improvement in the design and/or operational effectiveness of the control environment is necessary to gain assurance that risks are being managed to an acceptable level, and core objectives will be achieved.	
No		The system of internal control has serious weaknesses and controls are not effective in managing the key risks in scope. It is highly unlikely that core objectives will be met without urgent management intervention.	
Risk Priority Level		Definition	
Corporate	Critical	 Red	Audit findings which, in the present state, represent a serious risk to the organisation as a whole, for example, reputational damage, significant financial loss (through fraud, error or poor value for money), intervention by external agencies and / or lack of compliance with statutory regulations. Remedial action is required immediately
	Major	 Amber	Audit findings indicate a serious weakness or breakdown in the control environment, which, if untreated by management intervention, is highly likely to put achievement of core service objectives at risk. Remedial action is required urgently
	Moderate	 Yellow	Audit findings which, if not treated by appropriate management action, are likely to put achievement of some of the core service objectives at risk. Prompt specific action should be taken
Service	Low	 Green	Audit findings indicate opportunities to implement good or best practice, which, if adopted, will enhance the control environment. Remedial action is suggested

Report title: The draft Statement of Accounts and draft Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21		AGS/13/21
Report to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee		
Report author: Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and Paul Turner, Director Legal and Assurance		
Date of meeting: 28 June 2021	For: Information	
Enquiries to Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology email nicole.wood@essex.gov.uk Tel. No. 07946 705816 or Christine Golding, Chief Accountant email Christine.golding@essex.gov.uk Tel. No. 03330 138401 with respect to the Annual Governance Statement: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance paul.turner@essex.gov.uk		
Divisions affected: All Essex		

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a draft of the **Statement of Accounts** and the draft **Annual Governance Statement** for 2020/21 to the Committee for information (as appended), and to explain the Committee's role regarding approval and publication of these documents in September 2021.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee notes the arrangements for approval and publication of the Council's **Statement of Accounts** for 2020/21.
- 2.2 The Committee reviews the draft **Annual Governance Statement** for 2020/21, as appended, and considers whether it wishes to make any comments on it or propose any changes.

3. Statement of Accounts

- 3.1 The process of closing the Accounts, and of producing the information required to enable the external auditor to give an unqualified opinion on the accounts, is both complex and time constrained.
- 3.2 The Council is statutorily required to compile its annual accounts in compliance with generally accepted accounting practice. This means preparing the accounts in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 (the Accounting Code), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards and statutory regulations.

- 3.3 The Council is also required by Regulation to:
- Produce draft accounts, and present them for external audit, by a specified date each year;
 - Make the draft Statement of Accounts available for a period of 30 working days, during which time the public have the right to raise objections, inspect the accounts and question the Local Auditor; and
 - Publish its final, audited accounts by a specified date each year.

- 3.4 Statutory regulations usually require these activities to be undertaken in accordance with the following timetable:
- Produce the draft Statement of Accounts and present them for external audit by **31 May**;
 - Make the draft accounts available for public inspection for a period of 30 working days, to include the first **10 working days of June**; and
 - Publish final, audited, accounts by **31 July**.

However, in recognition of the significant pressure local authorities have been under in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and taking into account the recommendations of Redmond Review (an independent review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting), the Government decided to defer the date by which the draft accounts for **2020/21** and **2021/22** must be produced to **31 July**, and the deadline for publication of final, audited accounts to **30 September**. The Government also confirmed that authorities must commence their period for public inspection of their accounts no later than on **1 August**.

- 3.5 In line with these deadlines, the Executive Director for Finance and Technology will certify the draft (unaudited) Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 on **30 June**; and will present the draft accounts to the external auditor and commence the 30-day period for the exercise of public rights on **1 July**. The draft Statement of Accounts is appended for review by the Committee.
- 3.6 The external auditor plans to report the results of the audit work to the Committee on **27 September 2021**, at which stage the Committee will be asked to approve the Statement of Accounts for publication. The Committee will be required to consider the external auditor's findings before authorising the accounts for issue.

4. Annual Governance Statement

- 4.1 The Regulations that apply to the Statement of Accounts also include a requirement to publish an Annual Governance Statement.
- 4.2 The regulations require authorities to carry out a review of the effectiveness of their systems of internal control to provide assurance that the Authority has a sound internal control framework in place to manage the risks that might prevent achievement of its statutory obligations and organisational objectives.

- 4.3 Part of the way we achieve this is by a Code of Corporate Governance which refers to a range of documents, policies and procedures that underpin our aim of achieving good governance. In this context 'governance' means the systems, processes, culture and values by which we direct and control our business.
- 4.4 ECC has committed to a set of seven core principles, developed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountability (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) in their paper Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016. The contents of our Code of Corporate Governance meet the requirements of those seven key principles and key documents can be found on our website.
- 4.5 The draft Annual Governance Statement, which is published with the Statement of Accounts, is appended and the Committee are asked to give any comments they may have.
- 4.6 The Statement will be updated to reflect any changes requested or required by the Committee and to reflect any significant developments.
- 4.7 The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee will be asked to approve the final statement at the same meeting as it considers the Council's Statement of Accounts on **27 September 2021**.

5. Policy context and Outcomes Framework

- 5.1 The Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 summarises the financial performance and financial position for the Council for the year ending 31 March 2021. As such, the Accounts provide a financial representation of activities during 2020/21 against the Organisation Strategy.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications associated with this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council is required to produce annual accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as currently amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021. The Council is also required to produce an annual governance statement.

8. Staffing and other resource implications

- 8.1 There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

9. List of appendices

- 9.1 **Appendix A** – Draft Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 (including the Annual Governance Statement)

10. List of Background Papers

- 10.1 None

Statement of Accounts 2020/21



**Audit, Governance and Standards
Committee – 28 June 2021**

Page 47 of 288



Essex County Council

Contents

Contents	Page
Narrative Report	3
Statement of Accounts	23
▪ <i>Introduction</i>	25
▪ <i>Statement of Responsibilities</i>	27
▪ <i>Financial Statements</i>	29
▪ <i>Notes to the Financial Statements</i>	35
▪ <i>Group Accounts</i>	120
▪ <i>Pension Fund Accounts</i>	135
▪ <i>Glossary of terms</i>	187
Annual Governance Statement	193
Independent Auditor's Report *	216

* *To be added upon conclusion of the external audit of the Council's Accounts*

Narrative Report 2020/21

Narrative Report

The purpose of the Narrative Report is to provide information on the Council, its main objectives and strategies and the principal risks it faces. The content of the Narrative Report is as follows:

Contents	Page
Introduction	5
Vision for Essex	7
Organisation Strategy	7
COVID-19 – the impacts and how we have responded	8
Revenue spending	9
Capital investment	13
Revenue Reserves and Balances	19
Cash Flow management	20
Statement of Accounts	20
Annual Governance Statement	21
Conclusion	22

Narrative Report

Introduction

About Essex County Council

Essex County Council (ECC) is one of the largest of the county councils in England, covering an area of around **3,670** square kilometres, with a population of about **1.8m** people and comprising **70** electoral divisions. The Council forms the upper tier of local government within Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock).

Our Services

The following core services are provided by the Council:

- **Children and Families** (including the safeguarding of children; looked after children; services to vulnerable children and young people and their families; and adoption and fostering services).
- **Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate** (including libraries and community hubs; registration services; coroner services; information governance; heritage, culture and the arts; community engagement; and community resilience).
- **Economic Development** (including enterprise and inward investment; tourism; employability and skills; strategic spatial planning; and minerals and waste planning).
- **Education and Skills** (including mainstream schools and education; early years and pre-school; special schools and special educational needs provision; school improvement; raising the participation age; youth services and careers advice; and school crossing patrols).
- **Environment and Climate Change Action** (including waste minimisation, disposal and recycling; built and historic environment; country parks and green spaces; flood management; and rural affairs).
- **Finance** (including financial administration and management, comprising preparation and management of the revenue and capital budgets; treasury management; procurement; insurance; commercial services; commercial property portfolio; and traded services).
- **Health and Adult Social Care** (including the support of and assistance to people with learning or physical disabilities or sensory impairment and older people and the homeless; public health; mental health services; child health related matters; and drug and alcohol action).
- **Infrastructure** (including transport strategy; infrastructure commissioning and delivery; maintenance of highways, public rights of way and structures; street lighting; traffic regulation and road safety; parking; cycling; and public rights of way).
- **Leader** (including democratic engagement; garden communities; housing growth; and strategy development).
- **Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships** (including project and programme management; business intelligence; and strategic partnerships).

Narrative Report

These services are either provided directly by the Council or are commissioned from and delivered by other organisations. Most of these services are mandatory, meaning that the Council must provide them because it is under a statutory duty to do so.

Our leadership and workforce

The decisions that affect the services we provide and the policies we adopt are made by our Councillors. There are **75** Councillors at Essex County Council, who are elected in local elections based on their political affiliations, to represent **70** areas known as divisions. Most of the Councillors serving throughout the 2020/21 financial year were elected for a four-year term, effective from **4 May 2017**. The next four-year term commences on **6 May 2021**.

Full Council is a meeting of all **75** Council members, and it is at these meetings that Councillors decide the overall policies of the County Council and set the Council's annual revenue budget and capital programme. The full Council is also responsible for electing a **Leader** of the Council. Councillor David Finch was the **Leader** throughout 2020/21. He was responsible for the strategic direction, policies and priorities of the Council, including the overall corporate revenue and capital budget strategy.

The Leader appointed nine other Councillors to form a **Cabinet**. The Councillors who made up the Cabinet provided collective and individual leadership, undertook lead responsibility for allocated portfolios and contributed towards the strategic direction of the Council. One of the nine Cabinet Members appointed by the Leader fulfilled the role of **Deputy Leader**. Councillor Kevin Bentley was the **Deputy Leader** throughout 2020/21; he was subsequently elected as Leader (on **25 May 2021**).

Overview and scrutiny committees held our Cabinet to account for the decisions made on behalf of the Council.

Senior officers, led by our **Chief Executive** Gavin Jones (our Head of Paid Services) and our Executive Directors, were responsible for:

- Advising Councillors on policy.
- Implementing Councillors' decisions.
- Service performance.

Together, these officers formed our **Corporate Leadership Team**.

Our workforce is aligned to our Corporate Leadership Team.

Overall, our workforce comprises **11,939** 'full time equivalent' employees. Of this total, **5,806** were employed within our locally maintained schools. Our non-schools' workforce therefore comprised **6,133** 'full time equivalent' employees as at 31 March 2021.

2019/20	Workforce numbers (full time equivalents)	2020/21
996	Adult Social Care	1,094
1,312	Children and Families	1,397
1,311	Corporate and Customer Services	1,381
529	Education	553
494	Finance and Technology	588
923	Place and Public Health	955
138	Organisation Development and People	165
5,703	Sub total - non schools	6,133
6,159	Schools	5,806
11,862	Total	11,939

Narrative Report

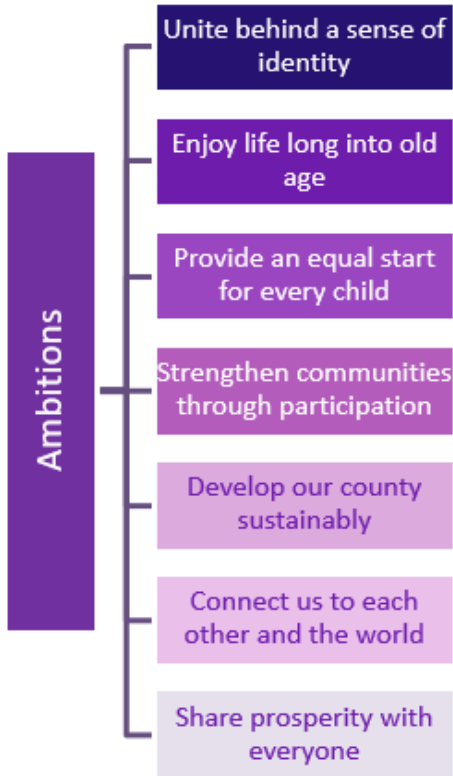
Vision for Essex

The [Future of Essex](#) is a single, shared vision for Essex that has been created by working together with our partners across Essex – residents, businesses, the voluntary sector, schools, universities and other public service partners.

It is a long-term statement of ambition and aspiration for Essex:

- A statement of values and beliefs that represent Essex's identity and spirit.
- A statement of priorities for Essex that we can aspire to achieve together.
- An expression of shared pride in and ambition for our county bringing together public services, businesses and residents.
- A declaration of ambitions and aspirations for our shared future.
- A narrative to define and promote our county externally.

The [Future of Essex](#) is not an Essex County Council document, but the agreed ambitions (as shown in the adjacent diagram) have informed the Council's organisational strategy.



Organisation Strategy

Strategic aims

The Council's [Organisation Strategy](#) sets out our areas of focus over the four year period 2017-21. It articulated how we have sought to achieve better outcomes for Essex, and secure the ambitions set out in the [Vision for Essex](#).

Our overarching ambition has been for Essex to be the best local authority in the country – because that is what the people of Essex deserve. This ambition translates into four strategic aims (as summarised in the adjacent diagram).



Narrative Report

COVID-19 – the impacts and how we have responded

2020/21 has been dominated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has worked hard to try and keep people as safe and secure as possible in the face of this challenge.

For the **economy**, we piloted a Business Accelerator Scheme to support people made redundant and launched a Kickstart programme to support new jobs in the county. We also set up a COVID-19 Business Information Service to provide advice in relation to COVID-19 and commissioned Let's Do Business to provide support for employers across the County to adapt and to safeguard jobs.

For our **vulnerable people**, requiring social care support, at the start of the pandemic we moved hundreds of staff onto 7-day working rotas to support hospital discharge. We also created a COVID-19 Response Fund worth **£12m** to support additional costs that care providers had to meet to keep people safe. We secured additional capacity for care beds to ensure that people could be discharged from hospital into an appropriate setting. We used technology to support disabled people who could no longer access day opportunities, as well as making use of Care Phones to enable people to stay connected to their loved ones during lockdown. And for our young people, not only were we able to maintain critical children's services but we also worked very closely with our schools to ensure they were able to operate safely and, where appropriate, safeguard the access to education for the children of key workers and the most vulnerable.

For our **Communities**, we set up Operation Shield, working with the Community and Voluntary sector and our district, city and borough Councils to enable the **60,000** people who had to Shield to access the support they needed to do that effectively. We recruited **7,000** volunteers to the Essex Well-being Service to undertake **40,000** tasks on behalf of members of their local community who were unable to do those things for themselves. To help hard-pressed families we delivered **22,850** free Summer holiday activity places, ensuring that throughout the summer holidays children could participate in physical activities and get a nutritious lunch, whilst parents were supported with free childcare.

Finally, we worked hard through our Public Health and Adult Social Care teams to **protect lives** and safeguard our people. This was fraught with difficulty in terms of the changing nature of the pandemic, our understanding of it, and therefore the appropriate courses of action to be taken but we were guided by the evidence to take action in the best interests of our communities, regardless of how difficult some of those decisions might have been. Our work included developing an Infection Control Plan - distributing more than **£31m** in funding to support infection control in our Care settings. We set up the Essex Contact Tracing Service to manage outbreaks in sensitive settings. To support the pathway out of the pandemic, we worked with our partners to manage the set-up of vaccination sites and the recruitment of Vaccination Marshall Volunteers.

We worked with singular focus throughout 2020/21 on addressing the challenges of COVID, and we will continue to do so over the next twelve months, to protect our communities from this dreadful virus.

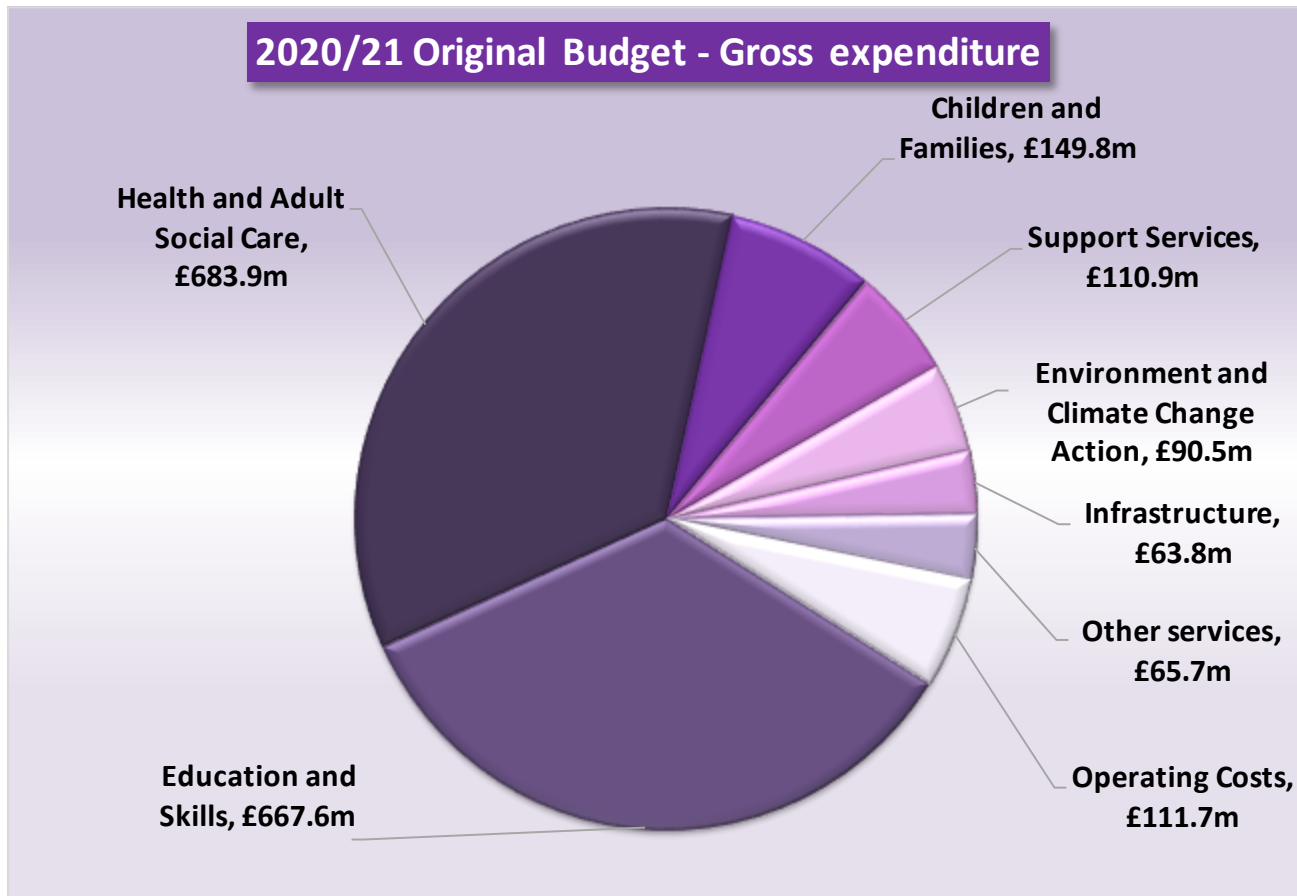
Narrative Report

Revenue spending

Revenue spending plans for 2020/21

Our budget for the provision of services in 2020/21 was set against a backdrop of considerable financial challenge, due to the Government's on-going austerity programme of national reductions in public sector spending, compounded by inflationary pressures (particularly National Living Wage increases) and an increasing demand for our services.

In total, we planned to spend some **£1,943.9m** (gross) on commissioning services this year. This spending plan was aligned to the Council's Cabinet Members, according to their specific responsibilities for discharging the functions of the Cabinet.



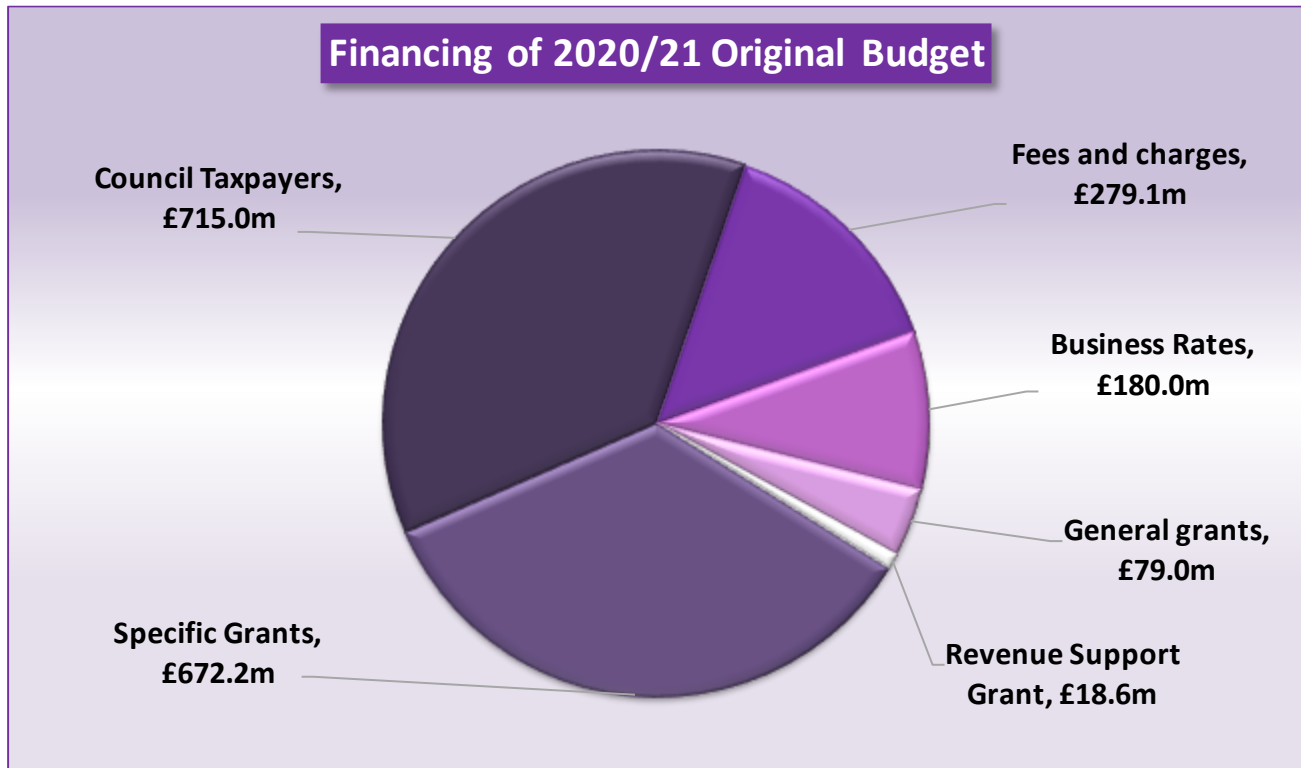
We intended to finance **£1,030.3m** of our spending from income from fees and charges (**£279.1m**) and from specific (**£672.2m**) and general (**£79m**) government grants.

The net budget, after allowing for specific and general government grants and income from fees and charges, originally amounted to **£913.6m**.

Narrative Report

The net budget was financed from:

- Revenue Support Grant (**£18.6m**).
- Business rates (*including business rates 'top up' grant*) (**£180m**); and
- Local taxpayers (**£715m**).



The Council Tax for a band D property was set at **£1,321.11** (compared with £1,270.44 in 2019/20), which equated to an increase of under **97p** per household per week.

The Council levied the Government's social care precept of **2%** in 2020/21, which must be spent on the provision of adult social care; this is included in the Council Tax figure of **£1,321.11**.

Year-end position

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an exceptional impact on the Council's finances, with significant additional costs of circa **£148m** and around **£207m** of government support confirmed through multiple and complex grant streams. Much of the funding received from the government covered more than one financial year too, and this had a material impact on the Council's reserves and balances at year end, as we needed to set aside COVID-19 funding to meet costs in 2021/22 and beyond.

Despite the exceptional circumstances the Council has emerged from 2020/21 in a resilient position although there remains considerable uncertainty around both demand pressures and government funding, notably beyond 2021/22.

Narrative Report

The Council delivered an under spend of **£11.5m (1.3%)** against a budget of **£913.6m**. This position is after adjusting for proposals to carry forward underspends for use in 2021/22 and reserve movements.

Actual net expenditure compared with the final approved budget for the Cabinet Members' portfolios is shown below, together with the planned and actual financing of that expenditure:

	Budget		Actual net expenditure £000	Over / (under) spend against final estimate £000	Mitigations £000	Underlying over / (under) spend £000
	Original £000	Final Estimate £000				
Children and Families	129,043	126,266	124,575	(1,691)	1,691	-
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	18,317	9,031	7,770	(1,261)	1,168	(93)
Economic Development	6,262	812	8,097	7,285	(7,285)	-
Education and Skills						
Dedicated Schools Budget	(3,063)	(2,925)	(11,883)	(8,958)	8,958	-
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	81,394	84,598	80,291	(4,307)	4,621	314
Environment and Climate Change Action	77,582	88,625	82,748	(5,877)	5,758	(119)
Finance	17,461	13,468	(599)	(14,067)	13,976	(91)
Health and Adult Social Care	423,018	446,682	414,795	(31,887)	24,636	(7,251)
Infrastructure	44,257	38,355	32,975	(5,380)	332	(5,048)
Leader	7,551	7,753	6,840	(913)	618	(295)
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	1,902	2,669	2,324	(345)	5,036	4,691
Recharged strategic support services	86,073	99,415	90,299	(9,116)	5,999	(3,117)
Net expenditure by Portfolios	889,797	914,749	838,232	(76,517)	65,508	(11,009)
Other operating costs						
Interest, capital financing and dividends	52,405	51,905	49,150	(2,755)	2,755	-
Appropriations to / (from) earmarked reserves:	50,467	57,182	145,414	88,232	(56,690)	31,542
Total net expenditure	992,669	1,023,836	1,032,796	8,960	11,573	20,533
General government grants (excl. RSG)	(79,059)	(126,229)	(130,874)	(4,645)	4,141	(504)
General Balance - contribution / (withdrawal)						
Contributions						
Budgeted contribution	-	16,003	16,003	-	-	-
Return of unspent supplementary funding	-	-	15,714	15,714	(15,714)	-
Underlying under spend	-	-	11,482	11,482	-	11,482
Withdrawals						
Transfer of Covid funding to earmarked reserves	-	-	(31,542)	(31,542)	-	(31,542)
Net Total	913,610	913,610	913,579	(31)	-	(31)
Financed by						
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	(18,598)	(18,598)	(18,598)	-	-	-
Business rates (incl. business rates top up grant)	(180,038)	(180,038)	(179,888)	150	-	150
Council taxpayers	(714,974)	(714,974)	(715,093)	(119)	-	(119)
Total Financing	(913,610)	(913,610)	(913,579)	31	-	31

The net under spend of **£11.5m** reflects:

- A net under spend by services, after mitigating adjustments are made, of **£11m**. **£3.4m** of this under spend arose following an actuarial valuation of the Council's self-insurance insurance arrangements, leaving a **£7.6m** under spend mainly concentrated in the Health and Adult Social Care portfolio, largely due to volatility in demand for residential and nursing care.
- Minor favourable movements of **£0.5m** on the funding forecast for the year.

Narrative Report

The net under spend of **£11.5m** was returned to the General Balance. At the same time, **£31.5m** was diverted from the General Balance to other reserves to:

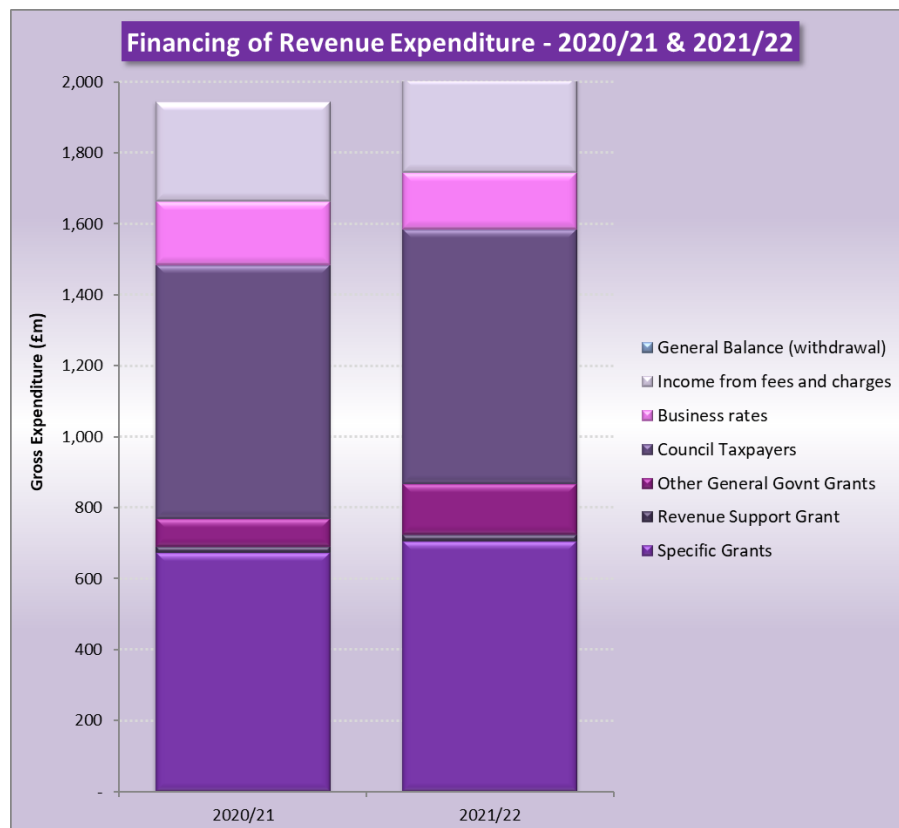
- replenish where the Council's general funds were initially used as a matter of urgency to meet exceptional COVID-19 costs and income losses before the government stepped in with emergency COVID-19 grants to meet the exceptional costs of the pandemic; and
- move unused grant to the COVID-19 equalisation reserve.

Revenue spending plans for 2021/22 and beyond

The 2020/21 financial year was challenging, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst the government provided funding towards the cost pressures and losses, the medium to long term impact of the pandemic on the economy and demand for services is still unknown, creating uncertainty in our medium term financial strategy.

The 2021/22 budget was approved by the Council in February 2021 and was underpinned by a financial strategy to ensure we can continue to live within our means, whilst also continuing to deliver essential services to residents and keep Council Tax as low as possible.

The gross budget amounted to **£2,013.7m** and the net budget, after allowing for specific and general government grants and income from fees and charges, originally amounted to **£894.8m**.



Narrative Report

The Council implemented a **1.5%** increase in the Social Care precept flexibility and no increase in the core Council Tax in 2021/22, meaning that the Council Tax for a band D property was set at **£1,340.91** (compared with **£1,321.11** in 2020/21); this is an increase of **38p** per household per week.

When we set the budget for 2021/22, we were forecasting a budget gap of **£48m** in 2022/23, rising to **£130m** in 2024/25. The most significant driver of these gaps was **inflation** (primarily related to National Living Wage increases), which accounted for **£80m**, followed by **new burdens** and **other** cost pressures of **£42m** and then **demographic growth** of **£16m**.

Some progress had been made towards balancing the budget over the medium term. The remaining **1.5%** of social care precept in 2022/23 will increase funding through Council Tax. We have also identified new savings of **£23m** in 2022/23, **£9m** in 2023/24 and **£7m** in 2024/25.

We need to identify options for addressing the residual budget gap. Work will continue throughout 2021/22 to identify options for closing the budget gap beyond next year. We are fully cognisant of the challenges faced, including the funding uncertainty. Drawing on our successful track record of identifying and delivering savings, we are determined to continue to transform how we operate to tackle this enormous task and we are committed to delivery of savings and generating the income required to reach a balanced budget position, but also to deliver better services for residents.

Further details of the Council's revenue investment plans are included in the [Essex County Council Organisation Plan 2021/22](#), which is available on the Council's website.

Capital investment

Background to the 2020/21 Capital Programme

Capital investment is essential to transform our capacity to meet future needs, to maintain our assets, generate additional income and deliver revenue savings. Our approach to setting the Capital Investment Programme for 2020/21 was to maximise and make the best use of the available funding to deliver projects that represent the key priorities of the Council and enable us to respond to residents' needs.

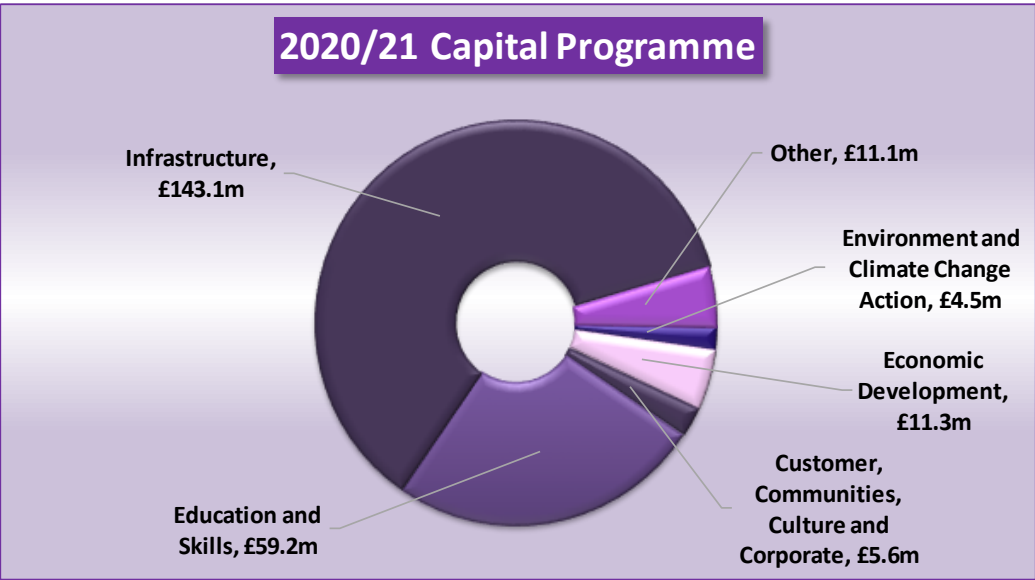
Overall, the Capital Programme for 2020/21 was originally set at **£234.8m** and comprised a diverse portfolio of activity, with elements that generate income and growth, drive savings and ensure the quality of infrastructure, for the benefit of Essex residents:

- **Invest to Grow (£87m)** – including economic growth schemes in infrastructure and highways, and the creation of new school places to meet additional demand from demographic changes and new housing developments and enhancing skills in key growth areas.

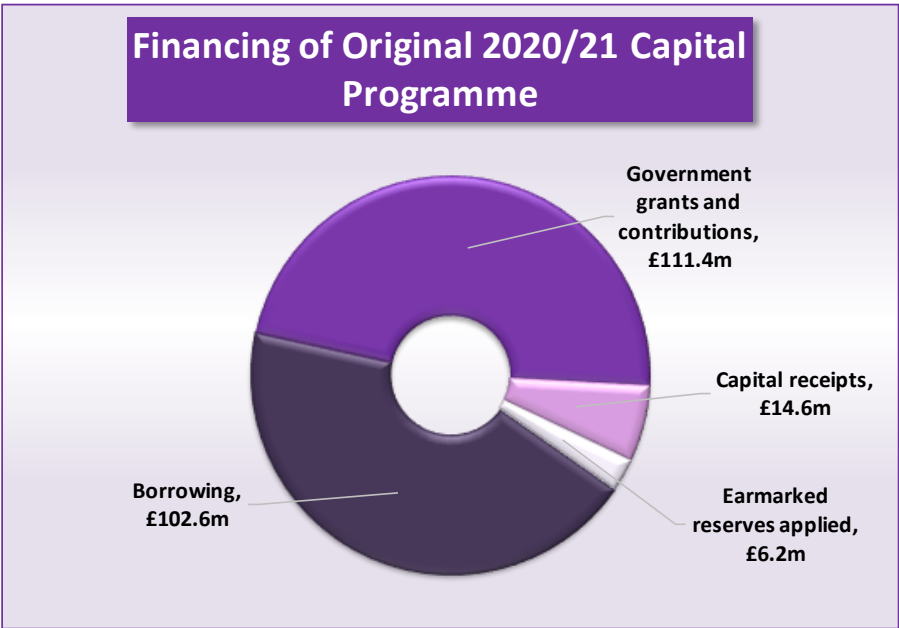
Narrative Report

- **Invest to save / generate return (£21m)** – schemes that generate a return or saving, including accommodation for older people and people with disabilities, LED street lighting and the Essex Housing Programme.
- **Invest to maintain (£126.8m)** – projects intended to maintain but extend the life of our assets, including highways maintenance schemes countywide.

The Programme was aligned to the Council’s Cabinet Members, according to their specific responsibilities for discharging the functions for the Cabinet.



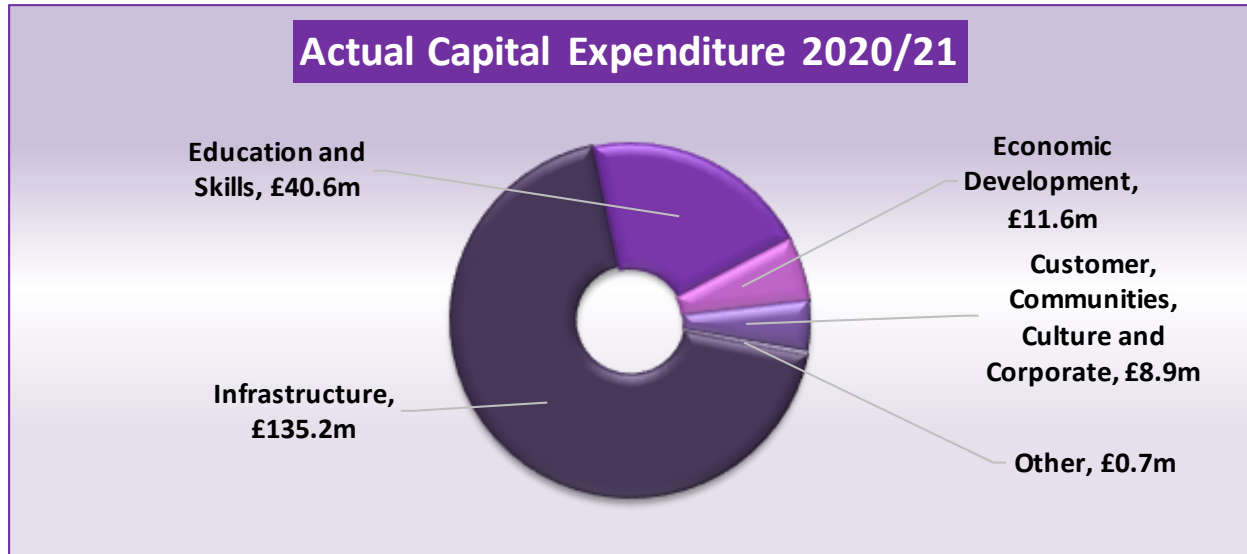
It was intended to finance the 2020/21 Capital Programme from a combination of borrowing (£102.6m) and from grants, contributions, capital receipts and reserves (£132.2m).



Narrative Report

2020/21 Outturn position

The final approved capital payments budget amounted to **£214.9m**. In comparison, actual expenditure amounted to **£197m**. This was **£17.9m (8%)** lower than budgeted (compared with an under spend of £23.7m (7%) in 2019/20).



During 2020/21, around **400** schemes were undertaken, including:

- Creating **1,700** new school places through school expansions, as well as a new primary school in Colchester (Lakelands Primary) providing **420** school places.
- Significant packages of transport improvement work, including progression of new connections at the M11 Junction 7A and at the Fairglen Interchange. Several other schemes were successfully completed too, including the Harlow Enterprise Zone Edinburgh Way, Basildon Town Centre and the Ipswich / Harwich Road Colchester Roundabout.
- Essex Highways had another busy year delivering essential work to maintain a safe road network and contribute to longer-term economic growth, thereby helping to deliver our vision for Safer, Greener and Healthier travel.
- **13** Essex capital build projects that will help regenerate the economy, made possible because of securing **£26.5m** of Get Building Funding (funding designed to allow 'shovel ready' projects to start quickly).

Narrative Report

The end of year position is set out in the following table:

	Original approved expenditure	Final approved expenditure	Actual Capital Payments	Variance from approved expenditure over / (under)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital payments				
Children and Families	1,040	545	454	(91)
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	5,564	5,416	8,946	3,530
Economic Development	11,165	20,640	11,581	(9,059)
Education and Skills	59,224	42,874	40,571	(2,303)
Environment and Climate Change Action	4,469	3,807	2,076	(1,731)
Finance	9,805	11,972	(1,978)	(13,950)
Health and Adult Social Care	421	208	198	(10)
Infrastructure	143,098	129,429	135,187	5,758
Total of capital payments financed	234,786	214,891	197,035	(17,856)
Financed by				
Borrowing	(102,557)	(86,781)	(67,837)	18,944
Government grants and contributions	(111,407)	(118,529)	(125,821)	(7,292)
Capital receipts	(14,580)	(9,581)	(3,377)	6,204
Earmarked reserves applied	(6,242)	-	-	-
Total financing	(234,786)	(214,891)	(197,035)	17,856

During 2020/21, we disposed of some of our land and buildings and other assets. The most significant asset disposals during 2020/21 were as follows:

Significant disposals	Capital receipts (£m)
▪ Sale of shares in Building Schools for the Future LLP	2.7
▪ 3-5 Keepers Cottages (Brentwood)	1.3
▪ Meadgate Centre (Chelmsford)	0.6
▪ Wivenhoe Centre (Colchester)	0.5
▪ Takeley Station House (Braintree)	0.4
▪ Caretakers House (Chelmsford)	0.3

The sale proceeds have partly been set aside to fund our capital investment programme in 2021/22 and beyond, but the Council used **£3.4m** of its capital receipts in 2020/21, under the terms of the government's initiative permitting the flexible use of capital receipts, to meet expenditure designed to generate ongoing revenue savings, and transform service delivery.

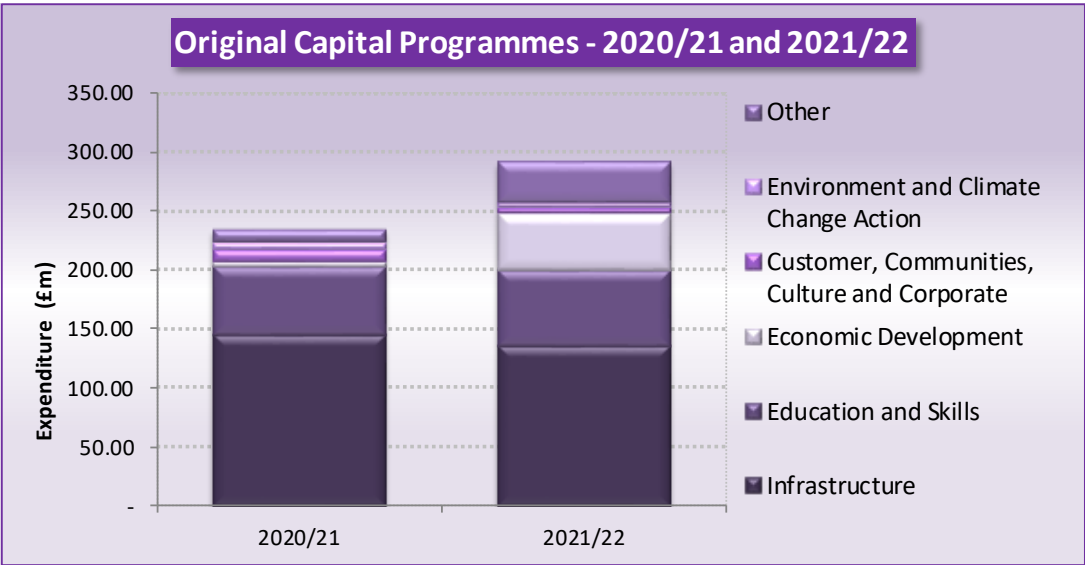
At 31 March 2021, the Council had **£6.4m** of properties held for sale, with sales expected to take place within the next twelve months, and a further **£53.9m** of surplus assets where disposal is anticipated but the timeframe for completion of the sales is less certain.

Capital investment plans for 2021/22

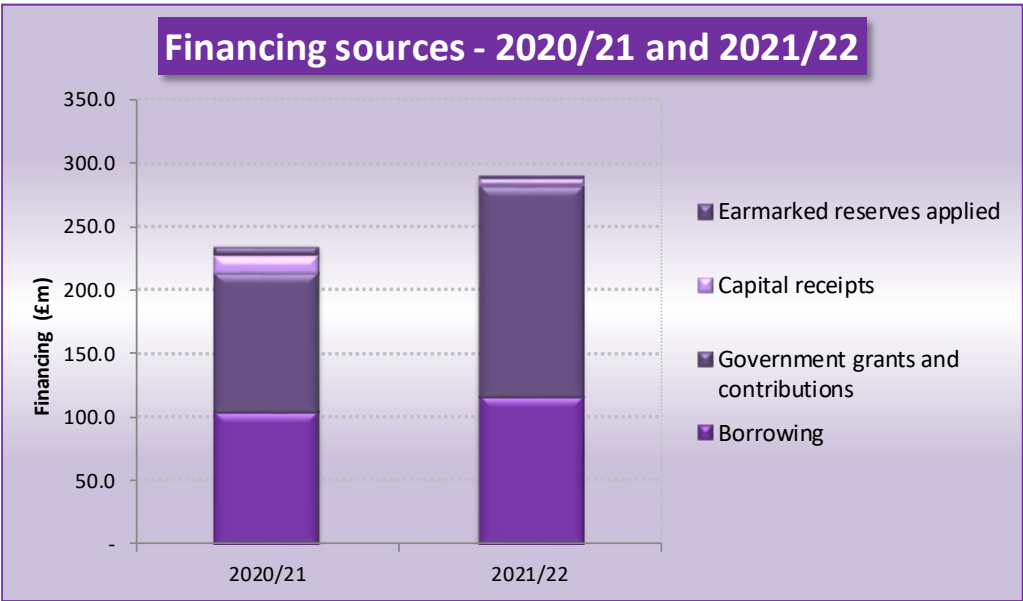
Overall, the Capital Programme for 2021/22 has been set at **£290.3m**, which is **£55.5m** more than the programme originally set for 2020/21. Our longer-term capital programme aspirations remain

Narrative Report

significant too, as we recognise that investment is essential to meet future needs, generate additional income and deliver revenue savings and cost reductions.



The 2021/22 Capital Programme will be financed from a combination of borrowing (£114.5m) and from grants, contributions, capital receipts and reserves (£175.8m).



We will continue to develop a future programme of investments which is affordable, within the financial envelope available, and will help transform service delivery to improve the quality of life for residents. Our overall aim is to have a diverse portfolio of activity, ensuring the creation of new assets, whilst maintaining the quality of existing infrastructure for the benefit of our residents and businesses. This is because continued investment is vital to achieving our ambitions for the County to generate economic growth, reduce congestion and unlock land to develop homes.

Narrative Report

Having secured Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) in 2020/21, schemes are now progressing through the design phase, such as Beaulieu Station and Chelmsford North East bypass that will deliver a new train station and road improvements, and the A133-A120 Link HIF and Colchester Rapid Transit System schemes, supporting delivery of the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community.

We have also secured Get Building funding, which will enable us to undertake a regeneration programme focussing on town and city centre modernisation through targeted infrastructure investments that unlock longer term economic potential, create new jobs and homes.

We will also continue to deliver on significant packages of road improvement works such as new connections at M11 Junctions 7A and 8 and at the A127 / A130 Fairglens Interchange. We will continue to work closely with the Department of Transport and Highways England to secure funding for our long-term pipeline too.

Essex Housing, our development arm which works with public sector partners to help address general, specialist and affordable housing need, continues to bring forward private units which offset the costs of the affordable and specialist units to help promote independence for some of the most vulnerable in the County, improve outcomes and reduce the costs of social care provision.

Finally, the Council will deliver a range of other schemes to enhance, maintain and deliver new assets; schemes such as superfast broadband.

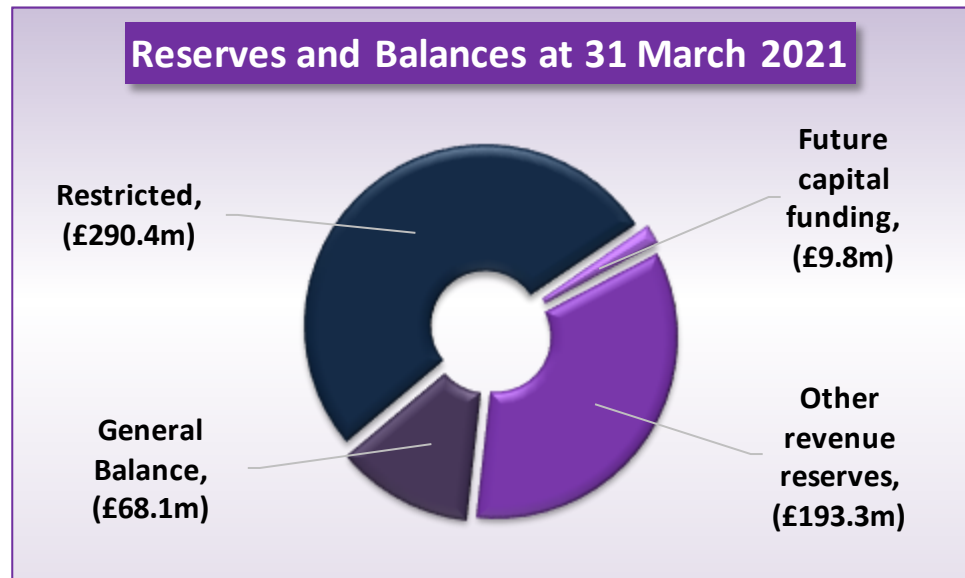
Further details of the Council's capital investment plans are included in the [Essex County Council Organisation Plan 2021/22](#), which is available on the Council's website.

Narrative Report

Revenue Reserves and Balances

Our revenue reserves play an essential part in the financial strategy of the Council, by ensuring we have some resilience to cope with unpredictable financial pressures and long-term contractual commitments.

The Council has built specific reserves to manage known financial liabilities and possible risks.



A substantial amount of the Council's reserves is 'restricted' in use (**£290.4m**). This means the funds are ring-fenced very specifically to long term contractual commitments such as Private Finance Initiative schemes, or they are funds held on behalf of others (including schools and partnerships) and are not available to support spending by the Council. These reserves are important in terms of risk management, as they have the potential to alleviate pressure on remaining reserves. However, they should not be considered available to support more general pressures facing the Council.

A further **£193.3m** of our reserves provide a cushion against the significant risks the Council faces and a source of funding to change the way the Council provides services and achieves future efficiencies.

A further **£9.8m** has been earmarked for funding future capital investment.

The remainder (**£68.1m**) is the General Balance, which is not ring-fenced and provides a working balance to protect the Council against unexpected cost pressures. This is **£11.7m** higher than in 2019/20 but reflects the significantly higher risk profile for demand, the economic outlook and local government funding. This is particularly critical during volatile economic times. With a significant degree of uncertainty around future local government finance, in particular delayed government reviews of Fair Funding, Rates Reform and social care, this will remain under close review. The current balance is enough to fund **24** days of operational expenditure.

The continued provision of adequate reserves is essential. Without these, it may be necessary to take remedial urgent action in-year to mitigate challenges that arise, which could lead to longer term consequences.

Narrative Report

Further details on the reserves held by the Council are provided within the Statement of Accounts (see page 63).

Cash Flow management

The Council primarily undertakes external borrowing to manage the cash flow implications of incurring capital expenditure that it does not immediately fund from cash resources, and to manage fluctuations in its cash flows more generally too. Separately, the Council has cash resources, which it has set aside for longer term purposes (such as funds set aside in reserves and balances) and working capital balances, that can either be invested or temporarily utilised to defer the need for external borrowing.

Some short-term loans were secured during 2020/21, primarily in accordance with the Council's agreement to temporarily borrow the surplus cash balances of Essex Cares Ltd (which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council). No substantial longer-term borrowing was undertaken in the year, despite an increase in the Council's capital financing requirement of **£30.1m** (see page 75 for further details).

The Council held substantial cash balances during 2020/21, largely because of receiving multi-year government funding for COVID-19 during 2020/21. These funds were mainly invested for periods of less than 1 year with the UK Government, money market funds, bodies with high credit ratings and other local authorities. Further details are provided in the Statement of Accounts (see page 81).

Statement of Accounts

The Council is required by statute to prepare a Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts, defined to include the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (i.e. the 'Code of Practice'). The Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 is presented within this document, commencing on page 23.

The key aim of the Statement of Accounts is to provide a 'true and fair' view of the Council's financial position at 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the 2020/21 financial year. The Statement of Accounts is therefore an essential feature of public accountability, reporting on the Council's use of funds raised from the public and provided by central government and confirming the availability of balances and reserves for future use.

The Financial Statements (shown on pages 29 to 34) summarise the financial effects of transactions and events that occurred during 2020/21. All other information included within the Statement of Accounts is intended to aid interpretation of the financial statements and/or to provide further information on the financial performance of the Council during 2020/21.

The primary financial statements comprise:

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** – presents information on resources generated and consumed during the year, based on generally accepted accounting practice.

Narrative Report

- **Movement in Reserves Statement** – presents the financial resources available to the Council to support future service delivery and cope with unexpected events.
- **Balance Sheet** – summarises the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2021 including the net assets it has available after settling its liabilities, and its reserves.
- **Cash Flow Statement** – shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents during 2020/21.

Whilst the presentation of these financial statements is largely defined by the CIPFA Code of Practice and other proper practices, the service groupings in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement are those used by the Council for taking financial decisions and monitoring financial performance.

The accounting cost in the year of providing services (as presented in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement) differs from the amount to be funded from taxation. For this reason, the Expenditure and Funding Analysis (shown in Note 5 of the Statement of Accounts, on page 55) provides a reconciliation between the accounting cost of service provision and the amounts spent under the Council's rules for monitoring expenditure against the funding in the annual budget. The reasons for the differences between the two sets of figures are also explained in Note 5.

Accounting policies (see pages 37 to 50) explain how the financial effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the financial statements. The Council must make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events when applying its accounting policies. Explanations are provided in notes 2 (page 51) and 3 (page 52) of the judgements and estimates made in 2020/21.

Other notes to the accounts (see pages 55 to 119) provide further information on the Council's financial performance and, where relevant, detailed analysis of the amounts provided in the primary financial statements. Information relating to transactions and events is included in these notes if it is material to the Council's financial statements. Information is considered material if omitting it or misstating it could influence decisions made based on the information presented.

Group accounts are presented in the Statement of Accounts in addition to the Council's own accounts. The Group accounts consolidate the Council's own accounts with those of its subsidiaries (Essex Cares Ltd and Essex Housing Development LLP) to provide a full picture of the Council's economic activities and financial position. The Essex Housing Development LLP only commenced trading during 2020/21.

Annual Governance Statement

Our Annual Governance Statement (which commences on page 193 of this publication) summarises the outcome of our review of the Governance Framework that has been in place during 2020/21. The statement demonstrates that we have in place effective arrangements for the governance of our organisation and that we are satisfied that we have a robust system of internal control, which is a critical component of our overall governance arrangements.

Narrative Report

Conclusion

Through careful planning and management, Essex County Council has been able to close its 2020/21 accounts showing a robust position. This will support the Council in meeting the financial challenges of 2021/22 and beyond, particularly as our focus shifts to how we fare as the COVID-19 restrictions in place throughout 2020/21 start to ease.

Whilst a balanced budget has been set for 2021/22, it is highly probable that there will continue to be volatility as we start to comprehend the fall out of the past year. In particular, there may be volatility resulting from pent up demand in Adult and Children's social care and home to school transport. Also, changes in residents' behaviour may impact on the volume of household waste.

Current projections for future years currently indicate a gap between the Council's expected funding streams and the Council's expenditure. It is therefore essential that the Council continues with its Transformation and Efficiency programme to identify further savings opportunities to ensure future balanced budgets can be set.

Nicole Wood

Executive Director, Finance and Technology

30 June 2021

Statement of Accounts 2020/21

Statement of Accounts

Contents	Page
Introduction	25
Statement of Responsibilities	27
Financial Statements	29
Notes to the Financial Statements	35
Group Accounts	120
Pension Fund Accounts	135
Glossary of terms	187

Statement of Accounts - Introduction

Financial Statements

The Council's financial statements for 2020/21 are set out on pages 29 to 34, and comprise:

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement**
- **Movement in Reserves Statement**
- **Balance Sheet**
- **Cash Flow Statement**

The financial statements include the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows of the local authority-maintained schools within the control of the Council.

Notes to the Accounts

Supplementary information is set out within the notes to the accounts (see pages 35 to 119) to provide further detail on the financial performance of the Council during 2020/21.

The notes to the accounts include the Council's accounting policies. The accounting policies specify how the financial effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the financial statements. All the accounting policies adopted that are material in the context of the Council's 2020/21 financial statements are described in **Note 1** to the Accounts, which commences on page 37.

The notes to the accounts also include an **Expenditure and Funding Analysis** (see *Note 5, commencing on page 55*). The Expenditure and Funding Analysis provides a reconciliation between how annual expenditure is funded from resources and the accounting cost of providing services in the year.

Group Accounts

Group accounts are presented, in addition to the Council's single entity statements, to provide a full picture of the Council's economic activities and financial position. The Group Accounts comprise:

- **Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.**
- **Group Movement in Reserves Statement.**
- **Group Balance Sheet.**
- **Group Cash Flow Statement.**

These statements, together with explanatory notes, are set out on page 120 to 134.

Pension Fund

The Essex Pension Fund provides pensions and other benefits to employees of the Council, city, district, borough and unitary councils and other scheduled and admitted bodies. An annual report and accounts

Statement of Accounts - Introduction

are published for the Fund. However, the accounting statements of the Fund are also included within this Statement of Accounts.

The Essex Pension Fund accounts comprise:

- **Fund Account** - summarises the financial transactions of the Pension Fund for the year.
- **Net Assets Statement** - summarises the net assets relating to the provision of pensions and other benefits payable to former employees of the Council and other admitted bodies.

The Pension Fund accounts are set out on pages 135 to 186.

Glossary of terms

A glossary of the terminology used throughout the Statement of Accounts is provided on pages 187 to 192.

Statement of Accounts - Statement of Responsibilities

Council's responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. At Essex County Council that officer is the **Executive Director, Finance and Technology**.
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- Approve the Statement of Accounts. The Council has delegated this responsibility to the **Audit, Governance and Standards Committee**.

Executive Director, Finance and Technology's responsibilities

The Executive Director, Finance and Technology is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out within the CIPFA / LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the 'Code of Practice'). In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Executive Director, Finance and Technology has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently.
- Made judgements and estimates which were reasonable and prudent.
- Complied with the Code of Practice.

The Executive Director, Finance and Technology has also:

- Kept proper, up to date, accounting records.
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Executive Director, Finance and Technology's certificate

I certify that this Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with proper practices and presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at 31 March 2021 and its expenditure and income for the year then ended.

Nicole Wood

Executive Director, Finance and Technology

30 June 2021

Statement of Accounts - Statement of Responsibilities

Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's certificate

I confirm that this Statement of Accounts was considered and approved by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at its meeting on **27 September 2021**.

Cllr Anthony Hedley

Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

27 September 2021

Statement of Accounts - Financial Statements

Introduction

The financial statements comprise:

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 30)**

This Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The Council raises taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with Regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

- **Movement in Reserves Statement (page 31)**

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

The Statement shows how the movements in the 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 amount chargeable to Council Tax for the year.

The 'Net (increase) / decrease before transfers to earmarked reserves' line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves are undertaken by the Council.

- **Balance Sheet (page 32)**

The Balance Sheet shows the value of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Council.

The net assets of the Council are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories:

- **Usable reserves** - those 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.
- **Unusable reserves** - those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. These include reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses that would only become available to provide services if assets are sold; and reserves that hold adjustments between accounting and funding certain transactions which are permitted under regulations.

- **Cash Flow Statement (page 34)**

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

- **Notes to the financial statements (page 35 to 119)**

These present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used. They also disclose information that is not presented within the financial statements but is relevant to an understanding of them.

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis, which is presented in Note 5 (commencing on page 55) to the Accounts, provides a reconciliation between the accounting cost of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices (as presented in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement), and the amounts to be funded from taxation.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

For year ended 31st March 2021

2019/20				Note		2020/21			
Gross expenditure	Government grants	Other income	Net expenditure			Gross expenditure	Government grants	Other income	Net expenditure
£000	£000	£000	£000			£000	£000	£000	£000
154,969	(16,381)	(7,741)	130,847		Children and Families	169,390	(24,412)	(7,993)	136,985
31,317	(182)	(9,498)	21,637		Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	34,980	(15,341)	(6,379)	13,260
18,099	(2,118)	(1,121)	14,860		Economic Development	27,019	(25,063)	(892)	1,064
					Education and Skills				
547,362	(508,393)	(37,104)	1,865		Dedicated Schools Budget	541,623	(541,486)	(22,248)	(22,111)
271,473	(26,604)	(43,121)	201,748		Non Dedicated Schools Budget	196,861	(38,315)	(36,666)	121,880
96,187	(1,824)	(9,194)	85,169		Environment and Climate Change Action	100,807	(6,176)	(5,323)	89,308
16,106	(247)	(901)	14,958		Finance	13,051	(331)	(14,086)	(1,366)
668,330	(107,587)	(145,160)	415,583		Health and Adult Social Care	766,222	(167,752)	(171,748)	426,722
95,460	(4,895)	(17,420)	73,145		Infrastructure	111,054	(6,899)	(29,687)	74,468
953	(43)	143	1,053		Leader	4,138	(286)	(8)	3,844
1,942	-	(128)	1,814		Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	3,074	(279)	(144)	2,651
					Recharged Strategic Support Services				
75,036	-	-	75,036		Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	86,086	-	-	86,086
19,162	-	-	19,162		Finance	20,296	-	-	20,296
2,384	-	-	2,384		Leader	3,124	-	-	3,124
8,836	-	-	8,836		Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	10,597	-	-	10,597
2,007,616	(668,274)	(271,245)	1,068,097		Cost of services - continuing operations	2,088,322	(826,340)	(295,174)	966,808
49,504	-	-	49,504	9	Other Operating Expenditure	35,149	-	-	35,149
123,790	-	(59,042)	64,748	10	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	100,060	-	(39,151)	60,909
-	(329,416)	(721,420)	(1,050,836)	12	Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	-	(364,569)	(731,298)	(1,095,867)
2,180,910	(997,690)	(1,051,707)	131,513		(Surplus) / deficit on Provision of Services	2,223,531	(1,190,909)	(1,065,623)	(33,001)
			(83,918)	26.2	(Surplus) / deficit arising on revaluation of non-current assets				2,668
			(160,849)	26.5	Re-measurements of the net defined benefits pension liability				68,756
			(244,767)		Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				71,424
			(113,254)		Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				38,423

Note: The service groupings shown above reflect the alignment of spending to Cabinet Members, according to their specific responsibilities for discharging the functions of the Cabinet during 2020/21; comparative figures for 2019/20 have been restated on a consistent basis.

Movement in Reserves Statement

For the years ended 31st March 2020 and 31st March 2021

	Notes	Usable Reserves					Total Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
		Earmarked General Reserves	General Fund Balance	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019		(294,878)	(56,610)	-	(4,220)	(355,708)	(820,441)	(1,176,149)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/20								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		-	131,513	-	-	131,513	(244,767)	(113,254)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding under regulations	7	-	(175,481)	(9,581)	2,962	(182,100)	182,100	-
Net (increase)/decrease before transfers to earmarked reserves		-	(43,968)	(9,581)	2,962	(50,587)	(62,667)	(113,254)
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	8	(44,139)	44,139	-	-	-	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in 2019/20		(44,139)	171	(9,581)	2,962	(50,587)	(62,667)	(113,254)
Balance at 31 March 2020		(339,017)	(56,439)	(9,581)	(1,258)	(406,295)	(883,108)	(1,289,403)
Movement in Reserves during 2020/21								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure		-	(33,001)	-	-	(33,001)	71,424	38,423
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding under regulations	7	-	(133,194)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(135,534)	135,534	-
Net (increase)/decrease before transfers to earmarked reserves		-	(166,195)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(168,535)	206,958	38,423
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	8	(154,538)	154,538	-	-	-	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in 2020/21		(154,538)	(11,657)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(168,535)	206,958	38,423
Balance at 31 March 2021		(493,555)	(68,096)	(10,907)	(2,272)	(574,830)	(676,150)	(1,250,980)

Statement of Accounts - Financial Statements

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

31 March 2020	Note		31 March 2021
£000			£000
		Property, Plant and Equipment	
		Operational assets	
1,398,104		Land and buildings	1,343,573
9,644		Vehicles, plant and equipment	7,317
1,180,934		Infrastructure	1,227,022
3,275		Community assets	3,671
		Non operational assets	
137,519		Assets under construction	162,180
52,338		Surplus assets held pending disposal	53,872
2,781,814	15	Total Property, Plant and Equipment	2,797,635
14,667	15	Heritage assets	14,678
39,181	15	Investment property	38,446
8,582	15	Intangible assets	5,436
12,705	19	Long term investments	11,167
15,942	21	Long term debtors	11,107
2,872,891		Long term assets	2,878,469
115,191	19	Short term investments	96,595
2,413	15	Assets held for sale	6,438
9,269	20	Inventories	6,435
129,249	21	Short term debtors	175,203
326,354	22	Cash and cash equivalents	504,691
582,476		Current Assets	789,362
(17,718)	19	Bank overdraft	(34,632)
(25,548)	19	Short-term borrowing	(40,704)
(324,397)	23	Creditors	(338,845)
(13,096)	25	Provisions (current)	(12,497)
(31,694)	24	Revenue grant receipts in advance (current)	(30,368)
(69,181)	24	Capital grant receipts in advance (current)	(102,493)
-		Donated Inventories Account	(2,534)
(7,629)	17	Finance Lease obligations (current)	(12,595)
(489,263)		Current liabilities	(574,668)
(1,215)	23	Creditors (non-current)	(1,432)
(1,956)	24	Revenue grant receipts in advance (non current)	-
(25,922)	24	Capital grant receipts in advance (non current)	(60,266)
(33,755)	25	Provisions (non-current)	(37,721)
(598,941)	19	Long term borrowing	(586,398)
		Other long term liabilities	
(115,580)	17	Finance lease obligations	(103,106)
(11,231)		Deferred credits	(10,584)
(888,101)	31	Net Pensions Liability	(1,042,676)
(1,676,701)		Long term liabilities	(1,842,183)
1,289,403		Net Assets	1,250,980

Statement of Accounts - Financial Statements

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

31 March 2020	Note		31 March 2021
£000			£000
		Usable reserves	
(339,017)	8	Earmarked reserves	(493,555)
(56,439)		General Fund Balance	(68,096)
(9,581)		Usable capital receipts reserve	(10,907)
(1,258)		Capital grants unapplied	(2,272)
(406,295)			(574,830)
		Unusable reserves	
(634,629)	26	Revaluation reserve	(596,239)
(1,150,386)		Capital Adjustments Account	(1,167,857)
12,452		Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	11,610
(636)		Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account	(560)
888,101		Pension reserve	1,042,676
(334)		Deferred capital receipts	(71)
(9,085)		Collection Fund Adjustment Account	18,541
11,409		Accumulated Absences Account	15,750
(883,108)			(676,150)
(1,289,403)		Total Reserves	(1,250,980)

I certify that these financial statements give a true and fair view of the Council's financial position and performance in advance of approval:

Nicole Wood - Executive Director, Finance and Technology - 30 June 2021

Statement of Accounts - Financial Statements

Cash Flow Statement

For year ended 31st March 2021

2019/20 £000	Notes		2020/21 £000
(27,227)	27	Operating activities	(133,854)
(17,316)	↓	Investing activities	(84,628)
(106,515)		Financing activities	57,059
(151,058)		Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(161,423)
157,578		Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April	308,636
308,636		Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	470,059

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Introduction

This section contains notes which are intended to aid interpretation of the financial statements (as set out on pages 29 to 34) and provide further information on the financial performance of the Council during 2020/21. The notes set out within this section are as follows:

Note		Page
1.	Accounting policies	37
2.	Critical judgements in applying accounting policies	51
3.	Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty	52
4.	Accounting Standards issued but not yet adopted	55
5.	Expenditure and Funding Analysis	55
6.	Expenditure and income analysed by nature	60
7.	Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding under Regulations	60
8.	Earmarked revenue reserves	63
9.	Other operating expenditure	66
10.	Financing and investment income and expenditure	66
11.	Trading operations	67
12.	Taxation and non-specific grant income	68
13.	Grant income	68
14.	Dedicated Schools Grant	70
15.	Property, plant and equipment, other non-current assets and assets held for sale	71
16.	Capital expenditure and capital financing	75
17.	Leases	76
18.	Private Finance Initiative and similar contracts	77
19.	Financial instruments	81
20.	Inventories	88
21.	Debtors	88
22.	Cash and cash equivalents	89
23.	Creditors	90
24.	Grant receipts in advance	90
25.	Provisions and contingencies	91

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Note		Page
26.	Unusable reserves	93
	26.1 Introduction	93
	26.2 Revaluation Reserve	93
	26.3 Capital Adjustment Account	94
	26.4 Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	95
	26.5 Pension Reserve	95
	26.6 Collection Fund Adjustment Account	96
	26.7 Accumulated Absences Account	96
27.	Cash Flows from operating, investing and financing activities	97
28.	Changes in liabilities arising from financing activities	98
29.	Termination benefits	98
30.	Pension Schemes accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes	99
31.	Defined Benefit Pension Schemes	101
32.	Audit costs	107
33.	Members' allowances and expenses	108
34.	Pooled budgets	108
35.	Officers' remuneration	110
36.	Senior officers' remuneration	111
37.	Related parties	114
38.	Accounting for schools	118
39.	Events after the Reporting Date	119

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Accounting policies

1.1 Introduction

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year, and its position as at 31 March 2021. The accounting policies explain the basis for the recognition, measurement and disclosure of transactions and other events within the Statement of Accounts. The accounting policies adopted, that are material in the context of the Council's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts, are set out within the following paragraphs.

1.2 General principles

The Council's Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory regulations.

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

1.3 Accruals of income and expenditure

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

Where income and expenditure have been recognised, but the cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recognised in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled the balance of debtors is reduced, and a charge is made to the appropriate line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the income that might not be recoverable.

1.4 Provisions and contingencies

1.4.1 Provisions

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

Provisions are maintained at the best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, considering relevant risks and uncertainties.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.4.2 Contingencies

A contingent liability arises where:

- An event has taken place that gives the Council a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by future events not wholly within the Council's control; or
- A provision would otherwise be made but it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required, or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Council a possible asset, whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain events.

Contingencies are not recognised in the financial statements but are disclosed as a note to the accounts.

1.5 Earmarked revenue reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future contingency or policy purposes. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund Balance.

When expenditure is incurred that is to be financed from a reserve, it is charged to the appropriate service revenue account in that year, to count against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An amount is then released from the earmarked revenue reserve and transferred back into the General Fund Balance, so that there is no net charge against Council Tax for the expenditure.

1.6 Government grants and 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 any conditions attached to the payments; and
- The grants and contributions will be received.

Grants and contributions received, for which conditions have yet to be satisfied, are carried in the Balance Sheet as grant receipts in advance.

When the conditions have been satisfied, the grants and contributions are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (i.e. specific revenue grants and contributions are credited to the relevant service line in the Cost of Services, and capital grants and contributions and non ring-fenced grants are credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income).

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Where specific revenue grants and contributions are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the associated expenditure has not yet been incurred, the grant is set aside in an Earmarked Revenue Reserve (i.e. in accordance with note 1.5) so that it can be matched with the expenditure in a subsequent year.

Capital grants and contributions are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account (if the grant eligible expenditure has been incurred); or to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account.

1.7 Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates

The Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates (NDR) income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, this differs from the amounts required by Regulation to be credited to the General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income 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 included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Council's Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of the end of year balances in respect of Council Tax and NDR related to arrears, allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

1.8 Employee benefits

1.8.1 *Benefits payable during employment*

Short-term employee benefits (including salaries, paid annual leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits) are recognised as an expense in the year in which employees render service to the Council.

An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlement earned by employees but not taken before the year end that employees can carry forward into the next financial year. This accrual is raised against services in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Accumulated Absences Account.

1.8.2 *Termination benefits*

Termination benefits are charged, on an accrual's basis, to the relevant service line 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.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.8.3 *Post-employment (retirement) benefits*

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

- The Teachers' Pension Scheme administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education.
- The NHS Pension Scheme administered by NHS Pensions.
- The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered by the Council.

The Teachers' and NHS Pension schemes provide defined benefits to members. However, the Schemes' arrangements mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified specifically to the Council. The schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were defined contributions schemes – no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet, and the employer's contributions payable to these schemes are charged to the relevant service lines within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme. Hence:

- The liabilities of the LGPS attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis, using the projected unit method.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based upon the indicative rate of return on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to the scheme's liabilities.
- The assets of the LGPS attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.
- Changes in the net pensions liability are analysed into the following components:
 - **Service Costs**, comprising:
 - **Current service cost** – charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (i.e. to the services for which the employees worked).
 - **Past service cost** - charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - **Net interest on the net defined benefit liability** – charged or credited to the 'Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure' line within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
 - **Re-measurements of the net pension liability** (comprising **Return on plan assets** and **Actuarial gains and losses**) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
 - **Contributions paid to the LGPS** – not accounted for as an expense within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

- The amount chargeable to the General Fund for providing pensions for employees is the amount payable for the year to the LGPS, as determined in accordance with the statutory requirements governing the Scheme. Where this amount does not match the net amount charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, the difference is appropriated, in the Movement in Reserves Statement, to the Pensions Reserve.

1.8.4 Discretionary benefits

The Council has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise because of an award to any member of staff (including teachers) 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.

1.9 Overheads and support services

Support Services are shown as separate headings in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as part of the Cost of Services, reflecting the Council's arrangements for accountability and performance. Other overhead costs are recharged to those who benefit from the supply or service, in accordance with the costing principles of the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice 2020/21 (SeRCOP).

1.10 Value added tax

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

1.11 Inventories

When acquired, inventories are recognised on the Balance Sheet at cost (comprising all costs of purchase and conversion, together with any costs incurred in bringing the inventories to their intended location and condition). Inventories are subsequently carried on the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

The cost of inventory acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value and it is recognised in the donated inventories account until the items are distributed.

Inventories are recognised as an expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when they are sold or consumed in the provision of services, or when they no longer provide economic benefits or service potential.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.12 Property, Plant and Equipment

1.12.1 Recognition of Property, Plant and Equipment

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis in the accounts, if it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council over a period extending beyond one year, and the cost of the item can be measured reliably.

Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred. Expenditure on furniture and fittings is not capitalised.

1.12.2 Measurement

Items of Property, Plant and Equipment 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.

Borrowing costs incurred whilst items of Property, Plant and Equipment are under construction are not capitalised.

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

Asset category	Measurement basis
Land and buildings	Current value (<i>existing use value or depreciated replacement cost</i>).
Vehicles and equipment	Depreciated historical cost (<i>as a proxy for current value</i>).
Infrastructure	Depreciated historical cost.
Community assets	Depreciated historical cost.
Assets under construction	Historical cost.
Surplus assets	Fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.

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

Assets are also assessed at each year end to determine whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist, and any possible differences are estimated to be material, an impairment loss is recognised.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Where increases in valuations are identified, the gain is accounted for by crediting:

- The Revaluation Reserve to recognise the unrealised gain; or
- The Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services where it arises from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

Where decreases in value are identified, the loss is accounted for by writing the carrying amount of the asset down against:

- Any accumulated gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve (i.e. up to the amount of the accumulated gains); or
- The Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, where there is no or insufficient balance in the Revaluation Reserve for the asset.

The Revaluation Reserve only contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007. Gains arising prior to that were consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

1.12.3 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life and assets that are not yet available for use.

Asset category	Depreciation basis
Land	Land is not depreciated.
Buildings	Buildings are depreciated, on a straight line basis, over the useful economic life (UEL) of each asset (as assessed by the Council's Valuer). Each part of the Council's buildings with a cost that is significant in relation to the total cost of the item is depreciated separately over its UEL. This means that the following components are depreciated separately: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Structure 80 years ▪ Roof 25 to 80 years ▪ Plant and machinery 30 to 40 years ▪ External works 30 years
Community assets	Depreciated over 60 years , on a straight-line basis.
Vehicles and equipment	Depreciated on a straight-line basis, over an expected lifetime ranging between 2 and 30 years .
Roads and other infrastructure	Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis over the following periods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road signage 30 years ▪ Roads and highway lighting 40 years

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Asset category	Depreciation basis	
	▪ Structures (eg: bridges)	120 years
	▪ Off-highways drainage	100 years
	▪ Other infrastructure	15 to 20 years
	▪ Additions prior to 2008/09	30 to 35 years
Assets under construction	Assets are re-categorised upon completion, from which point depreciation will be charged in accordance with the policies set out above.	

Depreciation charges commence in the first full year after assets become operational, except for vehicles, plant and equipment, where depreciation charges commence in the year of acquisition.

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

1.12.4 Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction, the asset is re-valued and is then classified as an asset 'Held for Sale' and carried at the lower of the revalued amount or the fair value less costs to sell the asset.

Once an asset is disposed of, the carrying amount of the asset and any receipts from its disposal are written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for disposals are categorised as capital receipts. These receipts are therefore appropriated, via the Movement in Reserves Statement, to the Capital Receipts Reserve. They can then only be applied for new capital investment, to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow or for specific purposes allowed for in regulations issued by the Secretary of State.

The written off value of asset disposals is not a charge against Council Tax, as the cost of Property, Plant and Equipment is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account and are recorded as such in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.13 Investment property

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value (i.e. at a price reflecting its highest and best use). Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually, reflecting the market conditions at the year end.

Gains and losses on revaluation and disposal are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Revaluation and disposal gains and losses are then reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account or, for any sale proceeds, to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

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

1.14 Charges to revenue for non-current assets

All services are charged with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets held and/or occupied.
- Revaluation and impairment losses on the assets held or occupied (i.e. where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be applied), and revaluation gains that reverse a revaluation loss previously recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- Amortisation of intangible assets held.

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover these charges. Instead, it is required to make a prudent annual provision to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by a revenue provision in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

1.15 Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions, but which does not result in the creation of a non-current asset, is charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year.

Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources, or by borrowing, a transfer is made in the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account to mitigate the impact on the General Fund Balance in the year.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.16 Private Finance Initiative and similar contracts

Where the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and similar contracts, and where ownership of the assets used under the contracts passes to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets in its own Balance Sheet as part of Property, Plant and Equipment.

Where the assets are constructed under a PFI contract, the asset under construction is only recognised in the Council's Balance Sheet when it becomes probable that future economic benefits attributable to the asset will flow to the Council.

Once recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet, assets are accounted for in accordance with Note 1.12. A PFI liability is also recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet for the amounts due to the scheme operator for the capital investment.

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

Element of charge	Accounting treatment
Services received <i>Services that the operator must provide with the Property, Plant and Equipment.</i>	Charged to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
Deferred income <i>Benefits that the Council is deemed to receive through its control of the services to be provided using the Property, Plant and Equipment.</i>	Credited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
Finance cost <i>Interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability.</i>	Debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
Contingent rent <i>Increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract.</i>	Debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
Payment towards liability <i>Obligation to pay the operator for the Property, Plant and Equipment.</i>	Applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator.
Lifecycle replacement <i>The replacement of components of an asset as they wear out.</i>	Posted to the Balance Sheet as a pre-payment and then recognised as an addition to Property, Plant and Equipment when the relevant works are eventually carried out.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.17 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.

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.

Property, plant and equipment held by the Council under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Subsequent payments are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability; and
- Financing charges and contingent rents (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Rentals paid by the Council under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefiting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments.

1.18 Cash and cash equivalents

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

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

1.19 Financial instruments

1.19.1 *Financial liabilities*

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

Interest is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, based on the carrying amount of the liabilities, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instruments. This means that:

- The amount included in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable, plus accrued interest; and
- Interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Financial liabilities are de-recognised when the obligation is discharged, cancelled or expires.

Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund to be spread over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

1.19.2 *Financial Assets*

Financial assets are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the financial instrument.

Financial assets held at amortised cost are initially measured at fair value, and subsequently at their amortised cost.

Interest receivable is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, based on the carrying amount of the assets, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instruments. This means that:

- The amount included in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable, plus accrued interest; and
- Interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of an asset are credited/debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Allowances for impairment losses are calculated for financial assets carried at amortised cost, applying the expected credit losses model, either on a 12 month or lifetime basis. 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. Changes in loss allowances, including balances outstanding at the date of derecognition of an asset, are debited / credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

1.20 Fair value measurement

The Council measures some of its non-financial assets (i.e. surplus 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 from the sale of an asset, or paid to transfer a liability, in an orderly transaction between market participants.

The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either in the principal market for the asset or liability or, in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Council uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available. Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the authority's financial statements are categorised as follows:

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

1.21 Joint operations

The activities undertaken by the Council in conjunction with other joint operators involve the use of the assets and resources of those joint operators. In relation to its interest in a joint operation, the Council as a joint operator recognises:

- Its assets, including its share of any assets held jointly.
- Its liabilities, including its share of any liabilities incurred jointly.
- Its revenue from the sale of its share of the output arising from the joint operation.
- Its share of the revenue from the sale of the output by the joint operation.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

- Its expenses, including its share of any expenses incurred jointly.

1.22 Schools

Whilst all locally maintained schools (i.e. community, foundation, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, community special and foundation special schools) are deemed to be entities controlled by the Council, only the income, expenditure, assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows that would be recognised by a 'school as an entity' are consolidated into the Council's financial statements.

Land and buildings provided by religious bodies for use by voluntary controlled, voluntary aided and certain foundation schools without the right to continuing use, such that they can be taken back by the owners at any point, are not recognised in the Council's financial statements, even though these assets may continue to be used by these schools for many years into the future.

1.23 Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates and errors

Prior period adjustments are made to comparative figures because of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively.

1.24 Events after the Reporting Period

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

Two types of event may be identified:

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

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

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

2. Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

The Council must make judgements about complex transactions, or those involving uncertainty about future events, when applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1.

The critical judgements made in applying the accounting policies for 2020/21 are as follows:

- **Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes**

Where ownership of the Property, Plant and Equipment used to provide services under operational PFI arrangements passes to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council considers that it controls the services that are provided, and the residual values of these assets and their facilities at the end of these agreements. Accordingly, it recognises the Property, Plant and Equipment assets in its own Balance Sheet.

With regard to the Waste Treatment Plant, the Council cannot yet determine that the economic benefits and service potential of the Plant will flow to it, as the Plant remains in its commissioning phase (see page 78 for further details). The Council has therefore determined that the asset and the associated PFI liability should not be recognised within its financial statements for 2020/21.

- **Collaborative arrangements**

- **Group entities**

Whilst the Council is involved in several collaborative arrangements, it has concluded that it is only necessary to consolidate the accounts of **Essex Cares Ltd** and **Essex Housing Development LLP** into its Group Accounts. Although the majority of Essex Cares' turnover arises in respect of contracts with the Council, and the Essex Housing Development LLP only commenced trading formally in February 2021, consolidation of their financial results into the Council's Group Accounts is considered appropriate on qualitative grounds, to provide a full picture of the Council's economic activities and financial position.

- **South East Local Enterprise Partnership**

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has a range of members who collectively decide what the priorities should be for investing in roads, buildings and facilities in Essex, East Sussex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock, as part of an integrated approach to growth and infrastructure delivery.

All funding allocated to the SELEP by the Government is transferred to the Council, and the Council is responsible for the disbursement of this funding in accordance with the funding decisions made by the SELEP's Accountability Board. The Council is not therefore able to direct the use of the SELEP's funding for its own, or any other, purposes.

The Council has concluded that it acts as an agent for the SELEP, which means that the SELEP's transactions are not reflected within the Council's financial statements. However, the Council recognises a creditor in its Balance Sheet for the cash it holds on behalf of the SELEP. At 31 March 2021, this creditor amounted to **£38.860m** (2019/20: £96.622m).

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

· Pooled budgets

Pooled budgets occur where several partners agree to set aside funds for a specific purpose that they will pursue jointly, usually because it enables them to address common objectives or realise benefits from working together. The Council currently participates in, and hosts, three pooled budgets:

- **Better Care Fund**
- **Equipment Pool**
- **Transforming Care Partnership Pool**

Further details of these pooled budgets are provided in Note 34, which commences on page 108.

The nature of these pooled budget arrangements implies an element of joint decision making over how the pooled funds are used. However, the precise accounting is determined by the terms of the agreements between the members of these partnership arrangements.

Whilst partners collectively agree the services to be provided, the agreed services are commissioned by the respective partners via their own contracts with end providers, with the commissioning entity holding end providers to account for the services they provide.

On this basis, the Council has determined that the transactions of these pools are not reflected in the Council's financial statements, except for expenditure incurred on agreed services commissioned by the Council via its own contracts with end providers, and the income it receives from the Pools to pay for these services.

3. **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 considering 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 Balance Sheet at **31 March 2021** for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are set out in the following paragraphs.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions	Comments on uncertainty
Property, Plant & Equipment and Investment Property	<p>The Council operates a rolling programme of valuations which ensures that all operational land and buildings are valued by a RICS registered valuer at intervals of no greater than five years.</p> <p>At each year end, a review is undertaken by the valuer to determine whether the carrying amount of these assets is consistent with their current value. Where this review indicates that the carrying amounts are inconsistent with their current value, the carrying amounts are adjusted by indices advised by the Valuer. The carrying amount of operational land and buildings has been reduced by £33.673m based on the Valuer's review as at 31 March 2021.</p> <p>Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's valuer was able to attach less weight to previous market evidence to inform opinions of value as at 31 March 2020. The Council's valuer therefore reported '<i>material valuation uncertainty</i>' as per VSP 3 and VPGA of the RICS Red Book Global in relation to 31 March 2020 values.</p> <p>The UK property markets are mostly functioning again now, with an adequate quantum of market evidence upon which to base opinions of value. The Council's valuer has <u>not</u> therefore reported valuations completed in 2020/21 as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty'. However, there is potential for market conditions to move rapidly in response to changes in the control or future spread of COVID-19.</p> <p>Given the unknown future impact that COVID-19 might have on the UK real estate market, the following gross book valuation figures as at 31 March 2021 will be kept under frequent review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land and buildings = £1.365bn Surplus assets = £54.352m Assets held for sale = £6.438m Investment property = £38.446m 	<p>A 10% movement in the current value of these assets would equate to a gain or loss of £146.422m.</p> <p>A reduction in the gross book value of land and buildings and surplus assets would result in a reduction to the Revaluation Reserve and / or a loss being recorded in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Conversely, an increase in values would increase the Revaluation Reserve and / or reverse any downward revaluations previously charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p> <p>A movement in value of investment properties would be posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p> <p>A movement in the value of assets held for sale would be reflected in the gain (or loss) on the disposal of non-current assets written off to Other Operating Costs line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p>	<p>Given the unknown future impact that COVID-19 might have on the UK real estate market, the valuation figures on the Council's property portfolio as at 31 March 2021 will be kept under frequent review.</p>

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions	Comments on uncertainty
Fair value valuations	When the fair values of financial and non-financial assets and financial liabilities cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets, their fair value is measured using valuation techniques based on observable data.	Significant changes in any of the valuation inputs would result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for the financial assets and liabilities.	The Council employs experts to identify the most appropriate valuation techniques to determine fair value. Information about the techniques used to determine the fair value is disclosed in notes 15.3, 19.3 and 19.5.
Pensions liability	Estimation of the net pension liability to pay pensions depends on several complex judgements. A firm of actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	The net pension liability in the accounts amounts to £1.043bn at 31 March 2021. The effect on the net pensions' liability as a result of changes in individual assumptions is detailed within note 31.4 which commences on page 105.	The pensions liability increased by £154.575m in 2020/21 because of changes in demographic, financial and other assumptions. Adjustments are likely to arise in future years, due to the complex nature of the judgements made to estimate the liability.
Collection Fund	The Council's Balance Sheet includes its share of the end of year balances in respect of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates arrears and allowances for doubtful debts. It will not be possible to assess the full effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on collection rates for Council Tax and non-domestic rates for many months, making it difficult to make a reliable assessment of credit losses as at 31 March 2021.	Because of the statutory rules related to Council Tax and non-domestic rates, a deterioration in collection rates would not immediately impact on the Council – the impact would crystallise in cash terms in the distribution of the Collection Fund surpluses and deficits in 2021/22.	The Council's share of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate debtors amounted to £69.435m at 31 March 2021, and its share of the allowances for credit losses amounted to £24.649m .

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

4. Accounting Standards issued but not yet adopted

The Council is required to disclose information relating to the impact on its financial statements of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but has not yet been adopted by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the 'Code').

Several accounting changes are being adopted by the Code in 2020/21, but none will have a material impact on the Council's financial statements.

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has issued International Financial Reporting Standard 16 Leases (IFRS 16) which, when adopted by the Code, will require the Council to recognise most of the assets it has secured the use of through a lease arrangement on its Balance Sheet as 'right of use' assets, together with the corresponding lease liabilities. This differs from the current practice of only recognising the assets and liabilities associated with the finance leases entered into by the Council on its Balance Sheet. It had been anticipated that IFRS 16 would originally be adopted in the 2020/21 financial year, but implementation has now been deferred to the 2022/23 financial year.

5. Expenditure and Funding Analysis

5.1 Introduction

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis (see note 5.2) shows, for each of the Council's portfolios and recharged strategic support services:

- **Net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund** (i.e. the amount spent under the Council's rules for monitoring expenditure against the funding in the annual budget for the General Fund); and
- **Net expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** (the resources consumed in the year, as measured by proper accounting practices).

The reasons for the differences between the two amounts for each portfolio / recharged strategic support service are explained in Note 5.3 (see page 57).

The service groupings in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, and hence in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis reflect the Council's political leadership (Cabinet) structure. This reporting format is the one most used by the Council for allocating resources and for assessing financial performance.

5.2 Expenditure and Funding Analysis

2019/20				2020/21		
Net expenditure chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net expenditure chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
122,909	7,938	130,847	Children and Families	124,575	12,410	136,985
16,571	5,066	21,637	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	7,770	5,490	13,260
6,692	8,168	14,860	Economic Development	8,097	(7,033)	1,064
			Education and Skills			
451	1,414	1,865	Dedicated Schools Budget	(11,883)	(10,228)	(22,111)
89,140	112,608	201,748	Non Dedicated Schools Budget	80,291	41,589	121,880
81,072	4,097	85,169	Environment and Climate Change Action	82,748	6,560	89,308
15,437	(479)	14,958	Finance	(599)	(767)	(1,366)
407,305	8,278	415,583	Health and Adult Social Care	414,795	11,927	426,722
48,058	25,087	73,145	Infrastructure	32,976	41,492	74,468
5,862	(4,809)	1,053	Leader	6,841	(2,997)	3,844
1,740	74	1,814	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	2,324	327	2,651
			Recharged Strategic Support Services			
61,772	13,264	75,036	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	62,510	23,576	86,086
17,527	1,635	19,162	Finance	16,160	4,136	20,296
2,227	157	2,384	Leader	2,774	350	3,124
7,959	877	8,836	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	8,853	1,744	10,597
884,722	183,375	1,068,097	Cost of services - continuing operations	838,232	128,576	966,808
(928,690)	(7,894)	(936,584)	Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(1,004,393)	4,584	(999,809)
(43,968)	175,481	131,513	Surplus on Provision of Services	(166,161)	133,160	(33,001)
			General Fund Balance			
(56,610)			Balance as at 1 April	(56,439)		
(43,968)			Surplus on Provision of Services	(166,161)		
44,139			Transfers to Earmarked Revenue Reserves	154,538		
-			Transfers from Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	(34)		
(56,439)			Balance as at 31 March	(68,096)		

Notes:

- The service groupings shown above reflect the alignment of spending to Cabinet Members, according to their specific responsibilities for discharging the functions of the Cabinet during 2020/21; comparative figures for 2019/20 have been restated on a consistent basis.

5.3 Notes to Expenditure and Funding Analysis

5.3.1 Adjustments between Funding and Accounting basis

The following analysis provides an explanation of the 'adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis' column in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis.

2019/20	Adjustments for capital purposes Note 5.3.2 £000	Net change for Pension Adjustments Note 5.3.3 £000	Other adjustments between funding and accounting Note 5.3.4 £000	Other differences Note 5.3.5 £000	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis £000
Children and Families	1,680	5,659	599	-	7,938
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	3,343	1,635	88	-	5,066
Economic Development	7,500	606	62	-	8,168
Education and Skills					
Dedicated Schools Budget	-	-	(1,045)	2,459	1,414
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	107,720	13,690	241	(9,043)	112,608
Environment and Climate Change Action	3,423	632	53	(11)	4,097
Finance	6	(35)	1	(451)	(479)
Health and Adult Social Care	3,174	4,576	528	-	8,278
Infrastructure	34,352	953	73	(10,291)	25,087
Leader	(4,261)	(713)	9	156	(4,809)
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	62	12	-	74
Recharged Strategic Support Services					
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	10,020	3,034	210	-	13,264
Finance	-	1,831	14	(210)	1,635
Leader	-	141	16	-	157
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	841	36	-	877
Cost of services - continuing operations	166,957	32,912	897	(17,391)	183,375
Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(61,906)	24,161	12,460	17,391	(7,894)
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	105,051	57,073	13,357	-	175,481

2020/21	Adjustments for capital purposes Note 5.3.2 £000	Net change for Pension Adjustments Note 5.3.3 £000	Other adjustments between funding and accounting Note 5.3.4 £000	Other differences Note 5.3.5 £000	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis £000
Children and Families	539	10,581	1,290	-	12,410
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	2,453	2,821	216	-	5,490
Economic Development	(8,341)	1,105	203	-	(7,033)
Education and Skills					
Dedicated Schools Budget	-	-	(1,922)	(8,306)	(10,228)
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	25,816	22,923	647	(7,797)	41,589
Environment and Climate Change Action	5,355	1,063	153	(11)	6,560
Finance	3,750	(37)	(4)	(4,476)	(767)
Health and Adult Social Care	1,060	9,097	1,770	-	11,927
Infrastructure	49,698	1,603	375	(10,184)	41,492
Leader	(2,541)	(2,409)	49	1,904	(2,997)
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	280	47	-	327
Recharged Strategic Support Services					
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	16,765	6,188	623	-	23,576
Finance	-	3,710	615	(189)	4,136
Leader	-	297	53	-	350
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	1,550	194	-	1,744
Cost of services - continuing operations	94,554	58,772	4,309	(29,059)	128,576
Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(78,414)	27,047	26,892	29,059	4,584
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	16,140	85,819	31,201	-	133,160

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

5.3.2 Adjustments for capital purposes

This column adds the following amounts into service lines:

- Depreciation and impairments of non-current assets.
- Amortisation of intangible assets.
- Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute.
- Capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year and applied to finance revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute.

For other income and expenditure not charged to services, this column adjusts for:

- The value of Property, Plant and Equipment disposed of in the year, together with the sale proceeds from these disposals.
- The statutory charges for capital financing (i.e. minimum revenue provision and other revenue contributions).
- Capital grants receivable in the year.

5.3.3 Net change for Pensions Adjustments

The net change for Pension adjustments comprises:

- For services, the removal of the employer pension contributions by the Council as allowed by statute, and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For other income and expenditure not chargeable to services, the addition of the net interest on the defined benefit liability.

5.3.4 Other adjustments between funding and accounting

The other adjustments between the amounts debited / credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amounts payable / receivable to be recognised under statute comprise:

- The amount by which officers' remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differs from remuneration chargeable in accordance with statutory regulations.
- The difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and non-domestic rates and what was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code.
- The amount by which finance costs charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differ from costs chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements.

5.3.5 Other differences

The other differences column shows the reclassification of amounts included in the 'cost of services' for 'Cabinet' reporting that are required to be classified as 'other income and expenditure not charged to services' in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

6. Expenditure and income analysed by nature

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

2019/20		2020/21
£000		£000
	Expenditure	
530,470	Employee expenses	569,063
1,345,308	Other service expenditure	1,428,062
131,838	Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	91,196
47,147	Interest payable and similar charges	37,614
3,313	Precepts and levies	3,366
46,191	(Gain) / loss on disposal of fixed assets	31,783
76,643	Corporate amounts	62,447
2,180,910	Total expenditure	2,223,531
	Income	
(271,390)	Fees, charges and other service income	(295,317)
(2,051)	Interest and investment income	(1,010)
(56,846)	Corporate amounts	(37,998)
(721,420)	Income from council tax and non domestic rates	(731,298)
(997,690)	Government grants and contributions	(1,190,909)
(2,049,397)	Total income	(2,256,532)
131,513	(Surplus) / deficit on Provision of Services	(33,001)

7. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding under Regulations

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

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

2019/20	Notes	Usable Reserves				
		Earmarked General Reserves	General Fund Balance	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)	26.3					
<u>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>						
Depreciation and impairment of non current assets		-	(128,854)	-	-	(128,854)
Amortisation of intangible assets		-	(2,984)	-	-	(2,984)
Impairment of assets held for sale		-	(6)	-	-	(6)
Movement in market value of investment properties		-	1,269	-	-	1,269
Capital grants and contributions applied		-	109,016	-	-	109,016
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute		-	(74,640)	-	-	(74,640)
Value of assets disposed of during the year		-	(72,931)	-	-	(72,931)
<u>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>						
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment		-	37,122	-	-	37,122
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account		-	(132,008)	-	-	(132,008)
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account						
Grants applied to financing (transferred to the CAA)		-	-	-	2,962	2,962
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied A/C		-	-	-	2,962	2,962
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve						
Sale proceeds (part of gain/loss on disposal)		-	26,957	(29,142)	-	(2,185)
Loan repayments - loans awarded for capital purposes		-	-	(19)	-	(19)
Transfer from Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve		-	-	-	-	-
Use of reserve to finance new capital expenditure		-	-	17,935	-	17,935
Use of capital receipts to repay debt		-	-	1,645	-	1,645
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve		-	26,957	(9,581)	-	17,376
(FIAA)	26.4					
Amount by which finance costs charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differ from costs chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements		-	(9,449)	-	-	(9,449)
Adjustments involving the FIAA		-	(9,449)	-	-	(9,449)
Adjustments involving the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account						
Gain or loss on the valuation of pooled investment funds		-	(394)	-	-	(394)
Adjustments involving the Pooled Invest Funds Adj Account		-	(394)	-	-	(394)
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve	26.5					
Reversal of items debited/credited to the CIES		-	(113,810)	-	-	(113,810)
Employers' pension contributions payable in the year		-	56,737	-	-	56,737
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve		-	(57,073)	-	-	(57,073)
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	26.6					
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differs from council tax income calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		-	(2,638)	-	-	(2,638)
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adj Account		-	(2,638)	-	-	(2,638)
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Account	26.7					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differs from remuneration chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements		-	(876)	-	-	(876)
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Account		-	(876)	-	-	(876)
Total adjustments		-	(175,481)	(9,581)	2,962	(182,100)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

2020/21	Notes	Usable Reserves				
		Earmarked General Reserves	General Fund Balance	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account (CAA)	26.3					
<u>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>						
Depreciation and impairment of non current assets		-	(87,904)	-	-	(87,904)
Amortisation of intangible assets		-	(3,292)	-	-	(3,292)
Movement in market value of investment properties		-	(735)	-	-	(735)
Capital grants and contributions applied		-	125,757	-	-	125,757
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute		-	(59,194)	-	-	(59,194)
Value of assets disposed of during the year		-	(37,630)	-	-	(37,630)
<u>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement</u>						
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment		-	39,711	-	-	39,711
Adjustments involving the Capital Adjustment Account		-	(23,287)	-	-	(23,287)
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account						
Grants applied to financing (transferred to the CAA)		-	-	-	64	64
Grants and contributions unapplied		-	1,078	-	(1,078)	-
Adjustments involving the Capital Grants Unapplied A/C		-	1,078	-	(1,014)	64
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve						
Sale proceeds (part of gain/loss on disposal)		-	6,069	(6,332)	-	(263)
Loan repayments - loans awarded for capital purposes		-	-	(1,451)	-	(1,451)
Use of reserve to finance new capital expenditure		-	-	3,377	-	3,377
Use of capital receipts to repay debt		-	-	3,046	-	3,046
Use of capital receipts for administrative costs of non current asset disposal		-	(34)	34	-	-
Adjustments involving the Capital Receipts Reserve		-	6,035	(1,326)	-	4,709
Adjustments involving the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account (FIAA)	26.4					
Amount by which finance costs charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differ from costs chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements		-	842	-	-	842
Adjustments involving the FIAA		-	842	-	-	842
Adjustments involving the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account						
Gain or loss on the valuation of pooled investment funds		-	(76)	-	-	(76)
Adjustments involving the Pooled Invest Funds Adj Account		-	(76)	-	-	(76)
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve	26.5					
Reversal of items debited/credited to the CIES		-	(152,249)	-	-	(152,249)
Employers' pension contributions payable in the year		-	66,430	-	-	66,430
Adjustments involving the Pensions Reserve		-	(85,819)	-	-	(85,819)
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account	26.6					
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differs from council tax income calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		-	(27,626)	-	-	(27,626)
Adjustments involving the Collection Fund Adj Account		-	(27,626)	-	-	(27,626)
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Account	26.7					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement differs from remuneration chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements		-	(4,341)	-	-	(4,341)
Adjustments involving the Accumulated Absences Account		-	(4,341)	-	-	(4,341)
Total adjustments		-	(133,194)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(135,534)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

8. Earmarked revenue reserves

The Council maintains earmarked revenue reserves to manage known financial liabilities and possible risks. These reserves are categorised as follows:

- **Restricted use** – reserves for known contractual liabilities and potential risks beyond the control of the Council and balances held on behalf of others (including schools).
- **Future capital funding** – comprise revenue contributions to be used to supplement the resources available to finance future capital expenditure.
- **Other** – reserves for general purposes and used to fund revenue investment, investment in new ways of working and reserves to respond to short term budget pressures.

Details of the restricted use and the most significant of the other reserves are as follows:

Reserves	Purpose and usage
RESTRICTED USE	
Grant equalisation reserve	Equalise the timing differences between the recognition of grant income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and incurring the grant eligible expenditure.
COVID-19 equalisation	Government funding set aside for exceptional one-off costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
PFI equalisation reserves	Used to equalise the impact of expenditure and government grant over the life of the PFI contracts.
Waste reserve	To smooth the effects of future increases in the costs of waste disposal.
Partnerships	To retain unspent contributions from partners and to apply them in subsequent years.
Schools	Schools are permitted to retain unspent resources which are held in the Schools Reserves. The statutory authority to commit these reserves rests with school governing bodies.
Dedicated Schools Grant deficit	This reserve disclosed the accumulated deficit on the dedicated schools' budget. The Council could not fund the deficit from its General Fund without the approval of the Secretary of State for Education; the deficit therefore had to be recovered through future dedicated schools grant funding.
Trading activities	Surpluses generated by the Council's internal trading activities, to be applied by these activities in subsequent years.
OTHER RESERVES	
Adults Digital Programme	Established to enable investment in innovative and digital solutions for Adult Social Care.
Adults Transformation	Set up to support delivery of ongoing future sustainability work in relation to Adult Social Care.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Reserves	Purpose and usage
Ambition Fund	To support investment that will deliver service improvements.
Capital receipts pump priming	Used to meet costs associated with bringing properties into readiness for disposal.
Carbon reduction	Used to finance measures aimed at reducing the Council's carbon footprint.
Carry Forwards	Used to carry under spends in the year of account forward to support expenditure plans in the forthcoming financial year.
Children's Transformation	Set up to support transformation capability in relation to the Children's sustainability programme.
Collection Fund Investment Risk	Established to mitigate the risks of falling collection rates for Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.
Commercial investment in Essex places	Established to fund commercial investment in Essex places that aligns to the Council's housing growth and town centre agendas.
EES Pension Risk	To be used to meet future pension liabilities arising in relation to the staff who transferred to new owner of EES for Schools.
Emergency	Established as funding to address emerging budget pressures.
Essex Climate Change Commission	To be used to reduce carbon emissions and promote green infrastructure initiatives.
Health and safety	Used to meet the costs of undertaking asbestos, legionella and disability discrimination act surveys.
Insurance	Provides for future potential and contingent liabilities for insurance claims.
Renewal Fund	To support COVID-19 recovery activity.
Technology solutions	Established to meet the future cost of replacing key Council technology systems.
Transformation	Used to meet costs associated with project and change management aspects of the Council's ambitious programme of transformation.

Unless otherwise stated, there are no time constraints placed upon usage of the Council's earmarked revenue reserves.

A summary of the balances on the Earmarked Reserves is set out in the following table.

	Balance 1 April 2019	2019/20 movements		Balance 31 March 2020	2020/21 movements		Balance 31 March 2021
		Contributions	Withdrawals		Contributions	Withdrawals	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Restricted use							
Grant equalisation reserve	(12,636)	(39,861)	2,644	(49,853)	(39,845)	39,289	(50,409)
COVID-19 equalisation	-	-	-	-	(38,505)	1,009	(37,496)
PFI equalisation reserves	(50,554)	(600)	10,481	(40,673)	(3,726)	5,424	(38,975)
Waste reserve	(103,631)	(9,245)	600	(112,276)	(4,574)	-	(116,850)
Partnership reserves	(1,621)	(74)	237	(1,458)	(426)	120	(1,764)
Schools	(38,025)	(4,022)	7,405	(34,642)	(11,378)	2,419	(43,601)
Dedicated Schools Grant deficit	-	-	5,359	5,359	(5,359)	-	-
Trading activities	(651)	(230)	53	(828)	(513)	-	(1,341)
Total restricted reserves	(207,118)	(54,032)	26,779	(234,371)	(104,326)	48,261	(290,436)
Reserves earmarked for future use							
Future capital funding	(12,061)	10,156	-	(1,905)	(7,942)	-	(9,847)
Other reserves							
Adults Digital Programme	(5,256)	(1,030)	3,417	(2,869)	(877)	2,458	(1,288)
Adults Transformation	-	-	-	-	(3,500)	-	(3,500)
Ambition Fund	-	(6,941)	2,970	(3,971)	(13,819)	1,212	(16,578)
Capital receipts pump priming	(3,204)	-	-	(3,204)	(1,000)	-	(4,204)
Carbon reduction	(2,303)	(313)	1,994	(622)	(550)	76	(1,096)
Carry forwards	(23,250)	(14,804)	23,250	(14,804)	(19,933)	13,464	(21,273)
Children's Transformation	-	-	-	-	(1,314)	-	(1,314)
Collection Fund investment risk	(1,412)	-	-	(1,412)	(2,617)	-	(4,029)
Commercial investment in Essex places	-	(12,583)	-	(12,583)	-	-	(12,583)
EES pension risk reserve	-	(4,000)	-	(4,000)	-	-	(4,000)
Emergency	-	(4,000)	4,000	-	(33,069)	20,505	(12,564)
Essex Climate Change Commission	-	(250)	-	(250)	(5,000)	250	(5,000)
Health and safety	(881)	(2,219)	-	(3,100)	(681)	969	(2,812)
Insurance	(8,061)	-	650	(7,411)	(1,238)	1,151	(7,498)
Renewal Fund	-	(2,900)	-	(2,900)	(26,018)	1,018	(27,900)
Technology solutions	-	(3,785)	-	(3,785)	(9,129)	4,165	(8,749)
Transformation	(25,193)	(19,783)	7,575	(37,401)	(25,705)	8,420	(54,686)
Other reserves	(6,139)	(2,229)	3,939	(4,429)	(1,176)	1,407	(4,198)
Total other reserves	(75,699)	(74,837)	47,795	(102,741)	(145,626)	55,095	(193,272)
Total earmarked revenue reserves	(294,878)	(118,713)	74,574	(339,017)	(257,894)	103,356	(493,555)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

9. Other operating expenditure

Other operating expenditure is comprised of the following:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	(Gains)/losses on the disposal of non current assets	
(26,957)	Disposal proceeds	(6,069)
72,931	Carrying value of assets disposed of during the year	37,630
6	Impairment of Assets Held for Sale	-
211	Disposal costs	222
46,191	Total losses on the disposal of non current assets	31,783
	Precepts and levies	
1,255	Lee Valley Regional Park	1,254
1,674	Environment Agency	1,722
384	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority	390
3,313	Precepts and levies	3,366
49,504	Total Other Operating Expenditure	35,149

The carrying value of assets disposed of during the year includes the effect of removing locally maintained schools from the Council's Balance Sheet that have obtained academy status during the financial year.

10. Financing and investment income and expenditure

Financing and investment income and expenditure is comprised of the following:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	
77,713	Interest cost	61,537
(53,885)	Interest on assets	(34,922)
23,828		26,615
47,147	Interest payable and similar charges	37,614
(2,051)	Interest receivable and similar income	(1,010)
	Income and expenditure related to investment properties and changes in their value	
(3,167)		(1,005)
(675)	Net surplus on trading activities	(353)
(334)	Other investment income (Dividends receivable)	(952)
64,748	Financing and Investment income and expenditure	60,909

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

11. Trading operations

The Council has several trading activities that are required to operate in a commercial manner and balance their budget by generating income from other parts of the Council and other organisations. They are as follows:

Trading activity	Purpose
▪ Music Services	Delivers music services to schools.
▪ Place Services	Provides environmental planning support and arboriculture services.
▪ EES for Schools	Delivered advisory and inspection, governor, library services and financial management support to schools until December 2019 .
▪ Information Services infrastructure	Monitored the decommissioning and refresh of IT equipment within the Council until 31 March 2020 , when the trading account was closed.

The net surplus on these trading activities is brought into account when determining the net operating expenditure of the Council.

	Music Services £000	Place Services £000	EES for Schools £000	Information Services £000	Total £000
1 April 2019	(168)	(483)	-	-	(651)
Income	(4,428)	(3,099)	(6,776)	(1,406)	(15,709)
Expenditure	4,416	2,830	6,603	1,185	15,034
Financing items	-	-	-	-	-
Net (surplus)/ deficit	(12)	(269)	(173)	(221)	(675)
Appropriations	65	39	173	221	498
31 March 2020	(115)	(713)	-	-	(828)
Income	(3,790)	(3,264)	-	-	(7,054)
Expenditure	3,805	2,896	-	-	6,701
Financing items	-	-	-	-	-
Net (surplus)/ deficit	15	(368)	-	-	(353)
Appropriations	(128)	(32)	-	-	(160)
31 March 2021	(228)	(1,113)	-	-	(1,341)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

12. Taxation and non-specific grant income

Taxation and non-specific grant income is analysed as follows:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Taxation	
(678,882)	Council tax	(709,221)
(42,538)	Non domestic rates	(22,077)
(329,416)	Non specific grant income	(364,569)
(1,050,836)	Taxation and non specific grant income	(1,095,867)

13. Grant income

13.1 Amounts credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant income

The following non-specific grants have been credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant income:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Non ring-fenced grants	
(133,768)	Non Domestic Rates (<i>Top up grant and Safety net / levy</i>)	(136,057)
(37,395)	COVID-19 Emergency Funding	(47,170)
(27,123)	Private Finance Initiative Grants	(27,123)
(18,300)	Revenue Support Grant	(18,598)
(4,721)	New Homes Bonus / New Homes Bonus Adjustment Grant	(4,826)
(10,112)	Social Care Grant	(33,252)
(5,089)	Independent Living Fund Grant	(5,089)
(11,423)	Business Rates (Section 31 Grants)	(12,283)
(1,249)	Other non ring-fenced grants	(1,130)
(249,180)		(285,528)
	Capital grants and contributions	
(8,104)	Department for Education grants	(798)
	Department for Transport grants	
(23,932)	Direct funding	(23,893)
(6,924)	Integrated transport grant	(6,409)
(15,197)	Other	(22,878)
(13,298)	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (Local Growth & Get Building funding)	(7,224)
(2)	Homes England - Housing Infrastructure Fund	(11,159)
(12,779)	Other grants and contributions	(6,680)
(80,236)		(79,041)
(329,416)	Total non-specific grant income	(364,569)

13.2 Amounts credited to Services

An analysis of the specific revenue and capital grants that have been credited to the Net Cost of Services within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is as follows:

2019/20				2020/21		
Capital grants	Specific revenue grants	Total		Capital grants	Specific revenue grants	Total
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
(12,808)	(3,989)	(16,797)	Department for Education (incl. Education and Skills Funding Agency)	(20,440)	(10,993)	(31,433)
			Department for Education grants			
			Education and Skills Funding Agency grants			
-	(464,793)	(464,793)	Dedicated Schools grant	-	(488,600)	(488,600)
-	(17,362)	(17,362)	Pupil Premium grant	-	(16,853)	(16,853)
-	(6,350)	(6,350)	Teachers Pensions grant	-	(12,197)	(12,197)
-	(9,783)	(9,783)	Universal Infants Free School Meals	-	(9,621)	(9,621)
-	(7,945)	(7,945)	Adult Community Learning	-	(7,141)	(7,141)
-	(10,826)	(10,826)	Other Education and Skills Funding Agency grants	-	(10,794)	(10,794)
(12,808)	(521,048)	(533,856)		(20,440)	(556,199)	(576,639)
			Department of Health and Social Care			
-	(60,829)	(60,829)	Public Health grant	-	(63,203)	(63,203)
-	-	-	Infection Control grant	-	(31,020)	(31,020)
-	-	-	Contain Outbreak Management Fund	-	(35,644)	(35,644)
-	-	-	Other COVID-19 related grants	-	(9,989)	(9,989)
-	(2,359)	(2,359)	Other Department of Health and Social Care grants	-	(5,238)	(5,238)
-	(63,188)	(63,188)		-	(145,094)	(145,094)
			Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)			
-	(39,983)	(39,983)	Additional Better Care Fund grant	-	(41,070)	(41,070)
-	-	-	Income Compensation Scheme	-	(8,353)	(8,353)
-	(3,782)	(3,782)	Other MHCLG grants	-	(4,944)	(4,944)
-	(43,765)	(43,765)		-	(54,367)	(54,367)
			Grants awarded by other bodies			
(972)	-	(972)	Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sports	(1,935)	-	(1,935)
-	(2,680)	(2,680)	Department for Transport	(4,080)	(5,316)	(9,396)
-	-	-	Homes England - Housing Infrastructure Fund	(2,064)	-	(2,064)
-	(7,133)	(7,133)	Home Office	-	(7,028)	(7,028)
(4,529)	-	(4,529)	South East Local Enterprise Partnership - Local Growth & Get Building funding	(8,207)	-	(8,207)
(1,525)	(10,626)	(12,151)	Other grants	(4,977)	(16,633)	(21,610)
(7,026)	(20,439)	(27,465)		(21,263)	(28,977)	(50,240)
(19,834)	(648,440)	(668,274)		(41,703)	(784,637)	(826,340)

Note: Comparative figures for the prior year have been grouped on a basis consistent with 2020/21.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

14. Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council's expenditure on schools is funded primarily by a grant awarded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). An element of the DSG is recouped by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to fund academy schools in the Council's area.

DSG is ring-fenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School Finance and Early Years (England) (No 2) Regulations 2018.

The Schools Budget includes elements for a range of educational services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the Individual Schools Budget (ISB), which is divided into a budget share for each maintained school.

Details of the deployment of DSG receivable for 2020/21 are provided in the following table.

2019/20 £000		2020/21 Total £000	Deployment in 2020/21	
			Central Expenditure £000	Individual Schools Budget £000
(1,090,849)	Final DSG for the year (before Academy recoupment)	(1,167,390)		
623,430	Academy figure recouped	676,883		
(467,419)	Total DSG after Academy recoupment	(490,507)		
3,019	Brought forward from previous year	5,359		
(464,400)	Agreed initial budgeted distribution	(485,148)	(82,233)	(402,915)
(1,627)	In year adjustments	(1,066)		(1,066)
(466,027)	Final budgeted distribution	(486,214)	(82,233)	(403,981)
471,386	Actual central expenditure / ISB deployed	484,506	80,525	403,981
5,359	(Surplus) / deficit carried forward to next year	(1,708)	(1,708)	-

15. Property, plant and equipment, other non-current assets and assets held for sale

15.1 Movement in balances – 2019/20

	Property, plant and equipment						Intangible Assets	Investment Property	Heritage Assets	Assets held for sale
	Land and buildings	Vehicles and equipment	Infra-structure Assets	Community Assets	Assets under construction	Surplus Assets				
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross Book Value										
As at 1 April 2019	1,446,356	54,952	1,552,614	3,360	168,935	56,013	16,490	38,337	14,610	6,124
Additions	(375)	2,606	-	-	107,477	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in:										
Revaluation Reserve	39,008	-	-	-	-	11,185	-	-	-	-
Surplus/Deficit on the provision of services	(61,684)	-	-	-	-	3,390	-	1,269	-	(6)
Disposals	(59,043)	(2,947)	-	(2)	-	(5,818)	(972)	(432)	-	(5,828)
Reclassifications to / (from) other categories	9,971	-	-	-	-	(12,094)	-	-	-	2,123
Transfers from assets under construction	51,333	204	82,481	216	(138,893)	317	4,237	7	98	-
As at 31 March 2020	1,425,566	54,815	1,635,095	3,574	137,519	52,993	19,755	39,181	14,708	2,413
Depreciation / Amortisation										
As at 1 April 2019	(38,688)	(43,922)	(411,245)	(230)	-	(889)	(9,161)	-	(38)	-
Revaluations and restatements	33,650	-	-	-	-	75	-	-	-	-
Depreciation / amortisation on impairments	4,598	-	-	-	-	28	-	-	-	-
Depreciation / amortisation for the year	(28,525)	(3,364)	(42,916)	(69)	-	(310)	(2,984)	-	(3)	-
Depreciation / amortisation on assets sold	1,514	2,115	-	-	-	430	972	-	-	-
Other movements in depreciation / impairment	(11)	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2020	(27,462)	(45,171)	(454,161)	(299)	-	(655)	(11,173)	-	(41)	-
Net Book Value at 31 March 2019	1,407,668	11,030	1,141,369	3,130	168,935	55,124	7,329	38,337	14,572	6,124
Net Book Value at 31 March 2020	1,398,104	9,644	1,180,934	3,275	137,519	52,338	8,582	39,181	14,667	2,413

15.2 Movement in balances – 2020/21

	Property, plant and equipment						Intangible Assets	Investment Property	Heritage Assets	Assets held for sale
	Land and buildings	Vehicles and equipment	Infra-structure Assets	Community Assets	Assets under construction	Surplus Assets				
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Gross Book Value										
As at 1 April 2020	1,425,566	54,815	1,635,095	3,574	137,519	52,993	19,755	39,181	14,708	2,413
Additions	4,873	370	-	-	137,302	4,314	-	-	-	-
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in:										
Revaluation Reserve	(32,828)	-	-	-	-	2,795	-	-	-	-
Surplus/Deficit on the provision of services	(17,700)	-	-	-	-	(111)	-	(735)	-	-
Disposals	(35,169)	(2,955)	-	(48)	-	(5)	-	-	-	(2,074)
Reclassifications to / (from) other categories	(336)	-	1	-	-	(5,764)	-	-	-	6,099
Transfers from assets under construction	20,575	305	90,957	515	(112,641)	130	146	-	13	-
As at 31 March 2021	1,364,981	52,535	1,726,053	4,041	162,180	54,352	19,901	38,446	14,721	6,438
Depreciation / Amortisation										
As at 1 April 2020	(27,462)	(45,171)	(454,161)	(299)	-	(655)	(11,173)	-	(41)	-
Revaluations and restatements	26,932	-	-	-	-	433	-	-	-	-
Depreciation / amortisation on impairments	5,382	-	-	-	-	46	-	-	-	-
Depreciation / amortisation for the year	(27,322)	(2,947)	(44,870)	(76)	-	(304)	(3,292)	-	(2)	-
Depreciation / amortisation on assets sold	1,062	2,900	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other movements in depreciation / impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
As at 31 March 2021	(21,408)	(45,218)	(499,031)	(370)	-	(480)	(14,465)	-	(43)	-
Net Book Value at 31 March 2020	1,398,104	9,644	1,180,934	3,275	137,519	52,338	8,582	39,181	14,667	2,413
Net Book Value at 31 March 2021	1,343,573	7,317	1,227,022	3,671	162,180	53,872	5,436	38,446	14,678	6,438

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

15.3 Fair value measurement

In accordance with Note 1.20 (page 49), the Council measures its surplus assets and investment property at fair value. The inputs into the valuation techniques are categorised as follows:

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

Information about the fair values of these assets as at 31 March 2021 is as follows:

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Level 1	Level 2	Fair value		Level 1	Level 2	Fair value
Quoted price in active market for identical assets £000	Other significant observable inputs £000	£000		Quoted price in active market for identical assets £000	Other significant observable inputs £000	£000
			Surplus properties			
5,025	24,462	29,487	Former school sites	5,655	24,774	30,429
2,521	8,390	10,911	Land	1,340	9,538	10,878
2,907	9,688	12,595	Other	2,706	10,339	13,045
10,453	42,540	52,993		9,701	44,651	54,352
			Investment properties			
-	12,250	12,250	Retail Park	-	9,000	9,000
-	10,200	10,200	Office Block	-	9,300	9,300
-	6,600	6,600	Industrial Unit	-	7,000	7,000
-	9,145	9,145	Agricultural tenancies	-	12,145	12,145
-	986	986	Other	-	1,001	1,001
-	39,181	39,181		-	38,446	38,446

The Council has interpreted **Level 1** inputs as meaning that the valuation figures are based on a strong pool of prima facie market evidence considered to be highly or directly comparable (i.e. very similar in terms of property type and/or location to the subject asset).

In the absence of prima facie market transactional evidence, fair value has been derived by determining a general tone of values for an asset class and/or geographical location and by considering transactional evidence for the sale of comparable assets (interpreted as being a **Level 2** input).

No fair values have been derived using **Level 3** inputs.

In estimating the fair value of the Council's investment properties, the highest and best use of the properties is their current use. For surplus properties, the highest and best use is assessed by considering if there is an alternative use to that applied by the Council when the properties were used for operational purposes that would maximise their value.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

15.4 Capital commitments

At 31 March 2021, the Council had entered contracts for the construction or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment. The commitments are summarised as follows:

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
43,878	Highways and Transportation	27,075
12,461	Education (schools)	15,610
14,542	Information Services	9,010
7,440	Other	2,831
78,321		54,526

15.5 Revaluations

The Council ensures that all Property, Plant and Equipment required to be measured at current value is re-valued, under a rolling five-year programme, by the Council's property advisor Lambert Smith Hampton. All valuations are undertaken in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The timing and amounts of the valuations are summarised in the following table:

	Held at historical value £000	Valued as at					Total cost or valuation £000
		31 March 2017 £000	31 March 2018 £000	31 March 2019 £000	31 March 2020 £000	31 March 2021 £000	
Operational Assets							
Land and buildings	-	105,613	65,813	113,203	296,359	783,993	1,364,981
Vehicles, plant & equipment	52,535	-	-	-	-	-	52,535
Infrastructure	1,726,053	-	-	-	-	-	1,726,053
Community Assets	4,041	-	-	-	-	-	4,041
Non-Operational Assets							
Surplus Assets	-	4,439	6,942	18,300	7,061	17,610	54,352
Assets under construction	162,180	-	-	-	-	-	162,180
Gross book value	1,944,809	110,052	72,755	131,503	303,420	801,603	3,364,142

Land and buildings are either valued at their 'existing use value' (EUV) or at 'depreciated replacement cost' (DRC). Where there is no active market for the land and buildings, because of their specialist nature, DRC is used as an estimate of current value (**94%** of the Council's land and buildings are estimated using DRC).

Depreciated historical cost (DHC) is used as a proxy for current value for assets which:

- Have low values and/or short lives (vehicles, plant and equipment).
- Are not used up as they provide services (community assets).
- Can only be used for the purpose originally constructed (infrastructure assets).
- Are still being constructed (assets under construction).

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The current value measurement for surplus assets is 'fair value', estimated at highest and best use from a market participants perspective (see note 15.3, on page 73, for further details).

16. Capital expenditure and capital financing

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance lease and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it.

The Capital Financing Requirement provides a measure of the capital expenditure incurred by the Council that has yet to be financed. The movement in the Capital Financing Requirement is analysed in the second part of this note.

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
1,056,856	Opening Capital Financing Requirement	1,076,153
	Capital investment	
109,170	Property, plant and equipment	146,714
7	Investment property	146
122	Intangible assets	-
	Inventories	
2,688	Expenditure	621
-	Written off balances	(4,636)
74,640	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	59,194
1,350	Loans awarded for capital purposes	-
187,977	Total capital investment	202,039
	Sources of finance	
(19,580)	Capital receipts	(6,423)
(111,978)	Government grants and contributions	(125,821)
(37,122)	Revenue provision for the repayment of debt	(39,711)
(168,680)	Total sources of finance	(171,955)
19,297	Increase in the Capital Financing Requirement	30,084
1,076,153	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	1,106,237
	Explanation of movements in year	
17,226	Increase in underlying need to borrow	29,954
2,071	Increase for assets acquired under finance lease	130
19,297	Increase in the Capital Financing Requirement	30,084

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

17. Leases

17.1 Council as Lessee – Finance leases

The following table summarises the Council's finance lease obligations:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
Short Term	Long Term		Short Term	Long Term
£000	£000		£000	£000
14	393	Property	9	385
1,038	3,901	Vehicles, plant and equipment	970	3,050
6,577	111,286	Private Finance Initiatives	11,616	99,671
7,629	115,580		12,595	103,106

Further detail on the liabilities related to Private Finance Initiative schemes is provided in Note 18, which commences on page 77.

17.2 Council as Lessee – Operating leases

The Council has acquired the use of Property, Plant and Equipment by entering operating leases. The future minimum lease payments due as at the year-end under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Property £000	Other £000	Total £000		Property £000	Other £000	Total £000
3,001	814	3,815	One year	2,940	694	3,634
9,611	1,191	10,802	Two to five years	8,461	1,161	9,622
47,234	120	47,354	Over five years	45,454	76	45,530
59,846	2,125	61,971	Total lease rentals	56,855	1,931	58,786

17.3 Council as Lessor

The Council has leased out several properties under the terms of a finance lease. The Council has a gross investment in these leases of **£71,000** as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £334,000), made up of the minimum lease payments expected to be received over the remaining term of the leases.

The Council also leases out properties under the terms of an operating lease. The properties leased under the terms of an operating lease are those within its Investment Property portfolio, (as detailed in Note 15.3 on page 73) and properties for the provision of community and voluntary services.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

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

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
3,246	Not later than one year	2,501
5,560	Later than one year and not later than five years	4,143
2,305	Later than five years	1,818
11,111	Total	8,462

The future minimum lease payments receivable as at 31 March 2021 reflect the amounts receivable up to the earliest date that the lessees can exit from the arrangements without penalty.

18. Private Finance Initiative and similar contracts

18.1 Nature and significant terms of PFI arrangements

The Council has entered into several Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and Public Private Partnership (PPP) schemes. The nature and significant terms of these arrangements are as follows:

Scheme	Nature and significant terms
A130 Bypass	<p>This contract was entered into in October 1999 for the design, construction and maintenance of the A130 Bypass and associated off-site facilities.</p> <p>Construction was completed in two phases; the Northern section was completed in 2002 and the Southern section in 2003. No payments were made until construction of the road was complete. Construction and land costs were estimated at £80m.</p> <p>Payments are made to the Contractor for the provision of the road surface and are based upon the availability and usage of the road. Deductions can be made if the road is closed or if traffic flow is affected by road works.</p> <p>The road will be passed to the Council in a repaired/neutral state at the end of the arrangements in 2030.</p>
Debden Park School	<p>Under this arrangement, the Operator was firstly responsible for construction of the school and subsequently for the running of it. Initial construction costs were in the region of £15m.</p> <p>The contractor is operating and maintaining the school facilities for a contract term of 25 years (i.e. until 2026).</p> <p>The amounts paid to the Contractor vary according to inflation, the proportion of time that the facilities are made available to the school and according to the achievement of performance goals.</p>
Clacton Secondary Schools	<p>This PFI contract was entered into in 2003/04 for the construction of a new secondary school and the expansion and refurbishment of a further two</p>

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Scheme	Nature and significant terms
	<p>secondary schools, all within the Clacton area. Total construction costs were in the region of £34m.</p> <p>The contract also provides for a full facilities management service for all sites for the contract term of 30 years (i.e. from 2005 until 2035).</p> <p>In return for these services, the Operator is paid an annual unitary charge, which varies according to inflation, the proportion of the time that the facilities are made available to the schools, and the extent to which the Operator meets agreed performance goals.</p>
Tendring Primary Schools	<p>The Council entered into a contract in October 2001, with a 32 year term, for the provision and refurbishment of 12 primary schools within the Tendring area. Total construction costs were in the region of £15m.</p> <p>The Council voluntarily terminated this contract on 28 December 2019. An early termination premium of £9.767m was payable to the contractor to extinguish the Council's liability on the effective date of termination. This premium was carried into the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account (see note 26.4 on page 95) and will be charged to the General Fund over the unexpired term that was outstanding on the contract when it was terminated.</p>
Castlevew, Cornelius Vermuyden and Columbus Schools	<p>This contract was entered into in April 2010 for the provision of three schools under one project agreement, with one unitary payment. The contract includes buildings and grounds maintenance, security, caretaking and cleaning. The operational term for the PFI contract, which commenced in January 2012, is 25 years.</p> <p>At financial close of this contract, two of the schools were foundation schools and one was a community school. All three of the schools have subsequently converted to academy status.</p> <p>These schools' governing bodies consent to the Council acting on their behalf and they accept the arrangements included within the PFI project agreement. Payment arrangements between the Council and these schools reflect those agreed in the project agreement.</p> <p>The Council carries the PFI liabilities on its own Balance Sheet for one of these schools (the Columbus School), as this school was a community school at financial close of the contract. The construction costs of this school amounted to £22.3m.</p>
Woodlands School	<p>The contract includes buildings and grounds maintenance, security, caretaking and cleaning. The operational term for the PFI contract is 23 years (excluding the construction period). Upon expiry of the contract, it is intended that any property interest will revert back to the Council for nil consideration.</p> <p>Construction costs for this school amounted to £27m. The school became operational in January 2014. It converted to academy status on 1 April 2015.</p> <p>Unitary payments, which include payment for services provided, financing charges and repayment of this liability, will be in the region of £4m per annum.</p>
Waste Treatment Plant – Basildon	<p>This contract was entered into on 31 May 2012 with UBB (Essex Waste) Ltd and provides for the design, construction, finance and operation of a waste treatment plant in Basildon.</p> <p>Work on the plant commenced in March 2013; the Facility</p>

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Scheme	Nature and significant terms
	<p>required capital expenditure in the region of £107m (borne by the private sector) and achieved the Readiness Date in November 2014.</p> <p>The Facility was accepting waste and achieving diversion from landfill but is currently mothballed. The contract remains in its commissioning phase and the contractual longstop date has passed. The parties are utilising the contractual and dispute mechanisms to seek resolution to the commissioning issues that have arisen (<i>see page 92 for further details</i>).</p> <p>The Facility, and associated PFI liability, will not be recognised in the Council's Balance Sheet until the Acceptance Test Certificate is issued for the Facility or a likely future obligation exists.</p> <p>Under the contract, the property interest reverts to the Council for nil consideration upon the expiry of the 25 year PFI contract.</p>

18.2 Details of payments to be made under PFI contracts

The Council makes agreed payments under the schemes detailed in note 18.1 each year, which are increased by inflation, and can be reduced if the contractor fails to meet availability and performance standards, but which are otherwise fixed.

Payments remaining to be made by the Council under the operational phase of its PFI contracts (*excluding any estimation of inflation and availability / performance deductions*) are as follows:

	Estimated timing of payments to PFI/PPP operators					
	Within one year	2 - 5 years	6 - 10 years	11 - 15 years	16 - 20 years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Service charges	6,787	29,068	35,448	30,246	2,121	103,670
Interest and similar charges	19,565	63,620	28,258	14,716	920	127,079
Repayment of liability	11,616	45,011	22,163	28,286	4,211	111,287
Lifecycle replacement	2,205	11,003	16,540	4,794	534	35,076
Total	40,173	148,702	102,409	78,042	7,786	377,112

Under existing legislation, the Council expects to continue to receive additional government grant that will broadly cover the capital elements of the payments to contractors.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

18.3 Property, plant and equipment used to provide services

The assets recognised on the Council's Balance Sheet that are used to provide services in respect of the above schemes are as follows:

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
	Gross Book Value	
146,706	As at 1 April	102,760
	Additions	
	Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in:	
(1,555)	Revaluation Reserve	591
(1,165)	Surplus/Deficit on the provision of services	510
(41,226)	Assets no longer subject to PFI arrangement	-
102,760	As at 31 March	103,861
	Depreciation / Amortisation	
(35,589)	As at 1 April	(37,089)
498	Revaluations and restatements	48
16	Depreciation / amortisation on impairments	-
(2,283)	Depreciation / amortisation for the year	(2,296)
269	Depreciation on assets no longer subject to PFI arrangements	-
(37,089)	As at 31 March	(39,337)
111,117	<i>Net book value at 1 April</i>	65,671
65,671	<i>Net book value at 31 March</i>	64,524

18.4 Value of PFI liabilities for capital expenditure

The following liability is outstanding to pay the PFI contractors for capital expenditure:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
(133,568)	Balance as at 1 April	(117,864)
15,704	Liabilities repaid	6,577
(117,864)	Balance as at 31 March	(111,287)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

19. Financial instruments

19.1 Categories of Financial Instruments

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

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Long term £000	Short term £000	Total £000		Long term £000	Short term £000	Total £000
			Financial assets			
			Investments			
11,254	-	11,254	Fair value through Profit or Loss	11,167	-	11,167
1,451	115,191	116,642	Amortised cost	-	96,595	96,595
12,705	115,191	127,896		11,167	96,595	107,762
4,810	84,626	89,436	Debtors (contractual)	557	101,695	102,252
-	326,354	326,354	Cash and cash equivalents	-	504,691	504,691
17,515	526,171	543,686	Total	11,724	702,981	714,705
			Financial liabilities (amortised cost)			
(598,941)	(25,548)	(624,489)	Borrowing	(586,398)	(40,704)	(627,102)
(115,580)	(7,629)	(123,209)	PFI / Finance lease liabilities	(103,106)	(12,595)	(115,701)
(1,215)	(296,467)	(297,682)	Creditors (contractual)	(1,432)	(272,932)	(274,364)
-	(17,718)	(17,718)	Bank overdraft	-	(34,632)	(34,632)
(715,736)	(347,362)	(1,063,098)	Total	(690,936)	(360,863)	(1,051,799)

Debtors and creditors are carried at amortised cost. The above totals for debtors and creditors differ from the Balance Sheet as debtors and creditors related to statutory debts such as Council Tax and non-domestic rates are excluded, as they are not classified as financial instruments.

19.2 Income, expense, gains and losses

The following table provides an analysis of the items included within the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to income, expense and gains and losses on financial instruments:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Net gains / losses	
	Financial assets classified as:	
394	Fair value through profit or loss	76
394	Net gains / losses	76
	Interest revenue	
	Financial assets classified as:	
(644)	Fair value through profit or loss	(454)
(1,801)	Amortised cost	(632)
(2,445)	Interest revenue	(1,086)
47,147	Interest expense	37,614
45,096	Net (gain) / loss for the year	36,604

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

19.3 Fair values of financial assets carried at fair value

The financial assets classified as 'Fair Value through Profit and Loss' in note 19.1 comprise an investment in a pooled Property Fund and an equity investment in Medtech Accelerator Ltd, a company supporting the development of new medical technologies to create new employment opportunities in the region.

The pooled Property Fund is measured at fair value on a recurring basis, using input **Level 1** in the fair value hierarchy. This means that fair value is based on the quoted price in an active market for identical shares.

The equity investment in Medtech Accelerator Ltd is held at amortised cost, as a proxy for fair value, as fair value cannot be reliably estimated.

19.4 Fair values for financial assets and liabilities not measured at fair value

Other than the financial assets described in note 19.3, all financial assets and all financial liabilities are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

The following table compares, for all financial assets and liabilities held at amortised cost, the carrying and fair values:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
Carrying amount £000	Fair Value £000		Carrying amount £000	Fair Value £000
		Financial liabilities		
		Borrowing		
(537,144)	(633,784)	Public Works Loans Board	(520,940)	(652,585)
(77,937)	(128,395)	Money Market loans	(77,916)	(155,175)
(9,408)	(8,826)	Other	(28,246)	(28,250)
(624,489)	(771,005)	Total borrowing	(627,102)	(836,010)
(123,209)	(190,065)	PFI / finance lease liabilities	(115,701)	(181,341)
(17,718)	(17,718)	Bank overdraft	(34,632)	(34,632)
(297,682)	(297,682)	Creditors (contractual)	(274,364)	(274,364)
(1,063,098)	(1,276,470)	Total Financial Liabilities	(1,051,799)	(1,326,347)
		Financial Assets		
116,642	116,451	Investments at amortised cost	96,595	96,604
326,354	326,354	Cash and cash equivalents	504,691	504,691
89,436	89,436	Debtors (contractual)	102,252	102,252
532,432	532,241	Total Financial Assets	703,538	703,547

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Financial liabilities

- The fair value of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans measures the economic effect of terms agreed with the PWLB compared with the estimates of the terms that would be offered for market transactions undertaken at the Balance Sheet date, which has been assumed to be the PWLB 'new loan' rate. The difference between the fair value of the PWLB loans (£652.585m) and the carrying amount (£520.940m) therefore measures the additional interest the Council will pay over the remaining term of the loans, against what would be paid if the loans were at prevailing 'new loan' rates. However, the Council would not simply be able to swap its existing loans for equivalent loans at the 'new loan' rate because the PWLB would raise a penalty charge for early redemption of £226.237m for the additional interest that would now not be paid. The exit price for the PWLB loans, including this penalty charge, would therefore be £747.177m.
- Whilst the 'fair value' measurements provide an indication of the cost of prematurely repaying existing PWLB and Money Market loans at 31 March 2021, the Council has a Capital Financing Requirement (see note 16 on page 75) well in excess of these loans, and so does not foresee the need to prematurely repay these loans.

Investments and cash

- Where an instrument will mature within the next 12 months, the carrying amount is assumed to approximate to fair value.

Other

- The fair value of trade creditors, debtors and PFI liabilities is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

19.5 Fair value hierarchy for financial assets and liabilities not measured at fair value

The fair values for borrowing and investments that are not carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value have all been derived at **level 2** of the fair value hierarchy (i.e. using inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the financial asset / liability). The fair value of the remainder of financial liabilities and assets that are not carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value have been derived at **level 3** of the fair value hierarchy.

The fair value for financial liabilities and financial assets that are not measured at fair value has been assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- **Financial Assets**
 - No early repayments or impairment is recognised.
 - Estimated ranges of interest rates at 31 March 2021 of **-0.01% to 0.15%** for loans receivable, based on new lending rates for the remaining period of the deposits at that date.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.
- **Financial liabilities**
 - No early repayment is recognised.
 - Estimated ranges of interest rates at 31 March 2021 of **0.77%** to **2.19%** for loans payable based on new lending rates for equivalent loans at that date.
 - The fair value of trade and other payables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

19.6 Nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments

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

- **Credit risk** – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Council.
- **Liquidity risk** – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments.
- **Market risk** – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council because of changes in such measures as interest rates.

The Council's overall treasury risk management framework focuses on the unpredictability of financial markets and arrangements for minimising these risks. An annual **Treasury Management Strategy** is produced in compliance with statutory regulations and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice (i.e. the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral guidance notes).

Overall, these procedures require the Council to manage risks in the following ways:

- By approving annual limits on the overall level of borrowing, exposure to fixed and variable interest rates, maturity structure of debt and amount that can be invested beyond one year.
- By approving an annual investment strategy that establishes criteria for both investing and selecting counterparties in compliance with government guidance.

Risk management is carried out by the Council's central treasury team, under policies approved by the Council in the annual **Treasury Management Strategy**. In addition, the Council has 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.

Credit risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as from credit exposure associated with the Council's customers.

The Council sought to minimise the credit risks associated with depositing funds with banks and financial institutions by only placing funds with those counterparties that had credit ratings

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

equivalent to, or better than, the credit rating criteria set out within the Council's investment strategy, which seeks to provide a sound approach to investing in normal market circumstances.

UK banks and building societies, and non-UK banks domiciled in a country with a minimum sovereign rating of 'AA', were considered for inclusion on the Council's lending list during 2020/21 if they had acceptable credit ratings in both of the following categories:

- **Short term rating** – provides an indication of the capacity of the financial institution to meet its financial commitments in the short term.
- **Long term rating** – provides an indication of the capacity of the financial institution to meet its financial commitments over the longer term.

Banks and building societies that satisfied the Council's minimum criteria across each of these categories were eligible to be included on the Council's lending list. The short and long-term ratings were further applied to determine the maximum amount that could be invested with individual counterparties and the maximum period of those investments. This approach sought to ensure that the Council applied a consistent approach to the amount, and period, of investments with institutions exposed to similar risks.

Nationalised / part-nationalised financial institutions were also included on the Council's lending list, together with low volatility net asset value (LVNAV) Money Market Funds that were denominated in 'sterling' and regulated within the EU and had an 'AAA' credit rating.

Application of the credit rating criteria set out within the Annual Investment Strategy meant that the maximum amount invested in 2020/21 by the Council with any financial institution, at any point in time, ranged between **£20m** and **£70m** (*i.e. the limit varied within this range, depending on the relative strength of financial institutions' credit ratings within the acceptable range*).

Surplus cash balances were predominantly invested on a short-term basis (*i.e. for periods of up to 364 days*) until the funds were next required. Funds invested on this basis were either placed 'on-call' or in short term 'fixed term' deposits. Because of the short-term nature of these investments, the Council was able to respond quickly to changes in credit risk.

The Council's Investments Strategy also allowed for underlying cash balances to be invested on a longer-term basis (*i.e. for periods beyond 364 days*). Because it is not possible to respond to changes in credit risk as quickly, a limit was set within the annual treasury management strategy, upon the total amount that could be invested for periods beyond 364 days. For 2020/21, this limit was **£50m** (2019/20: £50m).

No credit limits were exceeded during 2020/21 and the Council did not experience any losses from non-performance by any of its counterparties in relation to the deposits it placed with them.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Liquidity risk

There are no significant risks that the Council will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Council will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council seeks to mitigate against this risk by ensuring a relatively even debt maturity profile, through a combination of careful planning of new loans taken out and (where it is economic to do so) making early repayments.

The maturity analysis of existing financial liabilities (principal and interest) is as follows:

31 March 2020				Repayment period	31 March 2021			
PWLB £000	Money Market £000	Other £000	Total £000		PWLB £000	Money Market £000	Other £000	Total £000
34,066	3,162	3,787	41,015	Less than one year	25,827	3,174	26,059	55,060
34,066	3,162	3,787	41,015	Short term borrowing	25,827	3,174	26,059	55,060
26,092	3,162	3,535	32,789	Between 1 and 2 years	25,799	3,162	1,289	30,250
83,970	9,487	2,086	95,543	Between 2 - 5 years	90,417	9,487	898	100,802
169,208	15,812	-	185,020	Between 5 - 10 years	170,659	15,812	-	186,471
349,831	47,434	-	397,265	Between 10 - 25 years	324,137	47,434	-	371,571
257,710	47,435	-	305,145	Between 25 - 40 years	249,708	47,435	-	297,143
-	31,623	-	31,623	Between 40 - 50 years	-	31,623	-	31,623
-	98,254	-	98,254	Over 50 years	-	95,092	-	95,092
886,811	253,207	5,621	1,145,639	Long term borrowing	860,720	250,045	2,187	1,112,952
920,877	256,369	9,408	1,186,654	Total borrowing	886,547	253,219	28,246	1,168,012

Market Risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates could have a complex impact on the Council. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise.
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of borrowings will fall.
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise.
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall.

The Council only carries a small proportion of its investments at fair value, and none of its borrowings. Consequently, nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowing and investments would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will impact on the amount charged / credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and affect the General Fund Balance pound for pound.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The Council has several strategies for managing interest rate risk. The overall policy is to aim to keep a maximum of **30%** of borrowings in variable rate loans (2019/20: 30%).

The treasury management team has an active strategy for assessing interest rate exposure that feeds into the setting of the annual budget and which is used to update the budget quarterly during the year. This allows any adverse changes to be accommodated. The analysis will also advise whether new borrowing taken out is at fixed or variable rates of interest.

If interest rates had been **1%** higher throughout 2020/21 (with all other variables held constant) the Council's net interest burden would have been lower than that shown in Note 19.2, as follows:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
366	Interest payable on variable rate borrowing	444
(1,347)	Interest receivable on variable rate investments	(1,675)
(981)	Net (gain) / loss	(1,231)

19.7 Credit risk management practices

The following arrangements were in place for managing credit risk in relation to financial assets, and for estimating the impairment loss allowances that would reflect the Council's exposure to this risk:

Asset type	Credit risk management practices	Estimation of impairment loss allowances
Loans to other local authorities	Investments guaranteed by statute – no credit risk.	No allowance required.
Deposits with banks and building societies	Deposits are restricted by the Council's Treasury Management Strategy (as noted above).	Expected credit losses are calculated by applying historical experience of default factors supplied by the Council's Treasury Management Advisor.
Other debtors	Debtors are not subject to internal credit rating; they are instead grouped by their credit risk characteristics for the purposes of calculating expected credit losses.	Expected credit losses are calculated using provision matrices based on historical data for defaults, overlaid by consideration of factors impacting upon debtors' ability to settle their obligations.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The following table summarises the Council's potential credit risk exposure:

	Credit risk rating			Gross carrying amount
	Low	Medium	High	
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Deposits with banks and other financial institutions	565,360	-	-	565,360
Loans to businesses	-	-	-	-
	565,360	-	-	565,360
Other debtors (contractual) - not subject to credit rating				102,252
Total amount exposed to credit risk				667,612

The following movements in the impairment loss allowances for financial assets took place in 2020/21:

	Cash and cash equivalents £000	Investments at amortised cost £000	Other debtors (contractual) £000	Total £000
Allowance at 1 April 2019	24	33	14,063	14,120
Assets derecognised	-	(21)	-	(21)
Assets recognised	34	-	2,339	2,373
Allowance at 31 March 2020	58	12	16,402	16,472
Assets derecognised	-	(4)	-	(4)
Assets recognised	32	-	(299)	(267)
Allowance at 31 March 2021	90	8	16,103	16,201

The total credit loss allowance for contractual debtors, at **£16.103m**, equates to **15.8%** of the debt outstanding at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £16.402m, equating to 18% of the debt outstanding).

20. Inventories

The following table provides an analysis of the inventories held:

	Property acquired or constructed for sale £000	Personal Protective Equipment £000	Consumable Stores £000	Total £000
Balance as at 1 April 2019	9,852	-	44	9,896
Purchases	2,688	-	17	2,705
Recognised as an expense in the year	(3,328)	-	(4)	(3,332)
Balance as at 1 April 2020	9,212	-	57	9,269
Purchases	621	1,289	3	1,913
Donations	-	2,601	-	2,601
Recognised as an expense in the year	(1,345)	(1,356)	(11)	(2,712)
Written off balances	(4,636)	-	-	(4,636)
Balance as at 31 March 2021	3,852	2,534	49	6,435

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

21. Debtors

The following table analyses short and long-term debtors:

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Short term £000	Long term £000	Total £000		Short term £000	Long term £000	Total £000
74,925	679	75,604	Trade debtors	91,974	100	92,074
9,462	-	9,462	Recoverable Value Added Tax	9,656	-	9,656
			Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates			
10,752	-	10,752	Billing authorities	794	-	794
49,194	-	49,194	Taxpayers	69,435	-	69,435
19,619	425	20,044	Prepayments	27,267	396	27,663
4,436	-	4,436	Grants and accrued income	16,765	-	16,765
241	14,838	15,079	Other debtors	64	10,611	10,675
168,629	15,942	184,571		215,955	11,107	227,062
			Allowance for doubtful debts			
(16,402)	-	(16,402)	Sundry debtors	(16,103)	-	(16,103)
(22,978)	-	(22,978)	Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates	(24,649)	-	(24,649)
129,249	15,942	145,191	Total	175,203	11,107	186,310

22. Cash and cash equivalents

The following table shows the balance of cash and cash equivalents at 31 March.

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Assets £000	Liabilities £000	Net total £000		Assets £000	Liabilities £000	Net total £000
			Amounts that are an integral part of the Council's cash management			
104,078	-	104,078	Cash repayable on demand	144,999	-	144,999
183,901	-	183,901	Cash equivalents	313,191	-	313,191
-	(17,803)	(17,803)	Bank overdraft	-	(34,719)	(34,719)
-	85	85	Petty cash balances	-	87	87
287,979	(17,718)	270,261		458,190	(34,632)	423,558
38,375		38,375	Cash held by schools	46,501	-	46,501
326,354	(17,718)	308,636	Total of cash and cash equivalents	504,691	(34,632)	470,059

The Council holds several bank accounts which can fluctuate significantly depending on cash receipts and payments and may become overdrawn. However, the Council's banking arrangements mean that agreed overdraft charges are only incurred by the Council where the aggregate balance on all accounts is in an overdraft position.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

23. Creditors

The following table analyses short and long term creditors:

31 March 2020				31 March 2021		
Short term £000	Long term £000	Total £000		Short term £000	Long term £000	Total £000
156,504	1,096	157,600	Trade creditors	182,092	1,135	183,227
104,988	-	104,988	Cash held on behalf of partnerships	52,954	-	52,954
			Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates			
7,742	-	7,742	Billing authorities	36,618	-	36,618
14,249	-	14,249	Taxpayers	21,065	-	21,065
22,276	-	22,276	Employee related creditors	25,239	-	25,239
12,699	-	12,699	Other creditors	12,647	-	12,647
5,939	119	6,058	Receipts in advance	8,230	297	8,527
324,397	1,215	325,612	Total	338,845	1,432	340,277

24. Grant receipts in advance

Where grants or contributions have been received, but the conditions attached to the funding are not yet satisfied, the amount is carried in the Balance Sheet as a receipt in advance. An analysis of the amounts carried in the Balance Sheet as a receipt in advance is as follows:

31 March 2020					31 March 2021			
Revenue		Capital			Revenue		Capital	
Short term £000	Long term £000	Short term £000	Long term £000		Short term £000	Long term £000	Short term £000	Long term £000
653	-	5,781	-	Department for Education and related	1,556	-	218	-
406	-	-	-	Department for Education grants	2,573	-	-	-
1,059	-	5,781	-	Education and Skills Funding Agency	4,129	-	218	-
				Ministry of Housing, Communities & L. Govnt				
12,133	-			Business Rates Relief grant	-	-	-	-
8,654	-	-	-	Other	14,666	-	-	-
20,787	-	-	-		14,666	-	-	-
				Other grants				
388	-	23,195	-	Department for Transport	3,160	-	38,374	3,900
710	-	-	-	Department of Health and Social Care	4,516	-	-	-
-	-	1,691	-	South East Local Enterprise Partnership	-	-	26,263	12,000
553	-	2,371	-	Other	3,883	-	9,129	-
1,651	-	27,257	-		11,559	-	73,766	15,900
23,497	-	33,038	-	Total of grant receipts in advance	30,354	-	73,984	15,900
8,197	1,956	36,143	25,922	Developer contributions (S106)	14	-	28,509	44,366
31,694	1,956	69,181	25,922	Total	30,368	-	102,493	60,266

Note: Whilst prior year comparative figures are consistent overall with the figures presented in the 2019/20 Statement of Accounts, comparative figures have been analysed on a basis consistent with 2020/21.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

25. Provisions and contingencies

25.1 Provisions

The Council has set funds aside as provisions to meet obligations related to events that have taken place which probably require settlement by the transfer of economic benefits.

Provisions are split on the Council's Balance Sheet between current (amounts expected to be settled within 12 months) and non-current (those expected to be settled beyond the next 12 months).

An analysis of the current and non-current provisions is provided in the following table.

	Insurance Provision	Landfill aftercare	Non-domestic rating appeals	Other provisions	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Current provisions					
Balance at 31 March 2020	(5,000)	(425)	(5,892)	(1,779)	(13,096)
Amounts arising	-	(4,873)	(1,861)	(432)	(7,166)
Provisions reversed	-	-	-	710	710
Provisions utilised	340	488	1,315	957	3,100
Unwinding of discount	-	(11)	-	-	(11)
Amounts reclassified as (current) / non current	(340)	4,325	-	(19)	3,966
Balance at 31 March 2021	(5,000)	(496)	(6,438)	(563)	(12,497)
Non-current provisions					
Balance at 31 March 2020	(19,767)	(13,969)	-	(19)	(33,755)
Amounts arising	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions reversed	-	-	-	-	-
Provisions utilised	-	-	-	-	-
Amounts reclassified as current / (non current)	340	(4,325)	-	19	(3,966)
Balance at 31 March 2021	(19,427)	(18,294)	-	-	(37,721)
Total current and non-current provisions					
31 March 2020	(24,767)	(14,394)	(5,892)	(1,798)	(46,851)
31 March 2021	(24,427)	(18,790)	(6,438)	(563)	(50,218)

An explanation of each provision is as follows:

Provision	Purpose
Insurance	<p>The Insurance Provision represents the estimated outstanding liabilities of the Council that are likely to be paid over a number of years. They arise due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The self-insured elements of the Council's Insurance programme; and Other claims related to the period when Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) and Independent Insurance were the Council's insurers. <p>MMI insured the Council's liability risks from 1983, until they ceased trading in 1992. Since ceasing trading, MMI dealt with all outstanding claims, operating under a contingent Scheme of Arrangements. This Scheme allows MMI to claw back monies paid (in the form of a levy) from the scheme participants if it has insufficient funds to pay remaining claims itself. This Scheme was put in place to avoid winding up the company if a solvent run-off was not</p>

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Provision	Purpose
	<p>achievable.</p> <p>The Scheme of Arrangements was triggered, and therefore came into effect, on 13th November 2012. As a result, the Council has made two levy payments to the Scheme Administrator in previous years, equivalent to 25% of all claims received since 1993, and is now required to meet 25% of any subsequent claims. The Insurance Provision includes an allowance for this liability.</p> <p>The 25% levy may be enough to enable MMI to continue its run-off for several years. However, because of the latent nature of many claims, it is not possible to guarantee that the current levy percentage of 25% will remain adequate.</p> <p>The claims position has stabilised in recent years, and MMI are not anticipating a further levy in the short term. However, it is possible that the levy will ultimately be closer to 40%. Allowance has been made for this in the Insurance Reserve (see Note 8, which commences on page 63).</p>
Landfill aftercare	<p>The Council has responsibility for the aftercare of twelve former landfill sites. Restoration work was undertaken at all sites during the 1990's, when the sites were closed. However, the Council continues to monitor each site, and to operate and maintain pollution control infrastructure, to ensure that these sites do not bring harm to human health, property and the environment; the Council will have this obligation until the sites become inert.</p> <p>As the Council expects to discharge its environmental monitoring liabilities over a prolonged period, the provision has been discounted to the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation.</p>
Non-domestic rating appeals	<p>Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing and precepting authorities share proportionately the risks that the amount of non-domestic rates collectable could be affected by the requirement to make backdated refunds to non-domestic ratepayers who lodge appeals against the Valuation Rating Lists. For this reason, the Council's Balance Sheet includes an attributable share of the provisions raised by the billing authorities for non-domestic rating appeals.</p>
Other	<p>Various provisions have been established in respect of legal claims and constructive obligations.</p>

25.2 Contingencies

As detailed in Note 18, on page 78, the Council entered into a Private Finance Initiative contract for the design, construction and operation of a waste treatment plant in Basildon in May 2012. The relevant acceptance tests are still to be achieved and therefore the plant remains in the commissioning phase.

The Council has been involved in ongoing discussions with the operator UBB Waste (Essex) Ltd regarding the delay in achieving services commencement. Matters where no agreement had been reached were referred to the Court for consideration and to determine an outcome. On **18 June 2020** The High Court ruled in favour of the Council, and at a consequential hearing on 13 and 14 July 2020, awarded damages of **£9.038m** to February 2019 and **£99,563** per month thereafter (whilst the operator continued

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

operating the Facility outside of contract terms), totalling **£10.592m** to the date of the ruling plus interest. UBB Waste (Essex) Ltd were awarded a compensation event of **£745,000**.

On 27 July 2020 UBB Waste (Essex) Ltd appointed Administrative Receivers Geoffrey Paul Rowley (Office Holder IP Number: 8919) and David Shambrook (Office Holder IP Number: 22290), both of 2nd Floor, 110 Cannon Street, London EC4N 6EU. Capacity of Office Holder: Joint Administrative Receivers

On 11 September 2020 The High Court awarded the terms of payment from the Courts ruling of June 2020. Since the operator has entered administrative receivership, the Council is of the view that the award (**£10.592m**) and the payment (**£745,000**) remain contingent.

It is not possible to provide an indication of any additional costs that may be incurred as a result of any future court proceedings.

26. Unusable reserves

26.1 Introduction

The Council maintains several unusable reserves which are held for statutory reasons or to comply with proper accounting practice. The Council is not able to use these reserves to provide services. Notes 26.2 to 26.7 explain the purpose of the most significant of these unusable reserves and the movements in these reserves during the year.

26.2 Revaluation Reserve

This reserve records the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- Re-valued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost;
- Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation; or
- Disposed of and the gains are realised.

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

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The following table provides an analysis of the movements on the Revaluation Reserve:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
(601,983)	Balance as at 1 April	(634,629)
(135,013)	Revaluation of non current assets (increases)	(76,440)
51,095	Revaluation of non current assets (subsequent decreases)	79,108
(83,918)	(Surplus) / deficit on revaluations	2,668
14,555	Depreciation on revaluation gains	13,923
36,717	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	21,799
51,272	Amounts written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	35,722
(634,629)	Balance as at 31 March	(596,239)

26.3 Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The following table provides an analysis of the movements on the Capital Adjustment Account.

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
(1,208,599)	Balance as at 1 April	(1,150,386)
	Reversal of items related to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
78,170	Depreciation	78,813
53,668	Impairment of non-current assets	12,383
6	Impairment of assets held for sale	-
74,640	Revenue expenditure financed from capital under statute	59,194
72,931	Cost / value of assets disposed of during the year	37,630
279,415		188,020
	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	
(14,555)	Difference between fair value and historical cost depreciation	(13,923)
(36,717)	Revaluation gains outstanding for assets upon disposal	(21,799)
(51,272)		(35,722)
228,143	Net written out amount of the cost of non current assets consumed in the year	152,298
	Capital financing applied in the year	
(37,122)	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(39,711)
(19,580)	Capital receipts applied	(6,423)
	Capital grants and contributions applied to finance:	
(80,235)	Capital Expenditure	(78,968)
(28,781)	Revenue expenditure funded from capital	(46,789)
(2,962)	Application of grants from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(64)
(168,680)		(171,955)
19	Repayment of loans awarded for capital purposes	1,451
(1,269)	Movement in market value of investment properties	735
(1,150,386)	Balance as at 31 March	(1,167,857)

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

26.4 Financial Instruments Adjustment Account

This account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for income and expenses relating to certain financial instruments and for bearing losses or benefiting from gains per statutory provisions.

The Council uses the Account to manage:

- Premiums paid on the early redemption of loans, such that the expense is recognised in the General Fund over the unexpired term that was outstanding on the loans when they were redeemed; and
- Discounts received on the early redemption of loans, such that the benefit is recognised in the General Fund over a maximum period of 10 years.

2019/20				2020/21		
Premiums £000	Discounts £000	Total £000		Premiums £000	Discounts £000	Total £000
6,345	(3,342)	3,003	Balance as at 1 April	15,725	(3,273)	12,452
9,767	-	9,767	Premiums incurred in the year and charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	-	-	-
(129)	19	(110)	Amortisation of premiums / discounts to the General Fund	(127)	18	(109)
(258)	50	(208)	Transfer from the General Fund for the difference between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable / receivable to be recognised under statutory provisions relating to premiums and discounts on the early repayment of debt	(781)	48	(733)
15,725	(3,273)	12,452	Balance as at 31 March	14,817	(3,207)	11,610

26.5 Pension Reserve

The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require the Council to finance benefits earned as it makes employer's contributions to pension funds, or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible.

The Pension Reserve therefore absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions.

The balance on the Pensions Reserve shows the substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. Statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

2019/20				2020/21		
LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000		LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000
962,835	29,042	991,877	Balance as at 1 April	862,099	26,002	888,101
			Pension Reserve appropriation to / (from) the General Fund for:			
			Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the surplus/deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement			
113,228	582	113,810		151,693	556	152,249
(54,036)	(2,701)	(56,737)	Council contributions to the schemes	(63,809)	(2,621)	(66,430)
59,192	(2,119)	57,073	Total appropriation from Pension Reserve	87,884	(2,065)	85,819
(159,928)	(921)	(160,849)	Remeasurements of the net pension liability	67,051	1,705	68,756
862,099	26,002	888,101	Balance as at 31 March	1,017,034	25,642	1,042,676

26.6 Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of Council Tax and non-domestic rates income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as it falls due compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

2019/20				2020/21		
Council Tax £000	Non-domestic rates £000	Total £000		Council Tax £000	Non-domestic rates £000	Total £000
(11,045)	(678)	(11,723)	Balance at 1 April	(9,894)	809	(9,085)
			Amount by which income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements			
1,151	1,487	2,638		5,872	21,754	27,626
(9,894)	809	(9,085)	Balance as at 31 March	(4,022)	22,563	18,541

26.7 Accumulated Absences Account

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

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
10,533	Balance as at 1 April	11,409
(10,533)	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	(11,409)
11,409	Amounts accrued for at the end of the current year	15,750
876	Amount by which officer remuneration charged on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in accordance with statutory requirements	4,341
11,409	Balance as at 31 March	15,750

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

27. Cash Flows from operating, investing and financing activities

The cash flows from operating, investing and financing activities include the following items:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Cash flows from operating activities	
	Cash inflows	
(724,058)	Taxation	(758,924)
(919,570)	Grants	(1,054,556)
(291,036)	Sales of goods and rendering of services	(276,133)
(3,353)	Interest received	(1,477)
(334)	Dividends received	(952)
(1,938,351)		(2,092,042)
	Cash outflows	
449,632	Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	460,019
48,050	Interest paid	38,209
1,227,281	Cash paid to suppliers of goods and services	1,285,880
74,640	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	59,194
111,521	Other payments for operating activities	114,886
1,911,124		1,958,188
(27,227)	Net inflow of cash from operating activities	(133,854)
	Cash flows from investing activities	
	Cash inflows	
(29,161)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(7,783)
(523,713)	Proceeds from short and long term investments	(351,327)
(130,072)	Other receipts from investing activities	(194,902)
(682,946)		(554,012)
	Cash outflows	
115,344	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	137,322
548,300	Purchase of short and long term investments	331,400
1,986	Other payments for investing activities	662
665,630		469,384
(17,316)	Net inflow of cash from investing activities	(84,628)
	Cash flows generated from financing activities	
	Cash inflows	
(107,194)	Cash receipts of short and long term borrowing	(20,662)
(20,166)	Other receipts from financing activities	-
(127,360)		(20,662)
	Cash outflows	
17,770	Cash payments for the reduction of liabilities related to Finance Leases (incl. PFI contracts)	7,638
3,075	Repayment of short and long term borrowing	18,049
-	Other payments for financing activities	52,034
20,845		77,721
(106,515)	Net (inflow) / outflow of cash from financing activities	57,059
(151,058)	Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(161,423)

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

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

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

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

28. Changes in liabilities arising from financing activities

	Long term borrowing £000	Short term borrowing £000	Lease liabilities £000	Total £000
Balance at 1 April 2019	(511,798)	(8,572)	(138,908)	(659,278)
Cash flows	(87,143)	(16,976)	17,770	(86,349)
Non cash adjustments	-	-	(2,071)	(2,071)
Balance at 31 March 2020	(598,941)	(25,548)	(123,209)	(747,698)
Cash flows	12,543	(15,156)	7,638	5,025
Non cash adjustments	-	-	(130)	(130)
Balance at 31 March 2021	(586,398)	(40,704)	(115,701)	(742,803)

29. Termination benefits

The Council terminated the contracts of a number of employees during the year. The liabilities were recognised in the Cost of Services, in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as follows:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
85	Childrens and Families	-
122	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	-
236	Economic Development	-
2,189	Education and Skills	384
50	Environment and Climate Change Action	387
3	Finance, Property and Housing	52
86	Health and Adult Social Care	17
15	Infrastructure	-
	Recharged Strategic Support Services	
618	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	333
469	Finance, Property and Housing	78
30	Leader	-
189	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-
4,092	Total	1,251

Notes: The above figures include provision for termination benefits arising from formal plans for the restructuring of certain services, where actual exit packages have yet to be agreed at 31 March. Provision is raised on the basis of the best estimate of costs.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The numbers of exit packages agreed in each year are set out in the table below:

2019/20				Value of exit packages	2020/21			
No. packages agreed in the year			Total cost of packages £000		No. packages agreed in the year			Total cost of packages £000
Compulsory	Other	Total			Compulsory	Other	Total	
83	64	147	1,071	Less than £20,000	19	18	37	146
13	36	49	1,392	£20,000 to £39,999	2	3	5	149
14	10	24	1,772	£40,000 to £199,999	3	6	9	583
110	110	220	4,235	Total no. of agreed packages	24	27	51	878
			(143)	Other termination benefits				373
			4,092					1,251

The exit packages include all redundancy costs, pension contributions in respect of added years, ex gratia payments and other departure costs.

The Council is required to recognise the costs of termination benefits within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when it can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits, even if individual exit packages have yet to be agreed. For this reason, the total cost of packages agreed may differ from the amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in each year; the 'other termination benefits' line provides a reconciliation between the total cost of packages agreed and the amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

30. Pension Schemes accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes

The Council has two pension schemes which are accounted for as defined contribution schemes:

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita on behalf of the Department for Education. The scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries. The Teachers' Pension Scheme has in excess of **11,200** participating employers.

NHS Pension Scheme

Staff performing public health functions who were compulsorily transferred from a local primary care trust to the Council, and who had access to the NHS Pension Scheme on 31 March 2013, retained access to that Scheme on transfer to the Council on 1 April 2013.

The NHS Pension Scheme provides these employees with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on contribution rates set by the Secretary of State. The NHS Pension Scheme has approximately **8,300** participating employers.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

These schemes are defined benefit schemes. They are unfunded and the Scheme Administrators use notional funds as the basis for calculating the employer's contribution rates to be paid by the participating employers.

Due to the number of participating employers within the schemes, the Council is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the Schemes with enough reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, both schemes are accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

The following table shows the amounts the Council paid for pension costs in relation to these schemes:

2019/20				2020/21		
Teachers £000	NHS £000	Total £000		Teachers £000	NHS £000	Total £000
27,476	127	27,603	Employer's contributions	30,974	103	31,077
12,002	96	12,098	Employee contributions	11,885	81	11,966
39,478	223	39,701	Total	42,859	184	43,043

The Council's contributions are set in relation to the current service period only. As such, the Council is not entitled to, or liable for, any of the underlying assets or liabilities of the schemes.

The amounts in the above table reflect:

	Teachers		NHS	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Employer's contribution rate	16.48%, rising to 23.68% from Sept 2019	23.68%	16.88%	14.38%
Employee contribution rate	7.4% to 11.7%	7.4% to 11.7%	5.0% to 14.5%	5.0% to 14.5%

There were no contributions remaining payable as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: Nil).

The employer's contributions due to be paid in 2021/22 are estimated to be **£29.4m** for the teachers' pension scheme and **£105,000** for the NHS pension scheme.

The Council is responsible for all pension payments relating to added years that it has awarded to teachers, together with the related increases. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefit basis and are detailed in note 31 below.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

31. Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

31.1 Participation in Pension Schemes

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

The Council participates in two schemes:

- **The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)**

The LGPS is a defined benefit statutory scheme, administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulation 2013 and currently provides benefits based on career average revalued earnings.

The Administering Authority for the Fund is Essex County Council. The Essex Pension Fund Committee oversee the management of the Fund.

As administering authority to the Fund, Essex County Council, after consultation with the Fund Actuary and other relevant parties, is responsible for the preparation and maintenance of the Funding Strategy Statement.

Contributions are set every three years as a result of the actuarial valuation of the Fund required by the Regulations. The next actuarial valuation of the Fund will be carried out as at **31 March 2022** and will set contributions for the period from **1 April 2023** to **31 March 2026**. There are no minimum funding requirements in the LGPS but the contributions are generally set to target a funding level of 100% using the actuarial valuation assumptions.

In general, participating in a defined benefit pension scheme means that the Council is exposed to a number of risks:

- **Investment risk** - the Fund holds investments in asset classes, such as equities, which have volatile market values and while these assets are expected to provide real returns over the long-term, the short-term volatility can cause additional funding to be required if a deficit emerges.
- **Interest rate risk** - the Fund's liabilities are assessed using market yields on high quality corporate bonds to discount the liabilities. As the Fund holds assets such as equities the value of the assets and liabilities may not move in the same way.
- **Inflation risk** - all of the benefits under the Fund are linked to inflation and so deficits may emerge to the extent that the assets are not linked to inflation.
- **Longevity risk** - in the event that the members live longer than assumed a deficit will emerge in the Fund. There are also other demographic risks.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

In addition, as many unrelated employers participate in the Essex Pension Fund, there is an orphan liability risk where employers leave the Fund but with insufficient assets to cover their pension obligations so that the difference may fall on the remaining employers.

All of these risks may also benefit the Council (*e.g. higher than expected investment returns or employers leaving the Fund with excess assets which eventually get inherited by the remaining employers*). However, these risks are also mitigated, to a certain extent, by the statutory requirements to charge to the General Fund the amounts required by statute as described in Note 1.8.3.

- **Discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement in relation to the teachers' pension scheme**

This is an unfunded defined benefits arrangement, under which the liabilities are recognised when awards are made. However, there are no investment assets built up to meet these pensions liabilities, and cash must be generated to meet the actual pension payments as they eventually fall due.

31.2 Transactions relating to post-employment benefits

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Cost of Services) when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge the Council is required to make against Council Tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

2019/20				2020/21		
LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000		LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000
			Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement			
			Cost of Services			
90,828	-	90,828	Current service cost	128,297	-	128,297
2,877	-	2,877	Past service cost	681	-	681
(3,723)	-	(3,723)	(Gain) / loss on settlement	(3,344)	-	(3,344)
89,982	-	89,982		125,634	-	125,634
			Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure			
23,246	582	23,828	Net interest expense	26,059	556	26,615
113,228	582	113,810	Total charged to the Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	151,693	556	152,249
			Re-measurements of the net pensions liability			
172,085	-	172,085	Return on scheme assets	(603,722)	-	(603,722)
			Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in:			
(298,174)	(1,412)	(299,586)	Financial assumptions	764,783	2,378	767,161
(30,642)	(161)	(30,803)	Demographic assumptions	(51,277)	(333)	(51,610)
43,130	652	43,782	Experience (gain) / loss on defined benefit obligation	(42,733)	(340)	(43,073)
(46,327)	-	(46,327)	Other	-	-	-
(159,928)	(921)	(160,849)	Total charged to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	67,051	1,705	68,756
(46,700)	(339)	(47,039)	Total charged to Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	218,744	2,261	221,005
			Movement in Reserves Statement			
(113,228)	(582)	(113,810)	Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	(151,693)	(556)	(152,249)
54,036	2,701	56,737	Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year	63,809	2,621	66,430
(59,192)	2,119	(57,073)		(87,884)	2,065	(85,819)

31.3 Pensions assets and liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

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

2019/20				2020/21		
LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000		LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000
3,050,857	26,002	3,076,859	Present value of the defined benefit obligation	3,831,331	25,642	3,856,973
(2,188,758)	-	(2,188,758)	Fair value of plan assets	(2,814,297)	-	(2,814,297)
862,099	26,002	888,101	Net liability arising from defined benefit obligations	1,017,034	25,642	1,042,676

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Council has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total net deficit of the two Schemes of **£1.043bn** (2019/20: £888.101m) has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Council, as recorded in the Balance Sheet. However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Council remains healthy:

- The deficit on the Local Government Pension Scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the next twenty years; and
- Finance is only required to be raised to cover teachers' unfunded added years when the pensions are actually paid.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Scheme Liabilities

The following table provides a reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities:

2019/20				2020/21		
LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000		LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000
3,256,736	29,042	3,285,778	Balance as at 1 April	3,050,857	26,002	3,076,859
90,828	-	90,828	Current service cost	128,297	-	128,297
77,131	582	77,713	Interest cost	60,981	556	61,537
17,110	-	17,110	Contributions by scheme participants	18,520	-	18,520
			Remeasurement (gains)/losses:			
(30,642)	(161)	(30,803)	Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(51,277)	(333)	(51,610)
(298,174)	(1,412)	(299,586)	Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	764,783	2,378	767,161
43,130	652	43,782	Other	(42,733)	(340)	(43,073)
2,877	-	2,877	Past service costs	681	-	681
(100,568)	(2,701)	(103,269)	Benefits paid	(92,356)	(2,621)	(94,977)
(7,571)	-	(7,571)	Liabilities extinguished on settlements	(6,422)	-	(6,422)
3,050,857	26,002	3,076,859	Balance as at 31 March	3,831,331	25,642	3,856,973

Scheme Assets

The following table provides a reconciliation of the fair value of scheme assets:

2019/20				2020/21		
LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000		LGPS £000	Teachers £000	Total £000
2,293,901	-	2,293,901	Balance as at 1 April	2,188,758	-	2,188,758
53,885	-	53,885	Interest income	34,922	-	34,922
			Remeasurement gain/(loss)			
(172,085)	-	(172,085)	Return on plan assets (excl. amount incl in net interest expense)	603,722	-	603,722
46,327	-	46,327	Other	-	-	-
54,036	2,701	56,737	Contributions by the Council	63,809	2,621	66,430
17,110	-	17,110	Contributions from employees into the scheme	18,520	-	18,520
(100,568)	(2,701)	(103,269)	Benefits paid	(92,356)	(2,621)	(94,977)
(3,848)	-	(3,848)	Amounts made for settlements	(3,078)	-	(3,078)
2,188,758	-	2,188,758	Balance as at 31 March	2,814,297	-	2,814,297

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
£000	%		£000	%
1,281,161	58.5%	Equities	1,780,267	63.3%
94,339	4.3%	Gilts	71,705	2.5%
132,615	6.1%	Other bonds	136,900	4.9%
196,822	9.0%	Property	198,328	7.0%
90,977	4.2%	Cash and cash equivalents	70,890	2.5%
252,114	11.5%	Alternative assets	323,456	11.5%
140,730	6.4%	Other managed funds	232,751	8.3%
2,188,758	100.0%	Total assets	2,814,297	100.0%

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The percentages of the total Fund held in each asset class were as follows:

31 March 2020						31 March 2021				
UK		Overseas		Total		UK		Overseas		Total
Quoted	Unquoted	Quoted	Unquoted			Quoted	Unquoted	Quoted	Unquoted	
4.2%	-	49.2%	5.1%	58.5%	Equities	4.9%	-	53.7%	4.7%	63.3%
4.3%	-	-	-	4.3%	Gilts	2.5%	-	-	-	2.5%
6.1%	-	-	-	6.1%	Other bonds	4.9%	-	-	-	4.9%
2.5%	6.5%	-	-	9.0%	Property	2.0%	5.0%	-	-	7.0%
-	4.2%	-	-	4.2%	Cash and cash equivalents	-	2.5%	-	-	2.5%
-	0.7%	-	10.8%	11.5%	Alternative assets	-	0.6%	-	10.9%	11.5%
-	6.4%	-	-	6.4%	Other managed funds	-	8.3%	-	-	8.3%
17.1%	17.8%	49.2%	15.9%	100.0%	Total assets	14.3%	16.4%	53.7%	15.6%	100.0%

31.4 Basis for estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis to estimate the pensions that will be payable in future years. The liabilities have been assessed using the projected unit credit method which is dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels etc. The Pension Fund liabilities have been assessed by **Barnett Waddingham LLP**, an independent firm of actuaries. The liabilities have been estimated, based upon the results of the valuation as at **31 March 2019** which was carried out for funding purposes.

The significant assumptions used by the Actuary for the Local Government Pension Scheme were as follows:

Assumptions	2019/20	2020/21
▪ Rate of inflation		
- RPI	2.70%	3.20%
- CPI	1.90%	2.80%
▪ Rate of increase in salaries	2.90%	3.80%
▪ Rate of increase in pensions	1.90%	2.80%
▪ Discount rate	2.35%	2.00%
▪ Mortality assumptions for members retiring in normal health:		
- Life expectancy for future pensioners retiring in 20 years' time at 65:		
▪ Male	23.2 years	22.9 years
▪ Female	25.2 years	24.7 years
- Life expectancy of current pensioners retiring today aged 65:		
▪ Male	21.8 years	21.6 years
▪ Female	23.7 years	23.4 years
▪ Expected rate of return on assets in the scheme	-5%	29.30%

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The actuarial assumptions used in the calculation of the liabilities for Teachers' additional unfunded pensions were those shown on page 105 for the Local Government Pension Scheme, with the following exceptions:

Assumptions	2019/20	2020/21
▪ Rate of inflation		
- RPI	2.95%	3.50%
- CPI	1.95%	2.80%
▪ Rate of increase in pensions	1.95%	2.80%
▪ Discount rate	2.25%	1.70%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions used.

Sensitivity analysis has been undertaken, based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period. This assumes, for each change, that the assumption analysed changes, whilst all the other assumptions remain constant. In practice, changes in some of the assumptions may be inter-related.

The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme (i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method).

Local Government Pension Scheme	Effect of change in assumptions		
	£000	£000	£000
Adjustment to discount rate	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,757,879	3,831,331	3,906,294
Projected Service Cost	127,783	132,292	136,946
Adjustment to long term salary increase	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,836,560	3,831,331	3,826,147
Projected Service Cost	132,364	132,292	132,220
Adjustment to pension increases and deferred revaluation	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,900,403	3,831,331	3,763,559
Projected Service Cost	136,898	132,292	127,824
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	+ 1 year	None	- 1 year
Present value of total obligation	4,020,747	3,831,331	3,651,294
Projected Service Cost	138,272	132,292	126,543

Unfunded Teachers' Pensions	Effect of change in assumptions		
	£000	£000	£000
Adjustment to discount rate	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	25,449	25,642	25,838
Adjustment to pension increases and deferred revaluation	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	25,835	25,642	25,451
Adjustment to life expectancy assumptions	+ 1 year	None	- 1 year
Present value of total obligation	27,034	25,642	24,323

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis did not change from those used in the previous period.

31.5 Impact on the Council's Cash Flows

The objectives of the LGPS are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. There are no minimum funding requirements in the LGPS, but the contributions are generally set to target a funding level of 100% using the actuarial valuation assumptions. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The next triennial valuation is being carried out as at **31 March 2022** and will set the contributions for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

The total contributions expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Council in the year to 31 March 2022 is **£50.600m**. Although there are not expected to be any contributions with respect to active members, the total unfunded pensions in respect of teachers are estimated to be **£2.621m** as at 31 March 2022.

The weighted average duration of the pension obligation for the Local Government Pension Scheme members is **20** years. For the Teachers additional unfunded pensions, it is **8** years.

32. Audit costs

The following costs were incurred in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts and in respect of non-audit services provided by the Council's External Auditor:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Audit fees payable to the appointed auditor	
138	External audit services carried out by appointed auditor	169
12	Other services carried out by appointed auditor	12
150		181
	Rebates received in respect of fees paid in previous years	
-	Rebates received from Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA)	(15)
150	Net total	166

The fee for 'other services carried out by the appointed auditor' relates to the certification of the Teachers Pensions return, which is not covered by the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) certification arrangements, but external audit certification is nevertheless required by the grant awarding body.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

33. Members' allowances and expenses

The total of allowances and expenses paid to Members of the Council during the year amounted to:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Members allowances	
896	Basic allowances	877
620	Special responsibility allowances	628
1,516		1,505
60	Members expenses	10
1,576		1,515

34. Pooled budgets

The Council participates in three pooled budget arrangements:

- **Better Care Fund**

This arrangement comprises six pooled funds: a countywide pool, comprised of NHS contributions to social care (including reablement) and the Improved Better Care Fund and five other pools, comprised of the Disabled Facilities Grant, carers' breaks funding and CCGs' contributions to community health services.

Each pool is governed by a Section 75 Agreement, with an overarching collaboration agreement signed by the Council and each of the CCGs. For each service included within the Section 75 agreements, either the Council or a CCG is solely responsible for the delivery of the service.

Whilst the Better Care Fund was established as a pooled budget, the operation of the pool can involve the members ceding control of funds to a lead commissioner / principal or the arrangement being a joint operation.

- **Equipment Pool**

The purpose of this arrangement is to source, deliver, fit and refurbish equipment, adaptations and aids to daily living in service users' homes as part of an integrated community equipment service. Partners contribute based on their assumed activity levels.

- **Transforming Care Partnership Pool**

The aim of this arrangement is to ensure that people with learning disabilities, autism or both can live in the community, with the right support, thereby reducing their need for in-patient services and improving their quality of life.

All the current releasable funding for the hospital placements is paid into the pool, to fund commissioned hospital placements and community placements when people are discharged from hospital. If there is insufficient funding within the pool to fund all the community placements, the deficit is met by the local authority partner in whose administrative area the deficit occurs.

The contributions and expenses of the Better Care Fund Pool for 2020/21 were as follows:

2019/20								2020/21						
Basildon & Brentwood	Castle Point & Rochford	Mid Essex	North East Essex	West Essex	Central Pool	Total		Basildon & Brentwood	Castle Point & Rochford	Mid Essex	North East Essex	West Essex	Central Pool	Total
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
							Contributions							
(17,707)	-	-	-	-	-	(17,707)	Clinical Commissioning Groups	(18,646)	-	-	-	-	-	(18,646)
-	(11,908)	-	-	-	-	(11,908)	Basildon and Brentwood	-	-	-	-	-	-	(18,646)
-	-	(24,330)	-	-	-	(24,330)	Castle Point and Rochford	-	(12,462)	-	-	-	-	(12,462)
-	-	-	(23,495)	-	-	(23,495)	Mid Essex	-	-	(25,557)	-	-	-	(25,557)
-	-	-	-	(20,968)	-	(20,968)	North East Essex	-	-	-	(24,842)	-	-	(24,842)
-	-	-	-	-	(51,024)	(51,024)	West Essex	-	-	-	-	(21,299)	-	(21,299)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Essex County Council	-	-	-	-	-	(52,955)	(52,955)
(17,707)	(11,908)	(24,330)	(23,495)	(20,968)	(51,024)	(149,432)	Total Contributions	(18,646)	(12,462)	(25,557)	(24,842)	(21,299)	(52,955)	(155,761)
							Expenditure							
10,812	-	-	-	-	-	10,812	Clinical Commissioning Groups	11,393	-	-	-	-	-	11,393
-	7,097	-	-	-	-	7,097	Basildon and Brentwood	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,404
-	-	14,409	-	-	-	14,409	Castle Point and Rochford	-	7,404	-	-	-	-	15,147
-	-	-	14,612	-	-	14,612	Mid Essex	-	-	15,147	-	-	-	15,452
-	-	-	-	13,140	-	13,140	North East Essex	-	-	-	15,452	-	-	15,452
6,895	4,811	9,921	8,883	7,828	51,024	89,362	West Essex	-	-	-	-	13,046	-	13,046
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Essex County Council	7,253	5,058	10,410	9,390	8,253	52,955	93,319
17,707	11,908	24,330	23,495	20,968	51,024	149,432	Total Expenditure	18,646	12,462	25,557	24,842	21,299	52,955	155,761
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Net (surplus) / deficit	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

The contributions and expenses of the two other pooled budget arrangements were as follows:

2019/20					2020/21			
Equipment		Transforming Care			Equipment		Transforming Care	
Contributions	Expenditure	Contributions	Expenditure		Contributions	Expenditure	Contributions	Expenditure
£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000
(9,013)	9,013	(334)	2,825	Local authorities				
-	-	(83)	226	Essex County Council	(8,686)	8,686	(1,169)	4,394
(1,261)	1,361	(83)	67	Southend Council	-	-	(94)	241
				Thurrock Council	(1,242)	1,242	(94)	109
				Clinical Commissioning Groups				
-	-	(415)	537	Basildon and Brentwood	-	-	(273)	358
-	-	(1,911)	461	Castle Point and Rochford	-	-	(2,469)	301
(997)	997	(1,031)	680	Mid Essex	(1,214)	1,214	(989)	695
-	-	(1,297)	888	North East Essex	-	-	(1,248)	848
-	-	(613)	397	West Essex	-	-	(664)	294
-	-	(248)	215	Southend	-	-	(263)	259
-	-	(856)	575	Thurrock	-	-	(823)	587
				NHS Trusts				
(848)	848	-	-	East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust	(995)	995	-	-
(61)	61	-	-	Mid Essex Hospital Service NHS Trust	(35)	35	-	-
(318)	318	-	-	Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust	(285)	285	-	-
(708)	708	-	-	North East London Foundation Trust	(641)	641	-	-
(13,206)	13,306	(6,871)	6,871	Total	(13,098)	13,098	(8,086)	8,086

35. Officers' remuneration

Officers' remuneration includes all sums paid to or receivable by employees, expense allowances chargeable to tax and the money value of benefits. It should be emphasised that this relates to payments to individuals, so part year employment can produce distortions in the presentation.

Pension payments made, whether from a funded or unfunded scheme, do not count as remuneration for this purpose.

The numbers of officers whose remuneration amounted to £50,000 or more, grouped in rising bands of £5,000, are shown below.

2019/20			Remuneration band	2020/21		
Non-schools	Schools	Total		Non-schools	Schools	Total
161	116	277	£50,000 to £54,999	202	133	335
143	77	220	£55,000 to £59,999	181	69	250
73	62	135	£60,000 to £64,999	153	66	219
32	54	86	£65,000 to £69,999	56	62	118
23	28	51	£70,000 to £74,999	27	34	61
48	16	64	£75,000 to £79,999	47	17	64
23	10	33	£80,000 to £84,999	34	14	48
13	5	18	£85,000 to £89,999	12	6	18
6	4	10	£90,000 to £94,999	10	5	15
8	1	9	£95,000 to £99,999	15	1	16
3	-	3	£100,000 to £104,999	2	2	4
2	2	4	£105,000 to £109,999	5	1	6
13	-	13	£110,000 to £114,999	4	-	4
4	-	4	£115,000 to £119,999	12	-	12
3	-	3	£120,000 to £124,999	3	-	3
1	-	1	£125,000 to £129,999	1	-	1
1	-	1	£130,000 to £134,999	-	-	-
2	-	2	£140,000 to £144,999	-	-	-
1	-	1	£145,000 to £149,999	-	-	-
-	-	-	£155,000 to £159,999	1	-	1
560	375	935	Total	765	410	1,175

Notes: Senior officers whose individual remuneration is disclosed in note 36 (page 111) are excluded from the remuneration bandings shown in the above analysis.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

36. Senior officers' remuneration

36.1 Senior officers

Senior officers include all members of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team and other statutory officers.

36.2 Disclosure of senior officers' remuneration

Senior Officers' remuneration is disclosed overleaf.

Where a senior officer's annual salary is **£50,000** or more, but less than **£150,000**, remuneration is disclosed individually by way of job title. For those senior officers whose salary is **£150,000** or more, their name is also disclosed.

The employers' contribution to pensions are not amounts paid to individual members of staff, rather they reflect amounts paid by the Council into the Pension Fund; these contributions have been made at the level determined at the last actuarial valuation as necessary to meet the cost of the future pension accrual.

Bonus payments have been disclosed in the year of payment but relate to performance in the preceding financial year.

36.3 Fees paid in respect of individuals engaged on an interim basis

The Council also secured services from various other individuals on an interim basis during 2020/21. The fees payable by the Council in respect of some of these individuals amounted to **£150,000** or more in 2020/21, as follows:

2019/20 £	Position	2020/21 £
61,877	Lead Content Designer (Lino Boga-Rios)	206,424
118,501	Head of Portfolio (Graham Bright)	185,497

The amounts disclosed in respect of these individuals are the costs incurred by the Council to secure their services. The amounts received by these individuals will have been lower.

2019/20	Notes	Remuneration						
		Salaries, fees and allowances £	Bonus payments £	Expense allowances / benefits £	Compensation for loss of employment £	Total remuneration Excl pension contributions £	Employer's contribution to pension £	Total remuneration Incl. pension contributions £
Chief Executive - Mr Gavin Jones		196,950	-	14,336	-	211,286	31,709	242,995
Executive Director, Adult Social Care - Mr Nicholas Presmeg	(i)	164,055	-	-	-	164,055	25,286	189,341
Executive Director, Children and Families - Ms Helen Lincoln	(ii)	164,055	10,000	1,939	-	175,994	26,896	202,890
Executive Director, Corporate and Customer Services	(iii)	122,174	-	1,939	-	124,113	10,936	135,049
Executive Director, Corporate Development - Mr Jason Kitcat	(iv)	29,676	-	319	163,838	193,833	4,214	198,047
Executive Director, Finance and Technology	(v)	140,203	-	1,451	-	141,654	21,856	163,510
Executive Director, Economy, Localities and Public Health - Mr Mark Carroll		173,650	-	1,939	-	175,589	26,831	202,420
Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities - Dr Michael Gogarty	(vi)	165,087	-	3,112	-	168,199	26,579	194,778
Director, Legal and Assurance	(vii)	130,333	-	-	-	130,333	20,581	150,914
Director, Organisation Development and People		144,911	-	1,975	-	146,886	22,495	169,381

Notes:

(i) The Council's Executive Director, Adult Social Care fulfils the statutory role of Director for Adult Social Services (DASS).	(ii) The Executive Director, Children and Families fulfils the statutory role of Director of Children's Services, appointed under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004.
(iii) The Executive Director, Corporate and Customer Services fulfilled the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 until 31 July 2019 when reducing to a three-day working week. The Executive Director reverted to full time working in March 2020, to help with the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	(iv) The Executive Director, Corporate Development , left the Council on 31 May 2019.
	(v) The Executive Director, Finance and Technology , has fulfilled the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 since 1 August 2019.
(vi) The Council's Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities fulfils the statutory role of Director of Public Health.	(vii) The Council's Director, Legal and Assurance fulfils the statutory role of Monitoring Officer.

2020/21	Notes	Remuneration						
		Salaries, fees and allowances £	Bonus payments £	Expense allowances / benefits £	Compensation for loss of employment £	Total remuneration Excl pension contributions £	Employer's contribution to pension £	Total remuneration Incl. pension contributions £
Chief Executive - Mr Gavin Jones		196,950	-	14,117	-	211,067	38,799	249,866
Executive Director, Adult Social Care - Mr Nicholas Presmeg	(i)	167,196	-	-	-	167,196	31,559	198,755
Executive Director, Children and Families and Education - Ms Helen Lincoln	(ii)	167,196	-	1,724	-	168,920	31,559	200,479
Executive Director, Corporate and Customer Services - Mrs Margaret Lee		169,898	-	1,724	-	171,622	-	171,622
Executive Director, Finance and Technology - Miss Nicole Wood	(iii)	165,605	-	1,724	-	167,329	31,506	198,835
Executive Director, Place and Public Health - Mr Mark Carroll		176,983	-	1,724	-	178,707	33,487	212,194
Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities - Dr Michael Gogarty	(iv)	168,570	-	3,012	-	171,582	33,173	204,755
Director, Legal and Assurance	(v)	136,987	-	-	-	136,987	26,494	163,481
Director, Organisation Development and People		145,300	-	1,724	-	147,024	28,132	175,156

Notes

(i) The Council's Executive Director, Adult Social Care fulfils the statutory role of Director for Adult Social Services (DASS).	(ii) The Executive Director, Children and Families fulfils the statutory role of Director of Children's Services, appointed under Section 18 of the Children Act 2004.
(iii) The Executive Director, Finance and Technology , fulfils the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.	(iv) The Council's Director, Wellbeing, Public Health and Communities fulfils the statutory role of Director of Public Health.
(v) The Council's Director, Legal and Assurance fulfils the statutory role of Monitoring Officer.	

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

37. Related parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council, or to be controlled or influenced by the Council. The intention, in making this disclosure, is to make explicit 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.

Related party	Declaration
UK Government	The UK Government has effective control over the general operations of the Council. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides a significant 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. Grants received from government departments are detailed in notes 12 (page 68) and 13 (page 68).
Elected members	<p>Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. The Council's Constitution requires members to declare their pecuniary interests and any other interests that could reasonably be regarded as likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest in a Register of Interests and at relevant meetings. The Register of Interests is published on the Council's website. In addition, members are asked to declare separately any related party transactions with the Authority.</p> <p>Based on these declarations, the following matters require disclosure as related party transactions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Essex Foundation The Active Essex Foundation supports the most deprived communities across Essex through the promotion of physical activity and sport. The Council paid grants of £8,000 to the Foundation during 2020/21 (2019/20: £37,000). Cllr Ray Gooding is a trustee of the Active Essex Foundation. Cllr Gooding was the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills throughout 2020/21. Anglian Community Enterprise (ACE) The Anglian Community Enterprise (ACE) is a community interest company that provides community health and well-being services. The Council made payments totalling £18.211m to ACE in 2020/21 (including £15.216m via the Better Care Fund) (2019/20: £17.717m, including £14.390m via the Better Care Fund). Cllr Julie Young is a Director of ACE. Cllr Young was Vice Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee throughout 2020/21. Colchester United FC Football in the Community The objectives of this charity are to enrich the lives of people within the community through physical activity and the brand of Colchester United. The Council made payments to this charity in 2020/21 of £61,000, related to school holiday activity clubs. Cllr Anne Turrell is a trustee of this charity. Cllr Turrell was a member of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee throughout 2020/21.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Related party	Declaration
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) This is a Member led Association of Essex Local Councils. Through membership of the EALC, the Parish and Town Councils of Essex are affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils. The Council provided grants totalling £931,000 to this organisation in 2020/21 (2019/20: £30,000). Much of the grant funding awarded in 2020/21 was COVID-19 related, including for emergency foodbanks and to assist communities during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Cllr John Jowers is the current president of the EALC. He was the Chairman of the County Council during 2020/21.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essex Cares Ltd Essex Cares Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council (see page 117 for further details). Cllr Penny Channer was a non-executive director of Essex Cares throughout 2020/21; she received an allowance of £12,000 from Essex Cares in respect of this role in 2020/21 (2019/20: £12,000). Cllr Channer was a member of the Council's Audit, Governance and Standards Committee during 2020/21.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mosaic Publicity Ltd During 2020/21, the Council made payments to this company of £7,000 for services provided to the Council. Cllr Kevin Bentley is a Director of this company. Cllr Bentley was Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure during 2020/21.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playout Group A group of companies incorporated in October 2018 and wholly owned by Ormiston Families; provide a range of childcare and education services for children from 0 to 14 years. Cllr Derek Louis is a Director of these companies. During 2020/21, the Council made payments to these companies amounting to £100,000 (2019/20: £104,000). Cllr Louis was a member of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee for the second half of the 2020/21 financial year.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide Community Interest Company The principle activities of the company are the provision of integrated health and social care. Cllr Derrick Louis is the chairman of Provide. The Council made payments totalling £30.223m to this organisation in 2020/21 (including £13.888m via the Better Care Fund) (2019/20: £25.424m).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Road Visions Open Road is a drug and alcohol recovery support charity. It supports individuals on their journey to recovery from drug and alcohol addiction. The Council provided £2.171m to the charity in 2020/21 (2019/20: £1.6m). Cllr John Aldridge is a trustee of the charity. He was a member of the Development and Regulation Committee and the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee throughout 2020/21.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Related party	Declaration
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association Voluntary Services (RRAVS) The RRAVS is an umbrella organisation representing the interests of all voluntary and charitable groups in the area. The Council provided £53,000 to this organisation during 2020/21 (2019/20: £45,000). Cllr June Lumley is a trustee of this charity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) The RCCE is a registered charity that works with local community groups in villages and market towns across the County. The Council provided £1.159m to the charity during 2020/21 (2019/20: £1.076m). Cllr Simon Walsh, who was the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action throughout, is a trustee of the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safe Steps This charity operates projects for the benefit of domestic abuse victims in Essex. The Council provided funding of £188,000 to this charity in 2020/21. Cllr Andrew Sheldon's partner is a trustee of this charity. Cllr Sheldon was Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families during 2020/21.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome This charity's aim is to preserve the Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome. The Council loaned £200,000 to this charity in 2013, of which £125,000 was outstanding at 1 April 2020. The Council agreed to reduce the outstanding balance on the loan to £50,000 during 2020/21. The Charity paid the outstanding principal sum of £50,000 in September 2020 (2019/20: £28,000). Cllr John Aldridge and Cllr Mark Platt are trustees of this charity. Cllr Platt was the Deputy to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change Action throughout 2020/21. Cllr Platt is also a member of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tendring Eldercare This is a charity which seeks to relieve elderly people in Tendring who are in need, and to preserve and protect the health of those caring for elderly people by offering a respite service. The Council provided £72,000 to this charity in 2020/21 (2019/20: £100,000). Cllr Mark Platt is a trustee of this charity.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wyvern Community Transport This charity provides transport to people who find mainstream public transport difficult to access. The Council provided £127,000 to this charity in 2020/21 (2019/20: £125,000). Cllr June Lumley is a trustee of this charity.
	The total of members' allowances paid is shown in note 33 (page 108).
Officers	Members of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, and other officers with independent statutory powers, can influence significantly the policies of the authority. However, officers are bound by a Code of Conduct which seeks to prevent related parties exerting undue influence over the Council. In addition, they are required to declare any transactions with the Council.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Related party	Declaration
Essex Pension Fund	<p>The Council administers the Essex Pension Fund on behalf of its employees and those of the Essex district councils and other admitted bodies.</p> <p>The Council charged £3.437m for administering the Fund during 2020/21, of which £3,000 was outstanding at 31 March 2021 (2019/20: £3.298m, of which £545,000 was outstanding at 31 March 2020).</p>
Essex Cares Ltd	<p>Essex Cares Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council. It provides services for people requiring care, support and assistance living in the community. Essex Cares' transactions are consolidated fully within the Council's Group Accounts, which are set out on pages 120 to 134.</p> <p>The Council commissioned services from Essex Cares Ltd to the value of £44.508m in 2020/21 (2019/20: £39.228m).</p> <p>The Council provided financial, internal audit and other support services to Essex Cares Ltd during 2020/21; the value of these services in 2020/21 was £350,000 (2019/20: £390,000).</p> <p>The Council also provided cash management support to Essex Cares Ltd. The Council paid no interest on the amounts it borrowed from Essex Cares Ltd during 2020/21 (2019/20: paid interest of £9,000 (net) on amounts it borrowed, £100 of which was outstanding at 31 March 2020).</p> <p>As noted on page 115, Cllr Penny Channer has held a position on the Essex Cares' Board of Directors throughout 2020/21.</p>
Essex Housing Development LLP	<p>The Council is a member and designated member of the Essex Housing Development LLP. It is a subsidiary of the Council for accounting purposes, meaning that the LLP's transactions are consolidated within the Council's Group Accounts, which are set out on pages 120 to 134.</p> <p>The Council provided financial and other support services to the Essex Housing Development LLP during 2020/21. The LLP also purchased staff services from the Council to enable it to offer its services. The value of these support and other services in 2020/21 was £541,000, all of which was outstanding at 31 March 2021.</p> <p>The Council also allocated grants to the LLP in 2020/21 of £282,000 towards the cost of two housing projects being undertaken by the LLP.</p>
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex	<p>The Council seconded an officer to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex for part of 2020/21 to fulfil the statutory role of Chief Financial Officer, at a cost of £45,000 (all of which was outstanding at 31 March 2021).</p>
South East Local Enterprise Partnership	<p>The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (South East LEP) is a business-led, public / private body established to drive economic growth across East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. It has a range of members (including representatives from businesses, local authorities and higher / further education).</p> <p>The South East LEP secured £77.873m from the Government's Local Growth Fund in 2020/21 to support economic growth in the area, of which £33.429m was allocated to the Council to fund major economic growth and transport schemes (2019/20: £102.737m of which £18.519m was allocated to the Council for major transport schemes).</p> <p>In addition, the South East LEP secured £42.5m from the Government's Getting Building</p>

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

Related party	Declaration
	<p>Fund in 2020/21 to support economic recovery in the region, of which £17.533m was allocated to the Council to fund projects prioritised by the South East LEP and agreed with the Government.</p> <p>The Local Growth and Getting Building funding allocated to the Council by the South East LEP followed a competitive bidding process.</p> <p>The Council received a loan from the South East LEP in 2020/21 of £1.350m which was allocated from its Growing Places Fund for the purposes of financing capital expenditure by the Council on an approved project. The Council did not repay any of the principal sums borrowed from the South East LEP in previous years during 2020/21 (2019/20: £300,000).</p>

38. Accounting for schools

All locally maintained schools are deemed to be entities controlled by the Council, which means their transactions, unspent resources and current assets and liabilities are consolidated into the Council's single entity accounts.

With regard to Property, Plant and Equipment, the Council only recognises the assets of its Community and Foundation Schools (other than those owned by religious bodies), and the playing fields for all categories of local maintained schools, in its Balance Sheet. It does not recognise the school building assets of the other categories of local maintained school, as there is no evidence that the rights of ownership for these buildings have been assigned either to the school governing bodies or to the Council, and it is therefore assumed that the Trustees have retained their substantive rights to take back the school property without causal action by the schools. However, the Trustees are, by Regulation, required to give a minimum of two years' notice of their intention to terminate a school's occupancy of a site, to allow the Council and/or school governing body time to make alternative arrangements for the pupils.

The number of locally maintained schools deemed to be controlled by the Council is as follows:

2019/20						2020/21				
Nursery schools	Primary Schools	Secondary schools	Special schools	Total		Nursery schools	Primary Schools	Secondary schools	Special schools	Total
2	116	-	6	124	Community schools	2	110	-	6	118
-	27	1	1	29	Foundation schools	-	27	1	1	29
-	4	-	-	4	Foundation schools (C of E)	-	4	-	-	4
-	43	-	-	43	Voluntary controlled schools	-	40	-	-	40
-	45	3	-	48	Voluntary aided schools	-	41	3	-	44
2	235	4	7	248	Total	2	222	4	7	235

The financial relationship between the Council and the schools it maintains is set out in a 'Scheme for Financing Schools'. The Scheme is produced in line with statutory requirements and is subject to approval by members of the local Schools' Forum representing maintained schools. It deals with financial management issues, and sets out the approach to, and existence of, surplus and deficit balances in schools.

Statement of Accounts - Notes to the Financial Statements

The Scheme allows schools to carry forward from one financial year to the next any shortfall in expenditure relative to the school's budget share for the year plus/minus any balance brought forward from the previous year. The scheme also contains a provision which has the effect of carrying forward deficit balances but providing for deficits to be deducted from the following year's budget share. The scheme makes it clear that the Council cannot write off the deficit balance of any school. The Council can only give assistance towards elimination of a deficit balance from the Council's own schools budget (budget held centrally) where this has been agreed by the Secretary of State.

Note 14 on the Dedicated Schools Grant (see page 70) shows the total of the Individual Schools budget, which is divided into a budget share for each maintained school.

The reduction in the number of locally maintained schools between 2019/20 and 2020/21 shown in the above table primarily results from schools converting to academy status during the year.

Academy schools are publicly funded independent schools that are held accountable through a legally binding 'funding agreement' with the Government. This means that they cease to be local maintained schools upon conversion. A school wishing to convert to academy status must apply to the Department for Education, following consultation with such persons as the school thinks appropriate.

The conversion process usually involves at least five elements:

- The setting up of an academy trust.
- Putting in place a funding agreement between the academy trust and the Secretary of State for the running and funding of the academy school.
- Transferring the employment of the staff of the school from the local authority or governing body (as applicable) to the academy trust.
- Negotiating the transfer of assets and contracts of the school from the local authority and/or governing body to the academy trust.
- Arranging for the academy trust to have use of the land and buildings of the school(s), usually by way of a 125-year lease with the local authority or the transfer of the freehold of the land, as applicable.

To the extent that the land and buildings of a school converting to academy status are either leased by, or transferred from, the Council, or school governing body, the Property, Plant and Equipment is removed from the Council's Balance Sheet, and a loss on disposal is reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (as a component of 'Other Operating Expenditure').

39. Events after the Reporting Date

The Statement of Accounts was certified by the Executive Director, Finance and Technology on **30 June 2021**. Events taking place after this date were not reflected in the financial statements or notes.

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Introduction

In order to provide a full picture of the Council's economic activities and financial position, the accounting statements of the Council and Essex Cares Ltd have been consolidated. The Group Accounts are presented in addition to the Council's 'single entity' financial statements and comprise:

- Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- Group Movement in Reserves Statement
- Group Balance Sheet
- Group Cash Flow Statement.

These statements (*the purposes of which are explained on page 29*), together with those explanatory notes that are considered necessary in addition to those accompanying the Council's 'single entity' accounts, and accounting policies, are set out in the following pages, as detailed below.

Contents	Page
Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	121
Group Movement in Reserves Statement	122
Group Balance Sheet	123
Group Cash Flow Statement	125
Notes to the Group Accounts	126

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 31st March 2021

2019/20					2020/21			
Gross expenditure £000	Government grants £000	Other Income £000	Net expenditure £000		Gross expenditure £000	Government grants £000	Other income £000	Net expenditure £000
154,969	(16,381)	(7,741)	130,847	Children and Families	169,390	(24,412)	(7,993)	136,985
31,317	(182)	(9,498)	21,637	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	34,980	(15,341)	(6,379)	13,260
18,099	(2,118)	(1,121)	14,860	Economic Development	27,019	(25,063)	(892)	1,064
				Education and Skills				
547,362	(508,393)	(37,104)	1,865	Dedicated Schools Budget	541,623	(541,486)	(22,248)	(22,111)
271,473	(26,604)	(43,121)	201,748	Non Dedicated Schools Budget	196,861	(38,315)	(36,666)	121,880
96,187	(1,824)	(9,194)	85,169	Environment and Climate Change Action	100,807	(6,176)	(5,323)	89,308
16,106	(247)	(901)	14,958	Finance, Property and Housing	12,769	(331)	(13,643)	(1,205)
673,291	(107,587)	(150,406)	415,298	Health and Adult Social Care	768,525	(167,752)	(175,463)	425,310
95,460	(4,895)	(17,420)	73,145	Infrastructure	111,054	(6,899)	(29,687)	74,468
953	(43)	143	1,053	Leader	4,138	(286)	(8)	3,844
1,942	-	(128)	1,814	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	3,074	(279)	(144)	2,651
				Recharged Strategic Support Services				
75,036	-	-	75,036	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	86,086	-	-	86,086
19,162	-	-	19,162	Finance, Property and Housing	20,296	-	-	20,296
2,384	-	-	2,384	Leader	3,124	-	-	3,124
8,836	-	-	8,836	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	10,597	-	-	10,597
2,012,577	(668,274)	(276,491)	1,067,812	Cost of services - continuing operations	2,090,343	(826,340)	(298,446)	965,557
49,504	-	-	49,504	Other Operating Expenditure	35,149	-	-	35,149
123,348	-	(58,708)	64,640	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	99,017	-	(38,199)	60,818
-	(329,416)	(721,420)	(1,050,836)	Taxation and non specific grant income	-	(364,569)	(731,298)	(1,095,867)
2,185,429	(997,690)	(1,056,619)	131,120	(Surplus) / deficit on Provision of Services	2,224,509	(1,190,909)	(1,067,943)	(34,343)
			-	Tax expenses of subsidiary				-
			131,120	Group (surplus) / deficit				(34,343)
			(83,918)	(Surplus) / deficit arising on revaluation of non-current assets				2,668
			(163,843)	Re-measurements of the net defined benefits pension liability				66,750
			(247,761)	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				69,418
			(116,641)	Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				35,075

Note: The service groupings shown above reflect the alignment of spending to Cabinet Members, according to their specific responsibilities for discharging the functions of the Cabinet during 2020/21; comparative figures for 2019/20 have been restated on a consistent basis.

Group Movement in Reserves Statement

For the years ended 31st March 2020 and 31st March 2021

	Usable Reserves							Total	Total	Analysis of Reserves	
	Earmarked General Reserves £000	General Fund Balance £000	Authority share of Profit and Loss Reserve of Subsidiary £000	Authority share of Pension Reserve of Subsidiary £000	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve £000	Capital Grants Unapplied Account £000	Total Usable Reserves £000	Unusable Reserves £000	Reserves £000	Total Authority Reserves £000	Authority Share of Reserves of Subsidiary £000
Balance at 31 March 2019	(294,878)	(56,610)	(4,516)	(5,943)	-	(4,220)	(366,167)	(820,441)	(1,186,608)	(1,176,149)	(10,459)
Restatement of opening balances											
Reclassification of financial assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjustment for credit loss allowances	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjustment for modified loans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjusted Balance at 1 April 2019	(294,878)	(56,610)	(4,516)	(5,943)	-	(4,220)	(366,167)	(820,441)	(1,186,608)	(1,176,149)	(10,459)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/20											
Total Comprehensive Expenditure and Income	-	131,513	(393)	(2,994)	-	-	128,126	(244,767)	(116,641)	(113,254)	(3,387)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding under regulations	-	(175,481)	-	-	(9,581)	2,962	(182,100)	182,100	-	-	-
Net (increase)/decrease before transfers to earmarked reserves	-	(43,968)	(393)	(2,994)	(9,581)	2,962	(53,974)	(62,667)	(116,641)	(113,254)	(3,387)
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(44,139)	44,139	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in 2019/20	(44,139)	171	(393)	(2,994)	(9,581)	2,962	(53,974)	(62,667)	(116,641)	(113,254)	(3,387)
Balance at 31 March 2020	(339,017)	(56,439)	(4,909)	(8,937)	(9,581)	(1,258)	(420,141)	(883,108)	(1,303,249)	(1,289,403)	(13,846)
Movement in Reserves during 2020/21											
Total Comprehensive Expenditure and Income	-	(33,001)	(1,342)	(2,006)	-	-	(36,349)	71,424	35,075	38,423	(3,348)
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding under regulations	-	(133,194)	-	-	(1,326)	(1,014)	(135,534)	135,534	-	-	-
Net (increase)/decrease before transfers to earmarked reserves	-	(166,195)	(1,342)	(2,006)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(171,883)	206,958	35,075	38,423	(3,348)
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(154,538)	154,538	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Increase) / decrease in 2020/21	(154,538)	(11,657)	(1,342)	(2,006)	(1,326)	(1,014)	(171,883)	206,958	35,075	38,423	(3,348)
Balance at 31 March 2021	(493,555)	(68,096)	(6,251)	(10,943)	(10,907)	(2,272)	(592,024)	(676,150)	(1,268,174)	(1,250,980)	(17,194)

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Group Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

31 March 2020	Note		31 March 2021
£000			£000
		Property, Plant and Equipment	
		Operational assets	
1,398,920		Land and buildings	1,344,992
10,192		Vehicles, plant and equipment	7,521
1,180,934		Infrastructure	1,227,022
3,275		Community assets	3,671
		Non operational assets	
137,519		Assets under construction	162,180
52,338		Surplus assets held pending disposal	53,872
2,783,178		Total Property, Plant and Equipment	2,799,258
14,667		Heritage assets	14,678
39,181		Investment property	38,446
8,792		Intangible assets	5,909
12,705		Long term investments	11,167
15,698		Long term debtors	10,924
2,874,221		Long term assets	2,880,382
115,191		Short term investments	96,595
10,342		Inventories	8,122
135,214	5	Short term debtors	176,188
326,328		Cash and cash equivalents	504,948
2,413		Assets held for sale	6,438
589,488		Current assets	792,291
(17,718)		Bank overdraft	(34,632)
(23,571)		Short-term borrowing	(35,559)
(327,128)	5	Creditors	(338,831)
(31,694)		Revenue grant receipts in advance	(30,368)
(69,181)		Capital grant receipts in advance	(102,493)
-		Donated assets account	(2,534)
(13,350)		Provisions (current)	(12,734)
(7,629)		Finance lease obligations - short term	(12,595)
(490,271)		Current liabilities	(569,746)
(1,215)		Long term creditors	(1,432)
(1,956)		Revenue grant receipts in advance (long term)	-
(25,922)		Capital grant receipts in advance (non current)	(60,266)
(33,755)		Provisions (non-current)	(37,721)
(598,941)		Long term borrowing	(586,398)
		Other long term liabilities	
(115,580)		Finance lease obligations	(103,106)
(10,926)		Deferred credits	(10,340)
(881,894)	6	Net Pensions liability	(1,035,490)
(1,670,189)		Long term liabilities	(1,834,753)
1,303,249		Net Assets	1,268,174

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Group Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

31 March 2020	Note		31 March 2021
£000			£000
		Usable reserves	
(339,017)	6	Earmarked reserves	(493,555)
(56,439)		General Fund Balance	(68,096)
(4,909)		Profit and Loss reserve	(6,251)
(8,937)		Pension reserve	(10,943)
(9,581)		Usable capital receipts reserve	(10,907)
(1,258)		Capital grants unapplied	(2,272)
(420,141)			(592,024)
		Unusable reserves	
(634,629)	6	Revaluation reserve	(596,239)
(1,150,386)		Capital Adjustments Account	(1,167,857)
12,452		Financial Instruments Adjustment Account	11,610
(636)		Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account	(560)
888,101		Pension reserve	1,042,676
(334)		Deferred capital receipts	(71)
(9,085)		Collection Fund Adjustment Account	18,541
11,409		Accumulating Compensated Absences Adjustment Account	15,750
(883,108)			(676,150)
(1,303,249)		Total Reserves	(1,268,174)

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Group Cash Flow Statement

For the year ended 31st March 2021

2019/20 £000	Notes		2020/21 £000
(29,722)	7	Operating activities	(137,827)
(16,397)	↓	Investing activities	(84,106)
(104,946)	↓	Financing activities	60,227
(151,065)		Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(161,706)
157,545		Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April	308,610
308,610		Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March	470,316

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Notes to the Group Accounts

1. Group boundary

The Council has an interest in several entities, the most significant of which are Essex Cares Ltd and Essex Housing Development LLP.

Essex Cares Ltd was incorporated in October 2008 and was established by the Council to provide services for people living in the Community who require care, support and assistance. Essex Cares Ltd is a company limited by shares. Essex County Council owns **100%** of the ordinary shares of the Essex Cares Ltd group, which are vested with the Council as a corporate shareholder.

The Essex Housing Development LLP was registered on 26 August 2020 with the intention of helping address a shortfall in general, specialist and affordable housing within Essex. Essex Housing Development is a Limited Liability Partnership with two members and two designated members. The Council is a member and designated member with a **99%** interest in the LLP; Seax Trading Ltd is a member and a designated member with a **1%** interest in the LLP. Whilst registered on 26 August 2020, the LLP did not actively commence trading until February 2021.

Essex Cares Ltd and Essex Housing Development LLP are both subsidiaries of the Council for accounting purposes, and their results have been consolidated into the Group Accounts on a line by line basis using the acquisition accounting basis of consolidation.

None of the other Local Authority Trading Companies in which the Council has an interest are considered material enough, either when considered individually or in aggregate, to merit consolidation into the Council's Group Accounts.

2. Accounting policies

In preparing the Group Accounts the Council has:

- Aligned the accounting policies of the company with those of the Council and made consolidation adjustments where necessary.
- Consolidated the financial statements of the company with those of the Council on a line by line basis.
- Eliminated in full balances, transactions, income and expenses between the Council and its subsidiary.

3. Group Expenditure and Funding Analysis

2019/20				2020/21		
Net expenditure chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net expenditure chargeable to General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis	Net expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
122,909	7,938	130,847	Children and Families	124,575	12,410	136,985
16,571	5,066	21,637	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	7,770	5,490	13,260
6,692	8,168	14,860	Economic Development	8,097	(7,033)	1,064
			Education and Skills			
451	1,414	1,865	Dedicated Schools Budget	(11,883)	(10,228)	(22,111)
89,140	112,608	201,748	Non Dedicated Schools Budget	80,291	41,589	121,880
81,072	4,097	85,169	Environment and Climate Change Action	82,748	6,560	89,308
15,240	(282)	14,958	Finance	(438)	(767)	(1,205)
407,020	8,278	415,298	Health and Adult Social Care	413,383	11,927	425,310
48,058	25,087	73,145	Infrastructure	32,975	41,493	74,468
5,862	(4,809)	1,053	Leader	6,841	(2,997)	3,844
1,740	74	1,814	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	2,324	327	2,651
			Recharged Strategic Support Services			
61,772	13,264	75,036	Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	62,510	23,576	86,086
17,527	1,635	19,162	Finance	16,160	4,136	20,296
2,227	157	2,384	Leader	2,774	350	3,124
7,959	877	8,836	Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	8,853	1,744	10,597
884,240	183,572	1,067,812	Cost of services - continuing operations	836,980	128,577	965,557
(928,601)	(8,091)	(936,692)	Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(1,004,483)	4,583	(999,900)
(44,361)	175,481	131,120	Surplus on Provision of Services	(167,503)	133,160	(34,343)
			General Fund Balance & Profit and Loss Reserve			
(61,126)			Balance as at 1 April	(61,348)		
(44,361)			Surplus on Provision of Services	(167,503)		
44,139			Transfers from Earmarked Revenue Reserves	154,538		
-			Transfers from Usable Capital Receipts Reserves	(34)		
(61,348)			Balance as at 31 March	(74,347)		

4. Note to the Group Expenditure and Funding Analysis

2019/20	Adjustments for capital purposes £000	Net change for Pension Adjustments £000	Other adjustments between funding and accounting £000	Other differences £000	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis £000
Children and Families	1,680	5,659	599	-	7,938
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	3,343	1,635	88	-	5,066
Economic Development	7,500	606	62	-	8,168
Education and Skills					
Dedicated Schools Budget	-	-	(1,045)	2,459	1,414
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	107,720	13,690	241	(9,043)	112,608
Environment and Climate Change Action	3,423	632	53	(11)	4,097
Finance	6	(35)	1	(254)	(282)
Health and Adult Social Care	3,174	4,576	528	-	8,278
Infrastructure	34,352	953	73	(10,291)	25,087
Leader	(4,261)	(713)	9	156	(4,809)
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	62	12	-	74
Recharged Strategic Support Services					
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	10,020	3,034	210	-	13,264
Finance	-	1,831	14	(210)	1,635
Leader	-	141	16	-	157
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	841	36	-	877
Cost of services - continuing operations	166,957	32,912	897	(17,194)	183,572
Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(61,906)	24,161	12,460	17,194	(8,091)
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	105,051	57,073	13,357	-	175,481

2020/21	Adjustments for capital purposes £000	Net change for Pension Adjustments £000	Other adjustments between funding and accounting £000	Other differences £000	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting basis £000
Children and Families	539	10,581	1,290	-	12,410
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	2,453	2,821	216	-	5,490
Economic Development	(8,341)	1,105	203	-	(7,033)
Education and Skills	-	-	-	-	-
Dedicated Schools Budget	-	-	(1,922)	(8,306)	(10,228)
Non Dedicated Schools Budget	25,816	22,923	647	(7,797)	41,589
Environment and Climate Change Action	5,355	1,063	153	(11)	6,560
Finance	3,750	(37)	(4)	(4,476)	(767)
Health and Adult Social Care	1,060	9,097	1,770	-	11,927
Infrastructure	49,699	1,603	375	(10,184)	41,493
Leader	(2,541)	(2,409)	49	1,904	(2,997)
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	280	47	-	327
Recharged Strategic Support Services	-	-	-	-	-
Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate	16,765	6,188	623	-	23,576
Finance	-	3,710	615	(189)	4,136
Leader	-	297	53	-	350
Performance, Business Planning and Partnerships	-	1,550	194	-	1,744
Cost of services - continuing operations	94,555	58,772	4,309	(29,059)	128,577
Other income and expenditure not charged to services	(78,415)	27,047	26,892	29,059	4,583
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	16,140	85,819	31,201	-	133,160

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

5. Debtors and creditors

The debtors and creditors included within the Group Accounts exclude any amounts owed within the 'Group'.

6. Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Note 31 of the Council's single entity accounts provides an explanation of the Council's participation in two pension schemes:

- Local Government Pension Scheme; and
- Award of discretionary post-retirement benefits upon early retirement in relation to the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

Essex Cares Ltd participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme as an admitted body.

The following paragraphs explain the Group transactions relating to retirement benefits, the Group assets and liabilities within the Local Government Pension Scheme and the basis for estimating those assets and liabilities and the change in the Group Pension Reserve.

The Council's transactions related to the award of discretionary post retirement benefits upon early retirements in relation to the teachers' pension scheme (as detailed in Note 31 of the Council's single entity accounts) are not reproduced here but are included within the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Balance Sheet.

The following transactions have been made in the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during 2020/21 in relation to participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

2019/20				2020/21		
Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000		Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000
			Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement			
			Cost of Services			
90,828	1,638	92,466	Current service cost	128,297	1,405	129,702
2,877	301	3,178	Past service cost	681	-	681
(3,723)	1,345	(2,378)	Gain / loss on settlement	(3,344)	(10)	(3,354)
89,982	3,284	93,266		125,634	1,395	127,029
			Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure			
23,246	(123)	23,123	Net interest expense	26,059	(103)	25,956
23,246	(123)	23,123		26,059	(103)	25,956
113,228	3,161	116,389	Total charge to the Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	151,693	1,292	152,985
			Re-measurement of the net pensions liability			
172,085	6,038	178,123	Return on scheme assets	(603,722)	(18,800)	(622,522)
			Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in:			
(298,174)	(6,290)	(304,464)	Financial assumptions	764,783	18,789	783,572
(30,642)	(677)	(31,319)	Demographic assumptions	(51,277)	(1,121)	(52,398)
43,130	(622)	42,508	Experience (gain) / loss on defined benefit obligation	(42,733)	(874)	(43,607)
(46,327)	(1,443)	(47,770)	Other	-	-	-
-	-	-	Change in effect of the asset ceiling	-	-	-
(159,928)	(2,994)	(162,922)	Total charged to Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	67,051	(2,006)	65,045
(46,700)	167	(46,533)	Total charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	218,744	(714)	218,030
			Movement on the Authority's General Fund Balance			
(113,228)	-	(113,228)	Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19	(151,693)	-	(151,693)
54,036	518	54,554	Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year	63,809	265	64,074
(59,192)	518	(58,674)		(87,884)	265	(87,619)

The amount included within the Group Balance Sheet in respect of its Local Government Pension Scheme defined benefit plan is:

2019/20				2020/21		
Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Total £000		Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Total £000
3,050,857	65,845	3,116,702	Present value of the defined benefit obligation	3,831,331	83,998	3,915,329
(2,188,758)	(72,052)	(2,260,810)	Fair value of plan assets	(2,814,297)	(91,184)	(2,905,481)
862,099	(6,207)	855,892	Sub total	1,017,034	(7,186)	1,009,848
-	-	-	Impact of asset ceiling	-	-	-
862,099	(6,207)	855,892	Net liability arising from defined benefit obligations	1,017,034	(7,186)	1,009,848

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

The following table provides a reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities:

2019/20				2020/21		
Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000		Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000
3,256,736	77,792	3,334,528	Balance as at 1 April	3,050,857	65,845	3,116,702
90,828	1,638	92,466	Current service cost	128,297	1,405	129,702
77,131	1,851	78,982	Interest Cost	60,981	1,531	62,512
17,110	259	17,369	Contributions by scheme participants	18,520	251	18,771
			Actuarial (gains) / losses			
			Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions			
(30,642)	(677)	(31,319)		(51,277)	(1,121)	(52,398)
			Actuarial (gains) / losses arising from changes in financial assumptions			
(298,174)	(6,290)	(304,464)		764,783	18,789	783,572
			Experience loss (gain) on defined benefit obligation			
-	(622)	(622)		-	(874)	(874)
43,130	(1,099)	42,031	Other	(42,733)	-	(42,733)
2,877	301	3,178	Past service costs	681	-	681
(100,568)	(1,799)	(102,367)	Benefits paid	(92,356)	(1,709)	(94,065)
(7,571)	(5,509)	(13,080)	Liabilities extinguished on settlements	(6,422)	(119)	(6,541)
3,050,857	65,845	3,116,702	Balance as at 31 March	3,831,331	83,998	3,915,329

The following table provides a reconciliation of the fair value of scheme assets:

2019/20				2020/21		
Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000		Council £000	Subsidiary £000	Group £000
2,293,901	83,648	2,377,549	Balance as at 1 April	2,188,758	72,052	2,260,810
53,885	1,974	55,859	Interest income	34,922	1,634	36,556
			Remeasurement gain / (loss)			
			Return on plan assets (excl. amount incl in net interest expense)			
(172,085)	(6,038)	(178,123)		603,722	18,800	622,522
46,327	344	46,671	Other	-	-	-
54,036	518	54,554	Contributions by Employer	63,809	265	64,074
17,110	259	17,369	Contributions by scheme participants	18,520	251	18,771
(100,568)	(1,799)	(102,367)	Benefits paid	(92,356)	(1,709)	(94,065)
(3,848)	(6,854)	(10,702)	Settlements	(3,078)	(109)	(3,187)
2,188,758	72,052	2,260,810	Balance as at 31 March	2,814,297	91,184	2,905,481

The Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
£000	%		£000	%
1,323,337	58.5%	Equities	1,836,608	63.3%
97,445	4.3%	Gilts	74,059	2.5%
136,981	6.1%	Other bonds	141,475	4.9%
203,302	9.0%	Property	204,820	7.0%
93,972	4.2%	Cash and cash equivalents	75,193	2.5%
260,412	11.5%	Alternative Assets	333,990	11.5%
145,361	6.4%	Other managed funds	239,336	8.3%
2,260,810	100.0%	Total assets	2,905,481	100.0%

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

Note 31.4 of the Council's 'single entity' accounts, which commences on page 105, set out the significant assumptions used by the Actuary in its calculations for the Local Government Pension Scheme. The assumptions made in relation to Essex Cares Ltd are consistent with those made for the Council, except for the rate of increase in salaries where the rate for Essex Cares Ltd is estimated at **3.60%** (2019/20: 2.65%).

The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period. It assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes, while all other assumptions remain constant.

Local Government Pension Scheme	Effect of change in assumptions		
	£000	£000	£000
Adjustment to discount rate	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,840,177	3,915,329	3,992,039
Projected Service Cost	129,539	134,097	138,800
Adjustment to long term salary increase	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,920,691	3,915,329	3,910,014
Projected Service Cost	134,169	134,097	134,024
Adjustment to pension increases and deferred revaluation	+ 0.1%	0.0%	- 0.1%
Present value of total obligation	3,986,002	3,915,329	3,845,990
Projected Service Cost	138,753	134,097	129,581
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption	+ 1 year	None	- 1 year
Present value of total obligation	4,108,492	3,915,329	3,731,707
Projected Service Cost	140,161	134,097	128,270

Statement of Accounts - Group Accounts

7. Cash Flow

The cash flows for operating, investing and financing activities include the following items:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Cash flows from operating activities	
	Cash inflows	
(724,058)	Taxation	(758,924)
(919,570)	Grants	(1,054,556)
(289,993)	Sales of goods and rendering of services	(283,433)
(3,353)	Interest received	(1,477)
(334)	Dividends received	(952)
(1,937,308)		(2,099,342)
	Cash outflows	
449,632	Cash paid to and on behalf of employees	460,019
48,050	Interest paid	38,209
1,223,743	Cash paid to suppliers of goods and services	1,289,207
74,640	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	59,194
111,521	Other payments for operating activities	114,886
1,907,586		1,961,515
(29,722)	Net inflow of cash from operating activities	(137,827)
	Cash flows from investing activities	
	Cash inflows	
(29,161)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(7,783)
(523,713)	Proceeds from short and long term investments	(351,327)
(130,072)	Other receipts from investing activities	(194,902)
(682,946)		(554,012)
	Cash outflows	
116,263	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	137,844
548,300	Purchase of short and long term investments	331,400
1,986	Other payments for investing activities	662
666,549		469,906
(16,397)	Net inflow of cash from investing activities	(84,106)
	Cash flows generated from financing activities	
	Cash inflows	
(107,194)	Cash receipts of short and long term borrowing	(20,662)
(20,166)	Other receipts from financing activities	-
(127,360)		(20,662)
	Cash outflows	
17,770	Cash payments for the reduction of liabilities related to Finance Leases (incl. PFI contracts)	7,638
4,644	Repayment of short and long term borrowing	21,217
-	Other payments for financing activities	52,034
22,414		80,889
(104,946)	Net (inflow) / outflow of cash from financing activities	60,227
(151,065)	Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(161,706)

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Introduction

The Pension Fund accounts, and accompanying notes, summarise the financial transactions and net assets related to the provision of pensions and other benefits payable to former employees of the Council, Essex district, borough and unitary councils, and for other scheduled and admitted bodies. The Pension Fund accounts are set out in the following pages, as detailed below.

	Page
Fund Account	136
Net Assets Statement	137
Notes to the Pension Fund Accounts	138

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Pension Fund Accounts

Fund Account for the year ended 31st March 2021

2019/20 £000	Note		2020/21 £000
		Dealing with members and others directly involved in the Fund	
		Income	
(60,772)	9	Contributions receivable	(64,677)
(191,720)	9	Member contributions	(249,049)
(12,253)	9	Employers' contributions	(21,226)
(2,318)		Transfers in from other Pension Funds	(2,533)
		Other income	(2,533)
(267,063)		Total income	(337,485)
		Expenditure	
		Benefits payable	
211,869	9	Pensions	219,711
41,130	9	Commutation of pensions & lump sum retirement benefits	30,649
7,178	9	Lump sum death benefits	6,948
24,233	9	Payments to and on account of Leavers	11,120
284,410		Total expenditure	268,428
17,347		Net (additions) / withdrawals from dealings with members	(69,057)
55,317	11	Management expenses	58,191
72,664		Net (additions) / withdrawals including Fund Management expenses	(10,866)
		Returns on investments	
(109,811)	10	Investment income	(96,539)
433,307	12	Profit and losses on disposal of investments and changes in the value of investments	(2,008,342)
3,503		Taxes on income	4,236
326,999		Net returns on investments	(2,100,645)
399,663		Net (increase)/decrease in the assets available for benefits during the year	(2,111,511)
(7,027,288)		Opening net assets as at 1 April	(6,627,625)
(6,627,625)		Closing net assets as at 31 March	(8,739,136)

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Pension Fund Accounts

Net Assets Statement as at 31st March 2021

31 March 2020 £000	Note		31 March 2021 £000
	12	Investments at market value	
		Investment assets	
		Pooled Investments	
400,724		Fixed interest securities	425,110
1,468,496		Equities - Unit Life assurance policies	2,322,874
1,462,857		Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	2,044,184
285,066		Index linked securities	222,663
165,452		Property unit trusts	179,292
425,244		Other managed funds	722,751
599,583		Equities - Market Quoted equities	751,629
429,285		Property	436,570
340,352		Private equity	409,514
392,964		Infrastructure	607,190
234,178		Timber	244,419
135,587		Private debt	152,808
31		Derivative contracts	156
250,164		Cash/deposits	206,044
9,393		Other investment balances	10,090
6,599,376			8,735,294
		Investment liabilities	
(31)		Derivative contracts	(156)
(1,400)		Other investment balances	(60,598)
(1,431)			(60,754)
6,597,945		Total net investments	8,674,540
	14	Long term debtors	
539		Contributions due from employers	526
		Current assets and liabilities	
		Current Assets	
16,749		Cash	49,467
21,808		Contributions due from employers and other current assets	23,467
6,637,041			8,748,000
		Current liabilities	
(9,416)		Unpaid benefits and other current liabilities	(8,864)
6,627,625		Net assets of the scheme available to fund benefits at the end of the reporting period	8,739,136

The Fund's financial statements do not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after the period end. The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits is disclosed at Note 3.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Notes to the Pension Fund Accounts

1. Background

1.1 General description of the Fund

Under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (Administration) Regulations 2008, Essex County Council is required to maintain a pension fund.

The Essex Pension Fund ("the Fund") is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme and is administered by Essex County Council ("the Administering Authority") which is the reporting entity for this pension fund.

Established by the Local Government Superannuation Regulation 1974 the scheme is governed by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The Fund is administered in accordance with the following secondary legislation:

- Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Regulations 2013 (as amended);
- LGPS (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulation 2014 (as amended); and
- LGPS (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016.

The Fund is a contributory defined benefit pension scheme to provide pensions and other benefits for its Essex County Council employees and those other scheduled Bodies within its area. It is also empowered to admit the employees of certain other bodies, town and parish councils, educational establishments, contractors providing services transferred from scheduled bodies and community interest bodies. A complete list of the employers participating in the Fund is contained in the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts. The Fund does not provide pensions for teachers, for whom separate arrangements exist. Uniformed police and fire staff are also subject to separate pension arrangements.

The Council has delegated its pension functions to the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB) and Investment Steering Committee (ISC). Responsibility for the administration and financial management of the Fund has been delegated to the Executive Director, Finance and Technology along with the Director for Essex Pension Fund.

Independent investment managers have been appointed to manage the investments of the Fund. The Fund also invests in private equity, infrastructure and timber through the use of limited partnerships. The ISC oversees the management of these investments and meets regularly with the investment managers to monitor their performance against agreed benchmarks. The ISC in turn reports to the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board. The Fund's Investment Strategy Statement, is contained in the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts and can be found on the Pension Fund website (www.essexpensionfund.co.uk).

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Regional Asset Pools

In response to the Government's guidance and criteria on pooling investments issued in 2015, the Essex Pension Fund are working collaboratively with ten other like-minded LGPS Funds under the name of ACCESS (A Collaboration of Central, Eastern and Southern Shires).

In 2018 a joint procurement was undertaken by ACCESS for a passive provider with UBS Asset Management appointed as the preferred provider. In addition, in March 2018 Link Solutions Limited (Link) was appointed to act as operator of the ACCESS's Authorised Contractual Scheme (ACS). As at 31 March 2021 Link had launched 22 sub funds.

At the end of 2017/18 Essex Pension Fund had transitioned **£1,945m** from Legal and General to ACCESS's new provider, UBS Asset Management. During 2018/19 a further **£1,532m** had been invested into sub funds managed by Link Solutions Limited. No new assets were transitioned in 2019/20 or 2020/21.

It is anticipated that during 2021/22 further investment will be made into the ACS managed by Link.

1.2 Membership

Membership of the LGPS is voluntary and employees are free to choose whether to join the scheme, remain in the scheme, or make their own personal arrangements outside the scheme.

Organisations participating in the Essex Pension Fund include:

- Scheduled bodies, which are local authorities and similar bodies whose staff are automatically entitled to be members of the Fund.
- Admitted bodies, which are other organisations that participate in the Fund under an admission agreement between the Fund and the relevant organisation. Admitted bodies include voluntary, charitable and similar bodies or private contractors undertaking a local authority function following outsourcing to the private sector.

There are around **700** active employer organisations within Essex Pension Fund including the County Council itself.

Membership details are set out below:

31 March 2020		31 March 2021
57,498	Contributors	54,568
69,857	Deferred pensioners	68,914
44,682	Pensioners	46,210
172,037		169,692

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

1.3 Funding

Benefits are funded by contributions and investment earnings. Contributions are made by active members of the fund in accordance with the LGPS Regulations 2013 and range from **5.5%** to **12.5%** of pensionable pay for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. Employees can also opt to pay a reduced contribution. This is commonly referred to as the '50/50' option. At any time an active member can opt to pay half of their normal contribution. This option results in the pension built up during this time being reduced by half. Employee contributions are matched by employers' contributions which are set based on triennial actuarial funding valuations. The last such valuation was at **31 March 2019**. Details can be found on the website www.essexpensionfund.co.uk.

1.4 Benefits

Prior to 1 April 2014, pension benefits under the LGPS were based on final pensionable pay and length of pensionable service.

From 1 April 2014, the scheme became a career average scheme, whereby members accrue benefits based on their pensionable pay in that year at an accrual rate of 1/49th. Accrued pension is updated annually in line with inflation.

There are a range of other benefits provided under the scheme including early retirement, disability pensions and death benefits. For more details, please refer to the Essex Pension Fund website www.essexpensionfund.co.uk.

2. Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 issued by CIPFA, which is based upon International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as amended for UK public sector.

The financial statements summarise the Fund's transactions for the financial year ended 31 March 2021 and its position as at 31 March 2021. They report the net assets available to pay pension benefits. They do not take account of obligations to pay pensions and benefits which fall due after the end of the financial year, nor do they take into account the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits. However, a statement calculating the Fund's actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits (IAS 26) as at 31 March 2021 using IAS 19 methodology can be found in note 3.3. The actuarial position of the scheme as at 31 March 2019 can also be found in note 3.1.

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

3. Actuarial valuation

The contributions payable for 2020/21 and 2019/20 were determined by the 2019 and 2016 Actuarial Valuations respectively.

3.1 Actuarial Valuation 2019

In line with the Local Government Pension Regulations 2013 the Fund's Actuary undertakes a funding valuation every three years for the purpose of setting the employer contribution rates for the forthcoming triennial period.

An Actuarial Valuation of the Essex Pension Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2019 to determine the contribution rates with effect from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023. The results of the valuation are contained within the Statement by the Consulting Actuary of the Pension Fund Report and Accounts.

Actuarial Approach

Market conditions and the underlying investment performance of the Fund's assets will have a direct impact on the funding position.

The Actuary's approach adopted at the 2019 Actuarial Valuation included the following features:

- financial assumptions such as inflation and the discount rate are based on smoothed market indicators from around the valuation date, specifically over the six-month period from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019. The discount rate is based on the expected investment return from the Fund's assets.
- the market value of assets at 31 March 2019 is then adjusted to also be smoothed over the same six-month period so that a consistent comparison can be made with the liabilities.
- the smoothed assets also include a 5% volatility reserve deduction which may be used in the instance for future adverse experience to help achieve stability.

The Valuation was carried out using the projected unit actuarial method. Full details of the actuarial assumptions are contained within the full Valuation Report that is available from www.essexpensionfund.co.uk, but the main financial assumptions used for assessing the Funding Target and the common contribution rate were as follows:

Assumptions	Proposed financial assumptions	
	2016	2019
Rate of return	5.10%	4.50%
Rate of discount	5.10%	4.50%
Short term pay increase	CPI to 31 March 2020	N/A
Long term pay increase	3.9%	3.6%
Rate of increase to pensions in payment	2.4%	2.6%

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Assumptions	Proposed financial assumptions	
	2016	2019
Pension increases on Guaranteed Minimum Pension	Funds will pay limited increases for members that have reached SPA by 6 April 2016, with the Government providing the remainder of the inflationary increases. For members that reached SPA after this date, we have assumed that Funds will be required to pay the entire inflationary increases.	

The assumed life expectancy from age 65 is as follows:

31 March 2016 Years		31 March 2019 Years
	Retiring today	
22.3	Males	21.7
24.8	Females	23.7
	Retiring in 20 years	
24.5	Males	23.1
27.2	Females	25.1

The assets were assessed at market value.

On the basis of the assumptions adopted, the Valuation revealed that the value of the Fund's assets of **£6,711m** represented **97%** of the Funding Target liabilities of **£6,917m** at the valuation date. This was based on a smoothing adjustment of 100.5% applied to the market value of the assets less the 5% volatility reserve.

The valuation also showed that an average primary contribution rate of **20.0%** of Pensionable Pay per annum was required from employers (16.3% as at 31 March 2016). The primary rate is calculated as being sufficient, together with contributions paid by members, to meet all liabilities arising in respect of service after the valuation date.

In practice, each individual employer's position is assessed separately, and the contributions required are set out in the Actuary's statement. In addition to the certified contributions, payments to cover additional liabilities arising from early retirements (other than ill-health retirements) will be made to the Fund by the employers.

The next triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund is currently due as at 31 March 2022. Based on the results of this valuation, the contributions payable by the individual employers will be revised with effect from 1 April 2023.

Funding Strategy

The Funding Strategy adopted in assessing the contributions for each individual employer is in accordance with the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). Different approaches adopted in implementing

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

contribution increases and deficit recovery periods are as determined through the FSS consultation process.

The funding objectives of the Fund are:

- to prudently set levels of employer contributions that aim to achieve a fully funded position in the timescales determined in the Funding Strategy Statement;
- to recognise in drawing up its Funding Strategy, the desirability of employer contribution rates that are as stable as possible;
- to manage employers' liabilities effectively, having due consideration of each employer's strength of covenant, by the adoption of employer specific funding objectives;
- to maintain liquidity in order to ensure benefits can be met as and when they fall due over the lifetime of the Fund;
- to adopt appropriate measures and approaches to reduce the risk, as far as possible, to the Fund, other employers and ultimately the taxpayer from an employer defaulting on its pension obligations to minimise unrecoverable debt on termination of employer participation;
- to have consistency between the investment strategy and funding strategy; and to maximise returns within reasonable risk parameters.

3.2 IAS 19 Actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits

Many of the Fund's employers comply with the accounting disclosure requirements of either IAS 19 or FRS 102. These accounting standards specify the approach taken when calculating liabilities for disclosure in an employer's annual accounts – they do not determine the employer contribution. Employer contributions are determined via the Actuarial Valuation (as described in Note 3 above).

3.3 IAS 26 – Total Fund: Actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits

Separate to the Actuarial Valuation, IAS 26 requires the present value of the Fund's promised retirement benefits to be disclosed. For this purpose the actuarial assumptions and methodology used should be based on IAS 19 rather than the assumptions and methodology used in the Actuarial Valuation for funding purposes.

In order to assess the present value of the Fund's obligation on this basis, the Actuary, allowing for the different financial assumptions required under IAS 19 has used a roll forward approach in valuing the Fund's liabilities which were last calculated at the triennial actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2019.

Although the post mortality tables adopted are consistent with those for the most recent valuation, the mortality improvement projection has been updated to use the latest version of the Continuous Mortality Investigation's model (CMI_2020) which was released in March 2021. This update has been made in light of the coronavirus pandemic and reflects the latest information available from the CMI.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The duration of the Fund's liabilities is the weighted average time to pay each future expected cashflow for each member. This is based on the data from the last actuarial valuation. The Fund's liability duration as at 31 March 2021 is **20 years** which in turn means a discount rate of **2.00%** per annum (2.35% as at 31 March 2020). Liabilities are valued using a discount rate based on corporate bond yields.

An estimate of the Fund's future cashflows is made using notional cashflows based on the estimated duration above. These estimated cashflows are then used to derive a Single Equivalent Discount Rate (SEDR). The discount rate derived is such that the net present value of the notional cashflows, discounted at this single rate, equates to the net present value of the cashflows, discounted using the annualised Merrill Lynch AA rated corporate bond yield curve (where the spot curve is assumed to be flat beyond the 30 year point).

McCloud/Sargeant ruling

An allowance was made for the potential impact of the McCloud & Sargeant judgement in the results provided to the Fund at the last accounting date as stated above and therefore is already included in the starting position. This allowance is therefore incorporated in the roll forward approach and is remeasured at the accounting date along with the normal LGPS liabilities.

In order to assess the value of the benefit obligations, the actuary has updated the actuarial assumptions (see below) from those used for funding purposes.

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
(9,258,581)	Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(11,989,111)
6,613,778	Fair value of the Fund assets (bid value) *	8,739,136
(2,644,803)	Net liability	(3,249,975)

* Based on IAS 26 report (unaudited)

Please note, the liabilities above are calculated on an IAS 19 basis and therefore will differ from the results of the 2019 triennial funding valuation (note 3.1).

The key financial assumptions used are:

31 March 2020 %		31 March 2021 %
1.90	Pension increases	2.80
2.90	Salary increases	3.80
2.35	Discount rate	2.00

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The key demographic assumptions used (life expectations from age 65) are as follows:

31 March 2020 Years	Life expectancy from age 65	31 March 2021 Years
	Retiring today	
21.8	Males	21.6
23.7	Females	23.6
	Retiring in 20 years	
23.2	Males	22.9
25.2	Females	25.1

4. Accounting policies

4.1 Fund Account – revenue recognition

4.1.1 Contribution income

Normal contributions (also referred to as Primary Contributions), both from the members and from the employer, are accounted for on an accruals basis as follows:

- Employee contribution rates are set in accordance with LGPS regulations using common percentage rates for all schemes which arise according to pensionable pay.
- Employer contributions are set at the percentage rate recommended by the Fund Actuary in the payroll period to which it relates.

Employer deficit funding contributions (also referred to as Secondary Contributions) are accounted for on the due dates on which they are payable under the schedule of contributions set by the Fund Actuary or on receipt if earlier than the due date.

Employers' augmentation contributions and financial strain contributions are accounted for in the period in which the liability arises. Any amounts due in the year but unpaid are classed as a current financial asset. Amounts not due until future years are classed as long-term financial assets.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

4.1.2 *Transfers to and from other schemes*

Transfer values represent the amounts received and paid during the year for members who have either joined or left the Fund during the financial year and are calculated in accordance with the Local Government Scheme Regulations (see Note 9 which commences on page 155).

Individual transfers in/out are accounted for when received/paid, which is normally when the member liability is accepted or discharged.

Transfers in from members wishing to use the proceeds of their additional voluntary contributions to purchase scheme benefits are accounted for on a receipts basis and included in Transfers in (see Note 9 which commences on page 155).

Bulk (group) transfers are accounted for on an accruals basis in accordance with the terms of the transfer agreement.

4.1.3 *Investment Income*

- **Dividend income**

Dividend income is recognised in the Fund Account on the date the shares are quoted ex-dividend. Any amounts not received by 31 March are disclosed in the Net Assets Statement as other investment balances due. Investment income also includes withholding tax where this cannot be recovered.

- **Interest income**

Interest income is recognised in the Fund Account on an accruals basis, using the effective interest rate of the financial instrument as at the date of acquisition or origination.

- **Income from other investments**

This income is accounted for on an accruals basis. Any amount not received by the end of the financial year is disclosed in the Net Assets Statement under other investment balances.

- **Distribution from pooled funds**

Distributions from pooled funds are recognised at the date of issue. Any amounts not received by the end of the reporting period is disclosed in the Net Assets Statement as a current financial asset.

- **Property related income**

Property related income consists primarily of rental income. Rental income from operating leases on properties owned by the Fund is recognised on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

Any lease incentives granted are recognised as an integral part of the total rental income, over the term of the lease. Contingent rents based on the future amount of a factor that changes other than with the passage of time, such as turnover rents, are only recognised when contractually due.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

- **Change in market value of investments**

The change in market value of investments during the year is recognised as income and comprises all realised and unrealised profits and losses during the year.

4.2 Fund Account – Expense items

4.2.1 *Benefits payable*

Under the regulations, retirees can receive a lump sum retirement grant in addition to their annual pension. Pensions and lump sum retirement grants are accounted for from the date of retirement. When a member chooses to take a greater retirement grant in return for a reduced pension, these lump sums are accounted for on an accruals basis from the date that the option is exercised. Any amounts due but not paid are disclosed in the Net Assets Statement as current liabilities, provided that payment has been approved.

Other benefits are accounted for on the date that members leave the Fund, or upon death.

4.2.2 *Taxation*

The Fund is a registered public service scheme under section 1 (1) of Schedule 36 of the Finance Act 2004 and as such is exempt from UK income tax on interest received and from capital gains tax on proceeds of investments sold. Income from overseas investments suffers withholding tax in the country of origin, unless exemption is permitted. Irrecoverable tax accounted for as a fund expense as it arises.

As Essex County Council is the administering authority for the Fund, VAT input tax is recoverable on all Fund activities, including expenditure on investments and property expenses.

4.2.3 *Management expenses*

The Fund discloses its pension fund management expenses where possible, in accordance with the CIPFA guidance 'Accounting for Local Government Pension Scheme Management Expenses 2016'.

Administrative expenses

All administrative expenses are accounted for on an accruals basis. All staff costs of the administration part of the function are charged direct to the fund. Associated management, accommodation and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the Fund.

Oversight and governance

All oversight and governance expenses are accounted for on an accruals basis. All staff costs associated with governance and oversight are charged direct to the Fund. Associated

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

management, accommodation and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the Fund.

Investment management expenses

All investment management expenses are accounted for an accruals basis.

Fees of the external investment managers and custodian are agreed in the respective mandates governing their appointments. For the investment managers who manage the main asset classes of the Fund these are broadly based on the market value of the investments under their management and therefore increase or reduce as the value of these investments change. With the investment managers who manage the alternative assets the fees are generally calculated on a commitment basis.

Some of the Fund's investments are via pooled vehicles. In the majority of cases the investment manager deducts its management fees directly i.e. the Fund are not invoiced for these costs. The gross up of management fees are offset through the change in market value of these investments.

Where an investment manager's fee invoice has not been received by the Balance Sheet date, an estimate based upon the market value of their mandate as at the end of the year is used for inclusion in the Fund Account. In 2020/21, **£2.036m** of fees is based on such estimates (2019/20: £1.735m). A creditor has been raised and the actual invoice amount is shown within current liabilities.

The costs of the Pension Fund investment function are charged direct to the Fund along with any direct running costs. Transaction costs and custody fees are included within investment management expenses.

The cost of obtaining investment advice from external consultants is included in governance and oversight.

4.3 Net Assets Statement

4.3.1 Financial Assets

Financial assets are included in the Net Assets Statement on a fair value basis (with the exception of cash and debtors, which have been dealt with on an amortised cost basis), as at the financial year end date of 31 March. The financial asset is recognised in the Net Asset Statement on the date the fund becomes party to the contractual acquisition of the asset. From this date, any gains or losses arising from changes in fair value of the asset are recognised in the Fund Account.

The values of investments shown in the Net Assets Statement have been determined at fair value in accordance with the requirements of the Code and IFRS 13 (see Note 12). For the purposes of disclosing levels of fair value hierarchy, the Fund has adopted where possible, the classification

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

guidelines recommended in Practical Guidance on Investment Disclosures (PRAG / Investment Association, 2016). Each type of investment in consultation with the Fund's Investment Managers have been assessed and a single level has been applied, based on their overall characteristics.

4.3.2 *Valuation of investments*

The value of investments as shown in the Net Assets Statement is determined as outlined in the following paragraphs.

- **Market Quoted Investments**

In the majority of cases, market quoted equity investments for which there is a readily available market price is determined by the bid market price ruling on the final day of the accounting period.

- **Unquoted Investments**

The fair value of investments for which market quotations are not readily available are determined as follows:

Unquoted private equity

For unquoted equity, and private equity limited partnership, investments are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets in the private equity fund or limited partnership using the latest financial statements published by the respective fund managers. In 2020/21, many of these are valued as at 31 December 2020, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the British Venture Capital Association or an equivalent body. As such, an estimate of the valuation at 31 March 2021 has been made. The 31 December 2020 valuation is adjusted for payments made to, and received from, the private equity managers in the period 1 January to 31 March 2021.

In addition to the above treatment, the Fund, using market value estimate information supplied by the Fund's private equity manager a further adjustment has been made to reflect the last quarter's market change.

Other unquoted investments

Investments in unquoted property, private debt, timber and infrastructure pooled funds are valued at the net asset value or a single price advised by the fund manager. These investments are on the whole based on 31 March 2021 valuations.

- **Unit trusts and managed funds**

These are valued at bid prices provided by the relevant fund managers, which reflect the market value of the underlying investments.

In the case of pooled investment vehicles that are accumulation funds, change in market value also includes income which is reinvested in the Fund, net of applicable withholding tax.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

- **Fixed interest investments**

Fixed interest investments in the Fund's investment portfolio are recorded at net market value, based on their current yield (i.e. excludes interest earned but not paid over at the Fund year-end, which is included separately within accrued investment income and disclosed within Note 12).

- **Direct Property Investments**

Direct property investments have been valued on a fair value basis as at 31 March 2021, by Frank Knight, Chartered Surveyors in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) valuation standards 2017 which incorporates the International Valuation Standards and the RICS UK National Supplement effective from January 2019. The valuer's opinion of market value and existing use value was primarily derived using comparable recent market transactions on arm's-length terms, where available, and appropriate valuation techniques (the Investment Method), such as the use of estimated future yields and rental values.

Due to the unprecedented set of circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Valuers stated that the valuations as at 31 March 2020 were reported on the basis of 'material valuation uncertainty' per VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation – Global Standards. For the valuations as at 31 March 2021, the valuers have reverted back to normal valuation techniques and the 'material valuation uncertainty' has been removed.

4.3.3 Derivatives

Derivative financial instruments are used to manage exposure to specific risks arising from the Fund's investment activities. The Fund does not hold derivatives for speculative purposes.

4.3.4 Dividends, Interest and Foreign Currencies

Dividend, interest, purchases and sales of investments in foreign currencies have been accounted for at the spot market rates at the date of transaction. End of year spot market exchange rates are used to value cash balances held in foreign currency bank accounts, market values of overseas investments and purchases and sales outstanding at the end of the reporting period.

4.3.5 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash comprises of cash in hand and demand deposits. Cash equivalents are short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and that are subject to minimal risk of changes in value.

4.3.6 Additional Voluntary Contribution

The Essex Pension Fund provides an additional voluntary contribution (AVC) scheme for its members, the assets of which are invested separately from those of the pension fund. AVCs are not included in the accounts in accordance with Section 4(1)(b) of the Local Government Pension

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Scheme (Management and Investment of funds) Regulations 2016 but are disclosed for information in Note 13.

The AVC providers to the Fund are The Equitable Life Assurance Society, Prudential and Standard Life.

The AVC providers secure additional benefits on a money purchase basis for those members electing to pay additional voluntary contributions. Members participating in these arrangements each receive an annual statement confirming the amounts held in their account and the movements in the year.

The Fund relies on individual contributors to check that deductions made on their behalf are accurately reflected in the statements provided by the AVC providers.

5. Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

In applying the accounting policies set out within Note 4, the Fund has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Fund Accounts are:

- **Pension fund liability**

The pension fund liability is calculated every three years by the appointed actuary, with annual updates in the intervening years. The methodology used is in line with accepted guidelines and in accordance with International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19. Assumptions underpinning the valuation are agreed with the Actuary. This estimate is subject to significant variances based on changes to the underlying assumptions.

As permitted under IAS 26, the Fund has opted to disclose the actuarial present value of the promised retirement benefits by way of a note to the Net Assets Statement. This is shown in Note 3.3.

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

The Fund Accounts contain estimated figures that are based on assumptions made 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.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The items in the net assets statement at 31 March 2021 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
<p>Actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits</p> <p><i>Note:</i> <i>Results are taken from the 2021 Actuary IAS 26 Report</i></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 on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the fund with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.</p>	<p>The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a 0.1% decrease in the discount rate assumption would result in an increase in the pension liability of £243m.</p> <p>A 0.1% increase in the Pensions and deferred revaluations would result in an increase in the pension liability of £221m.</p> <p>A 0.1% increase in the long-term rate of salary increase would increase the value of liabilities by approximately £20m.</p> <p>Increasing the life expectancy assumptions by +1 year would increase the liability by approximately £562m.</p>

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Property	<p>Direct property</p> <p>Property valuation is performed by independent external valuers, in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' Valuation Standards. Valuation techniques are used to determine the carrying amount of directly held freehold and leasehold property. Where possible these valuation techniques are based on observable data, but where this is not possible management uses the best available data. Changes in the valuation assumptions used, together with significant changes in rental growth, vacancy levels, changes in market process, changes in volume of sales and purchases or the discount rate could affect the fair value of property.</p> <p>The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to affect real estate markets globally. Nevertheless, as at the valuation date (31 March 2021) property markets have converted back to normal functioning again. Accordingly, the property valuation is not reported as being subject to 'material value uncertainty' as defined by VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation - Global Standards.</p>	<p>The effect of variations in the factors supporting the valuation could result in an increase or decrease in the value of directly held property by +/- 10% an increase or decrease of £40.585m, on current value of £405.850m (Notes 17.1 and 17.4)</p>
	<p>Pooled property funds and global property</p> <p>Valuation techniques are used to determine the carrying amount of pooled property funds and global property. Where possible management uses the best available data.</p> <p>Uncertainties including changes in rental growth, covenant strength for existing tenancies, discount rate could affect the fair value of the property</p>	<p>The effect of variations in the factors supporting the valuation could result in an increase or decrease in the value of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pooled property funds by +/- 10% an increase or decrease of £17.929m, on current value of £179.292m. (Notes 17.1 and 17.4) • global held property by +/- 14,2% an increase or decrease of £4.326m, on current value of £30.720m. (Notes 17.1 and 17.4)

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
	<p>investments.</p> <p>The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to affect real estate markets globally. Nevertheless, as at the valuation date (31 March 2021) property markets have converted back to normal functioning again. Accordingly, the property valuation is not reported as being subject to 'material value uncertainty' as defined by VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation - Global Standards.</p>	
Private equity / Infrastructure / Timber / Private debt	<p>There is a degree of estimation involved in the valuation of these assets. Uncertainties including changes in market activity, credit risks, expected cash flows, discount rates used can impact valuations.</p>	<p>The total private equity, infrastructure, timber and private debt investments in the financial statements are £1,414m. There is a risk that this investment may be under or overstated in the accounts, totalling an increase / decrease of £117.108m (Notes 17.1 and 17.4).</p>

7. Events after the reporting date

These are events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period (adjusting events after the reporting period), and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period (non-adjusting events after the reporting period).

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the financial statements.

8. Accounting standards issued but not yet adopted

The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) has issued International Financial Reporting Standard 16 Leases (IFRS16) which, when adopted, will require the Fund to recognise most of the assets it has secured the use of through a lease arrangement on its Net Asset Statement as 'right of use' assets, together with the corresponding lease liabilities. This differs from the current practice of only recognising the assets and liabilities associated with the finance leases entered into by the Fund on its Net Asset Statement. It has been anticipated that IFRS16 would be adopted in 2021/22, but implementation has been deferred to the 2022/23

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

financial year.

9. Membership activities

9.1 Pension benefits payable

2019/20				2020/21		
Pensions £000	Commutation of pensions and lump sums £000	Lump sum death benefits £000		Pensions £000	Commutation of pensions and lump sums £000	Lump sum death benefits £000
74,960	10,720	1,898	Administering Authority	76,956	8,312	2,188
115,408	25,594	4,618	Scheduled Bodies	120,444	18,856	4,486
12,945	2,582	220	Community Admission Bodies	13,256	1,870	188
7,735	2,073	412	Transferee Admission Bodies	8,213	1,496	86
821	161	30	Resolution Bodies	842	115	-
211,869	41,130	7,178		219,711	30,649	6,948

9.2 Contributions receivable

9.2.1 By category

Contributions receivable from employers are set out below:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
60,772	Employee's normal contributions	64,677
	Employers' normal contributions	
154,216	Normal contributions	194,738
33,141	Employers' deficit recovery contributions	52,094
4,363	Employers' augmentation	2,217
191,720		249,049
252,492		313,726

The terminology used in the Actuarial Report for both employer contribution categories have been changed to:

- Employer normal contributions – primary contributions;
- Deficit contribution – secondary contributions;
- Employer augmentation relates to payments for the cost of early retirements.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

9.2.2 By type

2019/20			2020/21	
Member £000	Employer £000		Member £000	Employer £000
15,919	49,882	Administering Authority	17,337	59,575
41,331	128,494	Scheduled Bodies	43,897	176,748
1,888	8,030	Community Admission Bodies	1,785	7,544
1,302	4,175	Transferee Admission Bodies	1,313	3,905
332	1,139	Resolution Bodies	345	1,277
60,772	191,720		64,677	249,049

9.3 Transfers in from other pension funds

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
12,253	Individual transfers	(21,226)
12,253	Total	(21,226)

During 2020/21 (and 2019/20) no group transfers from other schemes were received.

9.4 Payments to and on account of leavers

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
900	Refunds of contributions	1,294
20	State scheme premiums	-
	Transfers out	
23,313	Individual transfers	9,826
24,233	Total	11,120

In 2020/21 and 2019/20, no bulk transfers were made.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

10. Investment Income

10.1 By Type

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
26,991	Dividends from equities	15,239
20,962	Dividends from equity pooled funds	22,912
2,182	Private Equity income	3,223
16,362	Infrastructure / timberland income	24,075
15,790	Managed fund income	7,673
7,611	Income from pooled property investments	3,350
12,394	Net rent from properties	14,477
3,132	Interest from cash deposits	852
903	Other	796
106,327	Total investment income showing net property rent	92,597
	Add back:	
3,484	Property operating expenses	3,942
109,811	Total investment income showing gross property rent	96,539

In line with best practice guidelines, the note that accompanies investment income requires the Fund to show rent from property net of other property income and operating property expenses. However, rent from property which is included under 'investment income' in the Fund Account is shown on a gross basis.

10.2 Investment property net rental

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
15,738	Rental Income from investment property	18,184
140	Other Property income	235
(3,484)	Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	(3,942)
12,394	Total	14,477

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

10.3 Contractual rental receivable

The table below shows the contractual amount of rental income due to the Fund as at 31 March:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
16,406	Within one year	12,239
53,461	Between one and five years	40,967
53,774	Beyond five years	42,865
123,641	Total	96,071

The above disclosure has been reduced by a loss allowance of **12.7%** per annum (2019/20: 3.2%) reflecting the Fund's expected loss from late or non-recovery of rents from tenants. This is based on Fund information for the year to 31 March 2021.

10.4 Movement in the fair value of investment properties

	Freehold £000	Leasehold £000	Total £000
Fair value at 1 April 2019	302,980	80,270	383,250
Additions	73,841	1,092	74,933
Disposals	(39,809)	-	(39,809)
Net gain/loss on fair value	(13,182)	(7,267)	(20,449)
Fair value at 31 March 2020	323,830	74,095	397,925
Additions	2,710	27,698	30,408
Disposals	(23,845)	(6,170)	(30,015)
Net gain/loss on fair value	19,655	(12,123)	7,532
Fair value at 31 March 2021	322,350	83,500	405,850

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

11. Management expenses

11.1 By type

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
3,299	Administration costs	3,680
50,522	Investment management expenses	53,207
1,496	Oversight and governance	1,304
55,317	Total	58,191

ACCESS ongoing costs were £78,000 for 2020/21 (2019/20: £74,000). These costs are shown under oversight and governance costs line of the above note.

11.2 Investment management expenses

2019/20	Management fees £000	Performance related fees £000	Transaction costs £000	Total £000
Pooled Investments				
Fixed Interest Securities	2,800	-	171	2,971
Equities - Unit Life assurance policies	568	-	-	568
Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	7,038	-	-	7,038
Index linked securities	-	-	-	-
Property unit trusts	1,279	-	-	1,279
Other managed funds	1,647	-	200	1,847
Equities - market quoted equities	4,581	-	365	4,946
Property	3,342	-	-	3,342
Global property	347	-	-	347
Private equity	6,022	7,135	(447)	12,710
Infrastructure	6,777	3,293	-	10,070
Timber	1,334	185	-	1,519
Private Debt	1,571	1,311	-	2,882
Other investment management costs	224	-	-	224
	37,530	11,924	289	49,743
Custody fees				779
Total				50,522

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

2020/21	Management fees £000	Performance related fees £000	Transaction costs £000	Total £000
Pooled Investments				
Fixed Interest Securities	2,799	-	203	3,002
Equities - Unit Life assurance policies	606	-	-	606
Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	8,160		248	8,408
Index linked securities	22	-	-	22
Property unit trusts	440	-	-	440
Other managed funds	1,983	-	183	2,166
Equities - market quoted equities	3,979		344	4,323
Property	3,786	-	-	3,786
Global property	2,072	(166)	-	1,906
Private equity	5,404	2,397	-	7,801
Infrastructure	6,487	9,251	-	15,738
Timber	1,371	271	-	1,642
Private Debt	1,598	1,205	-	2,803
Other investment management costs	221	-	-	221
	38,928	12,958	978	52,864
Custody fees				343
Total				53,207

Custody fees are made up of fees paid to the Fund's Global Custodian, Northern Trust and other out of pocket custody expenses. These were **£301,000** and **£42,000** in 2020/21 respectively (£303,000 and £476,000 in 2019/20).

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

12. Investments

12.1 Value of investments held by managers

The value of investments held by each fund manager on 31 March was as follows:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
£m	%		£m	%
		Investments managed inside the ACCESS Pool		
591	9.0	Link Asset Solutions - Long term Global Growth Fund	765	8.8
447	6.8	Link Asset Solutions - Global Dividend Fund	663	7.6
425	6.4	Link Asset Solutions - Global Equity Fund	616	7.1
1,753	26.6	UBS Asset Management	2,486	28.7
3,216	48.8		4,530	52.2
		Investments managed outside of the ACCESS Pool		
136	2.0	Alcentra Ltd	153	1.8
637	9.6	Aviva Investors	647	7.5
259	3.9	Stewart Investors (formerly First State)	346	4.0
401	6.1	Goldman Sachs Asset Management International	425	4.9
382	5.8	Hamilton Lane	442	5.1
92	1.4	IFM Investors	177	2.0
70	1.1	JPMorgan Asset Management	208	2.4
368	5.6	Marathon Asset Management Ltd	428	4.9
425	6.4	M&G Investments Alpha Opportunities	723	8.3
231	3.5	Partners Group Management II S.à r.l (Infrastructure)	224	2.6
31	0.5	Partners Group Management II S.à r.l (Global Property)	31	0.4
243	3.7	Stafford Timberland Limited	244	2.8
107	1.6	Other *	97	1.1
3,382	51.2		4,145	47.8
6,598	100.0		8,675	100.0

*The large balance held under Other as at 31 March 2021 was mainly due to **£60m** cash being held on a temporary basis, to finance an investment being settled by the Fund on 1 April 2021. The large balance held as at 31 March 2020 was mainly due to **£81m** cash being held on a temporary basis, to finance an investment being made on 1 April 2020.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

12.2 Investments by asset type

The tables below provide an analysis of investment assets by type and show the movements in the market value of the investments, including profits and losses realised on the sales of investments:

2019/20	Value at 1 April 2019 £000	2019/20 Movement					Value at 31 March 2020 £000
		Purchases	Net Transfers	Sale Proceeds	Change in Market Value	Cash Movement	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Pooled investments							
Fixed interest securities	404,594	-	-	(693)	(3,177)	-	400,724
Equities - Unit life assurance policies	1,653,855	75,001	-	-	(260,360)	-	1,468,496
Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	1,532,112	25,253	-	(7,037)	(87,471)	-	1,462,857
Index linked securities	391,041	-	-	(100,000)	(5,975)	-	285,066
Property unit trusts	226,626	3,781	-	(53,898)	(11,057)	-	165,452
Other managed funds	365,608	84,937	-	(2,508)	(22,793)	-	425,244
	4,573,836	188,972	-	(164,136)	(390,833)	-	4,207,839
Equities - Market quoted equities	878,337	163,911	-	(325,733)	(116,932)	-	599,583
Property	383,250	105,658	-	(39,989)	(19,634)	-	429,285
Private equity	321,530	51,753	-	(87,505)	54,574	-	340,352
Infrastructure	356,015	26,358	-	(19,967)	30,558	-	392,964
Timber	212,357	16,242	-	(3,780)	9,359	-	234,178
Private Debt	118,654	41,268	-	(20,254)	(4,081)	-	135,587
Cash							
Cash deposits held at the custodian/other							
Sterling	83,669	-	-	-	-	101,996	185,665
Foreign currency	62,292	-	-	(3,424)	3,424	2,207	64,499
	145,961	-	-	(3,424)	3,424	104,203	250,164
	6,989,940	594,162	-	(664,788)	(433,565)	104,203	6,589,952
Derivative pending foreign currency contracts	418	481	-	(1,156)	257	-	-
	6,990,358	594,643	-	(665,944)	(433,308)	104,203	6,589,952
Other investment balances							
Assets							
Amounts receivable for sales of investments	60						1,664
Investment income due	7,892						7,269
Amounts receivable in respect of the GLF sales	43						460
Liabilities							
Amounts payable for purchase of investments	(56)						(1,207)
Investment withholding tax payable	(153)						(193)
Amounts payable in respect of the GLF purchases	-						-
	6,998,144						6,597,945

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

2020/21	Value at 1 April 2020 £000	2020/21 Movement					Value at 31 March 2021 £000
		Purchases £000	Net Transfers £000	Sale Proceeds £000	Change in Market Value £000	Cash Movement £000	
Pooled investments							
Fixed interest securities	400,724	-	-	(794)	25,180	-	425,110
Equities - Unit life assurance policies	1,468,496	104,700	32,300	-	717,378	-	2,322,874
Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	1,462,857	55,863	-	(338,358)	863,822	-	2,044,184
Index linked securities	285,066	32,300	(32,300)	(75,000)	12,597	-	222,663
Property unit trusts	165,452	17,353	-	(4,413)	900	-	179,292
Other managed funds	425,244	219,816	-	(1,983)	79,674	-	722,751
	4,207,839	430,032	-	(420,548)	1,699,551	-	5,916,874
Equities - Market quoted equities	599,583	160,035	-	(223,075)	215,086	-	751,629
Property	429,285	30,408	-	(31,921)	8,798	-	436,570
Private equity	340,352	55,360	-	(61,299)	75,101	-	409,514
Infrastructure	392,964	274,636	-	(77,931)	17,521	-	607,190
Timber	234,178	34,128	-	(10,970)	(12,917)	-	244,419
Private Debt	135,587	22,887	-	(15,695)	10,029	-	152,808
Cash							
Cash deposits held at the custodian/other							
Sterling	185,665	-	-	-	-	(40,131)	145,534
Foreign currency	64,499	-	-	4,827	(4,827)	(3,989)	60,510
	250,164	-	-	4,827	(4,827)	(44,120)	206,044
	6,589,952	1,007,486	-	(836,612)	2,008,342	(44,120)	8,725,048
Derivative pending foreign currency contracts	-	13	-	(13)	-	-	-
	6,589,952	1,007,499	-	(836,625)	2,008,342	(44,120)	8,725,048
Other investment balances							
Assets							
Amounts receivable for sales of investments	1,664						847
Investment income due	7,269						9,243
Amounts receivable in respect of the GLF sales	460						-
Liabilities							
Amounts payable for purchase of investments	(1,207)						(60,107)
Investment withholding tax payable	(193)						(214)
Amounts payable in respect of the GLF purchases	-						(277)
	6,597,945						8,674,540

The change in market value includes all increases and decreases in the market value of investments held at any time during the year, including profits and losses realised on sales of investments since 1 April.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

12.3 Pooled investments representing 5% or more of net assets

The Fund holds the following investments in unit trusts/pooled vehicles which are in excess of 5% of the value of the Fund:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
£000	%		£000	%
481,814	7.3%	UBS Asset Management Life All World Equity Tracker	835,605	9.6%
590,709	9.0%	Link Fund Solutions LTGG Fund	764,863	8.8%
425,244	6.4%	M&G Alpha Opportunity Fund	722,751	8.3%
447,157	6.8%	Link Fund Solutions Global Dividend Fund	663,391	7.6%
424,991	6.4%	Link Fund Solutions Global Equity Fund	615,930	7.1%
333,557	5.0%	UBS Asset Management Life USA Equity Tracker Hedged	488,740	5.6%
400,724	6.1%	Goldman Sachs Strategic Absolute Fund	425,110	4.9%

13. Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC) Investments

A summary of the information provided by Equitable Life, Prudential and Standard Life to the Fund is shown in the table below.

13.1 Reconciliation of movements in AVC investments

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
8,416	Value of AVC fund at beginning of year	8,783
1,569	Employees contributions	1,546
(191)	Investment income and change in market value	(504)
(1,011)	Benefits paid and transfers out	(1,186)
8,783		8,639

13.2 Analysis of AVC investments by Provider

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
64	Utmost (formerly Equitable Life)	64
4,651	Prudential *	4,651
4,068	Standard Life	3,924
8,783		8,639

* The Prudential were not able to confirm their Fund's balance as at 31 March 2021 at the time of the accounts being drafted. Therefore the 2019/20 balance is being used until more up to date is available.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

14. Current assets and liabilities

14.1 Analysis of current assets

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
	Cash Balances	
1,737	Cash at bank	1,469
15,012	Cash on short term deposits within 3 months	47,998
16,749		49,467
	Debtors and payments in advance	
4,811	Contributions due – employees	5,250
15,524	Contributions due – employers	17,540
1,473	Sundry debtors	677
21,808		23,467
38,557	Total	72,934

14.2 Analysis of long-term debtors

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
228	Other employer contributions due	199
311	Reimbursement of lifetime allowances	327
539	Total	526

Introduced in 2016, the lifetime allowance limits the amount of pension that can be paid by an individual pensioner without incurring an extra tax charge. Responsibility falls to the pensioner. However, the Fund offers the facility to pay all or part of the tax upfront, on the individual's behalf, and gets reimbursed by additional pension deductions over time. A long-term debtor of **£327,000** has been raised in 2020/21 in this regard (2019/20: £311,000).

14.3 Analysis of current liabilities

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
	Unpaid benefits and other current liabilities	
(1,460)	Contributions due – employers	(648)
(1,883)	Investment manager fees payable	(2,763)
(5,139)	Benefits payable	(5,047)
(934)	Other	(406)
(9,416)	Total	(8,864)

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

14.4 Contingent liabilities and contractual commitments

As at 31 March 2021, the Fund had a commitment to contribute a further **£1.089bn** to its existing direct and indirect partnership investments, including private equity, infrastructure, timber and private debt (31 March 2020: £1.192bn). The amounts called by these funds are irregular in both size and timing over a period of between five to ten years from the date of each original commitment.

15. Related party transactions

The Fund is required to disclose material transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Fund, or to be controlled or influenced by the Fund. The intention in making this disclosure is to make explicit the extent to which the Fund might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to negotiate freely with the Fund.

15.1 Administration of the Fund

The Essex Pension Fund is administered by Essex County Council.

The Council incurred gross costs of **£3.437m** in 2020/21 of which £7,000 was outstanding at **31 March 2021** (2019/20: £3.298m, of which £545,000 was outstanding at 31 March 2020) in relation to the administration of the Fund and was subsequently reimbursed by the Fund for these expenses. The Council is also the single largest employer of members of the Fund and contributed **£59.575m** to the Fund in 2020/21 (2019/20: **£49.882m**). No significant amounts were owing to and due to be paid from the Fund in the year.

The Fund has in place a separate bank account arrangement with the County Council. Surplus cash is invested by the County Council's treasury management team on the sterling money markets, in accordance with the Essex Pension Fund treasury management policy and strategy as agreed by the Essex Pension Fund Investment Steering Committee 24 March 2021. This service is provided to the Fund at a cost of **£28,000** (2019/20: £28,000).

During the year to 31 March 2021, the Pension Fund had an average investment balance of **£47.121m** (2019/20: £21.097m) earning **£57,000** interest (2019/20: £110,000).

15.2 Governance

Under IAS 24 'Related Party Disclosures' it is a requirement that material transactions with related parties, not disclosed elsewhere, should be included in a note to the financial statements. During the year, each member of the Essex Pension Board and Investment Steering Committee are required to declare their interests at each meeting. None of the Essex Pension Board Members, Investment Steering Committee Members or Senior Officers undertook any material transactions with the Essex Pension Fund. There were no material contributions due from the employer bodies at the end of the year that remained outstanding after the due date for payment.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

15.3 Members of the LGPS

Essex County Council administers the LGPS for its own employees and numerous other bodies. Under legislation introduced in 2003/04, Councillors were also entitled to join the Pension Fund. However, under legislation introduced from 1 April 2015, the entitlement for Councillors to join the Pension Fund was removed. After the local County elections of May 2017 all active Councillors' memberships changed to deferred. Those Members of the Essex Pension Board and Investment Steering Committee who, during 2020/21, were also members of the LGPS are listed below.

Representative of scheme members	County Councillors
▪ S. Child	▪ Cllr S. Barker
Representative of scheme employers	▪ Cllr M. Maddocks
▪ C. Riley	

From 1 April 2015 pension funds were required to establish a local Pensions Board under section 5 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. Members of this Board, (Essex Pension Fund Advisory Board) who, during 2020/21, were also members of the LGPS are listed below:

Representative of scheme employers	Representative of scheme members
▪ J. Durrant	▪ A. Coburn
▪ Cllr S. Walsh	▪ D. Hurst
	▪ S. Roberts
	▪ J. Sheehy

The employees of Essex County Council who hold key positions in the financial management of the Essex Pension Fund during 2020/21 and were also members of the Fund were the Executive Director, Finance and Technology, the Interim Director for Essex Pension Fund and three personnel covering 20% each of the Head of Essex Pension Fund role.

During 2020/21 approximately 2% of the Executive Director, Finance and Technology time was spent on the Pension Fund, with the other officers spending 100% of their time in this way.

The short-term benefits (pay) associated with the time spent by these staff working on the Fund and the current service cost i.e. the increase in the value of the Fund's future pension liabilities arising out of the employees on-going membership of the Fund are shown below:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
145	Short term benefits	137
153	Current service costs	106
298		243

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

16. Agency Services

The Essex Pension Fund pays discretionary awards to former employees of both current and former employers' of the Fund. The amounts paid are not included within the Fund Account but are provided as a service and are fully reclaimed from the employer bodies. The sums are disclosed below:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
1,443	Administering Authority	1,389
5,166	Scheduled Bodies	5,026
89	Community Admission Bodies	86
2	Resolution Bodies	2
20	Former employers	19
6,720	Total	6,522

17. Fair value – Basis of valuation

17.1 Fair value hierarchy

The valuation of financial instruments has been classified into three levels, according to the quality and reliability of information used to determine fair values.

- **Level 1** – Assets and liabilities at Level 1 are those whose fair values are derived from unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities. Assets classified as Level 1 comprise of equities, quoted fixed securities, quoted index linked securities and unit trusts. Listed investments are shown at bid prices. The bid value of the investments is based on bid market quotation of the relevant stock exchange.
- **Level 2** – Assets and liabilities at Level 2 are those where quoted market prices are not available, for example where an instrument is traded in a market that is not considered to be active, or where valuation techniques are used to determine fair value and where these techniques use inputs that are based significantly on observable market data.
- **Level 3** – Assets and liabilities classified as Level 3 are those where at least one input that could have significant effect on the instruments valuation is not based on observable market data. Such instruments would include unquoted equity investments which are valued using various valuation techniques that require significant judgement in determining appropriate assumptions.

The value of the investment in private equity is based on valuations provided by the general partners to the private equity funds in which the Essex Pension Fund has invested.

These valuations are prepared in accordance with the International Private Equity and Venture Capital Valuation Guidelines, which follow the valuation principles of IRRS and US GAAP. Valuations are usually undertaken annually at the end of December, with unaudited valuations provided by the general partner as at 31 March.

The valuations of infrastructure and timber are based on net asset value provided by the fund manager.

The table below sets the valuation basis used. All assets have been valued using fair value techniques based on the characteristics of each instrument, with the overall objective of maximising the use of market based information:

Fund Manager	Asset	Valuation Hierarchy	Basis of Valuation	Observable and Unobservable inputs	Key Sensitivities affecting the Valuation
Stewart Investors/ Marathon Asset Management Ltd	Market Quoted Equities	Level 1	Published Bid Market Price.	N/A	N/A
Link Asset Solutions	Pooled global equities funds	Level 1	Net Asset Value / Bid Market Price.	Net Asset Values.	N/A
Goldman Sachs Asset Management International	Fixed interest securities	Level 1	Fixed interest securities are valued at a market value based on current yields.	Net Asset Values.	N/A
UBS Asset Management	Equities/Indexed Linked Life Assurance Policies	Level 2	Valuation technique with quoted prices of a similar asset.	Price of recent transactions for identical instrument.	Significant change in economic circumstances or time lapse since the transaction took place.
M&G Investments Alpha Opportunities	Other managed funds	Level 2	The prices are published reflecting the NAV at each dealing point but are not exchange traded.	Price of recent transactions for identical instrument.	Significant change in economic circumstances or time lapse since the transaction took place.
All	Forward Foreign Exchange Derivatives	Level 2	Market exchange rates at the year end.	Price of recent transactions for identical instrument.	Risk of an exchange rate changing between the transaction date and the subsequent settlement date volatility of the exchange rates during the hedge period.

Fund Manager	Asset	Valuation Hierarchy	Basis of Valuation	Observable and Unobservable inputs	Key Sensitivities affecting the Valuation
Aviva Investors	Direct property	Level 3	Direct Property independently valued by Knight Frank LLP in accordance with the current editions of Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) Valuation - Global Standards, which incorporate the International Valuations Standards, and the RICS UK National Supplement. Valuation derived from using comparable recent market transactions on arm's length terms, where available, and other appropriate techniques such as the use of rental yields and rental values.	Pricing inputs are unobservable and include situations where there is little market activity. Estimated rental growth, covenant strength for existing tenancies, Discount rate, Land / building valuation surveys.	The following sensitivities have been identified. Asset values can range between (+/-10%), significant changes in yield movement (+/-5%) and estimated rental value movement (+/-5%) have been identified as key sensitivities. The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to affect real estate markets globally. Nevertheless, as at the valuation date property markets have converted back to normal functioning again. Accordingly, the valuation is not reported as being subject to 'material value uncertainty' as defined by VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation - Global Standards.
Partners Group Management II Sea r.l	Global property	Level 3	Assets are based on valuations received from the Managers which are determined in accordance with the last know NAV and adjusted for subsequent capital calls and distributions and other relevant information provided.	Pricing inputs are unobservable and include situations where there is little market activity. Estimated rental growth, covenant strength for existing tenancies, Discount rate, Land/building valuation surveys.	Significant changes in rental growth, vacancy levels or the discount rate could affect valuations, as could more general changes to market process and volume of sales and purchases. Assets values can range between (+14.2% / -14.2%).
Aviva Investors	Property unit trusts	Level 3	Assets are based on valuations received from the Managers which are determined in accordance with the last know NAV and adjustment for subsequent capital calls and distributions and other relevant information provided by the real estate fund.	Pricing inputs are unobservable and include situations where there is little market activity. Estimated rental growth, covenant strength for existing tenancies, Discount rate, Land/building valuation surveys.	The following sensitivities have been identified. Asset values can range between (+/-10%), significant changes in yield movement (+/-5%) and estimated rental value movement (+/-5%) have been identified as key sensitivities. The outbreak of COVID-19 continues to affect real

Fund Manager	Asset	Valuation Hierarchy	Basis of Valuation	Observable and Unobservable inputs	Key Sensitivities affecting the Valuation
					estate markets globally. Nevertheless, as at the valuation date property markets have converted back to normal functioning again. Accordingly, the valuation is not reported as being subject to 'material value uncertainty' as defined by VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation - Global Standards.
Hamilton Lane	Private Equity	Level 3	Investments in private equity funds are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets, using the latest financial statements published by the respective fund managers in accordance with the appropriate industry guidelines. Limited partnerships are valued at Fair value based on the net asset value ascertained from periodic valuations provided by those controlling the partnership. The net assets value of the funds are determined using the valuation techniques such as discounted cash flows, earning multiples etc, and these use the inputs detailed in the next two columns.	Management's cash flow projections, estimates of growth expectations and profitability, profit margin expectations, gross domestic product, inflation, interest rates, discount rates, adjustments to current prices for similar assets, valuation techniques.	Valuations could be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Funds reporting date by changes to gross domestic product, inflation, interest rates, and discount rates. Asset values can range between (+15%/-15%).
Partners Group Management II S.à r.l	Infrastructure	Level 3	Investments in the funds are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets. Audited valuations are carried out annually on the investments. The net assets value of the funds are determined using the valuation techniques such as discounted	Management's cash flow projections, estimates of growth expectations and profitability, profit margin expectations, gross domestic product, inflation, interest rates, discount rates, tax rates, Earnings Before Interest, taxes, Depreciation and	Valuations can be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Funds reporting date by changes to expected cash flows, fair value adjustments, discount factors used, EBITDA and recent

Fund Manager	Asset	Valuation Hierarchy	Basis of Valuation	Observable and Unobservable inputs	Key Sensitivities affecting the Valuation
			cash flows, earning multiples etc, and these use the inputs detailed in the next two columns.	Amortization (EBITDA) and adjustments to current prices for similar assets, valuation techniques.	transaction prices. Asset values can range between (+5.3% /-5.3%).
JP Morgan Asset Management	Infrastructure	Level 3	Investments are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets Audited valuations are carried out annually on the investments. The net assets value of the funds are determined using the valuation techniques such as discounted cash flows, earning multiples etc, and these use the inputs detailed in the next two columns.	Management's cash flow projections, estimates of growth expectations and profitability, profit margin expectations, gross domestic product, inflation, interest rates, discount rates, tax rates, Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) and adjustments to current prices for similar assets, valuation techniques.	Valuations can be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Funds reporting date by changes to expected cash flows and fair value adjustments, changes in interest rates, inflation, discount rate, price weaknesses As a result assets values can range between (+7.0% /-5.7%).
IFM Investors	Infrastructure	Level 3	The investments are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets. Audited valuations are carried out annually on the investments The net assets value of the funds are determined using the valuation techniques such as discounted cash flows, earning multiples etc, and these use the inputs detailed in the next two columns.	Management's cash flow projections, estimates of growth expectations and profitability, profit margin expectations, gross domestic product, inflation, interest rates, discount rates, tax rates, Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) and adjustments to current prices for similar assets, valuation techniques.	Valuations could be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Fund's reporting date. Key sensitivities identified are changes in gross domestic product, base rates, inflation and discount rates. Asset values can range between (+6/-6%).
Stafford Timberlands Limited	Timberlands	Level 3	Valuation technique is based on accepted valuation techniques and standards that include discounted cashflow and multiple earnings	Management's cash flow projections, estimates of growth expectations and profitability, profit margin expectations, discount rates, Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA), adjustments to current prices for	Valuations could be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Fund's reporting date by changes to expected cash flows earning multiple and discount rates used in the discounted cash

Fund Manager	Asset	Valuation Hierarchy	Basis of Valuation	Observable and Unobservable inputs	Key Sensitivities affecting the Valuation
				similar assets, valuation techniques.	flow analysis. Asset values can range between (+5%/-5%).
Alcentra Limited	Private Debt	Level 3	Net Asset Value Market approach using comparable trade multiples. They include comparison to recent arm's length transactions, reference to other instruments that are sustainably the same, discounted cash flow analysis, option adjusted spread models and, if applicable, enterprise valuation.	These techniques may include a number of assumptions relating to variables such as management cash flow projections, credit risk, interest rates, EBITDA, direct lending loans values, discount rates, marketability.	Material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the Pension Funds reporting date by changes to expected cash flows, EBITDA multiple, and discount rates used (e.g. discounts offered for lack of marketability). Asset values can change between (+4.6%/-4.6%).

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The following table provides an analysis of the financial assets and liabilities of the pension fund grouped into Level 1 to 3 based on the level at which the fair value is observable.

Values as at 31 March 2020				Values as at 31 March 2021		
Level 1 Quoted market prices	Level 2 Using observable inputs	Level 3 Significant unobservable inputs		Level 1 Quoted market prices	Level 2 Using observable inputs	Level 3 Significant unobservable inputs
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
			Financial assets			
2,472,558	2,178,836	1,152,133	Fair value through profit and loss	3,231,013	3,268,444	1,471,572
2,472,558	2,178,836	1,152,133		3,231,013	3,268,444	1,471,572
			Non financial assets			
-	-	545,685	Fair value through profit and loss	-	-	558,221
			Financial liabilities			
(1,400)	(31)	-	Fair value through profit and loss	(60,598)	(156)	-
(1,400)	(31)	-		(60,598)	(156)	-
2,471,158	2,178,805	1,697,818	Total net assets per level	3,170,415	3,268,288	2,029,793
		6,347,781	Total Net Assets			8,468,496

17.2 Transfers between hierarchy levels

No reclassifications were made as at 31 March 2020 or as at 31 March 2021.

17.3 Reconciliation of fair value measurements within Level 3

2020/21	Value at 1 April 2020	2020/21 Movement						Value at 31 March 2021
		Transfer to Level 3	Purchases	Net Transfers	Sale Proceeds	Unrealised profit/ loss	Realised profit/ loss	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Properties								
UK properties (freehold)	323,830	-	2,710	-	(23,845)	15,092	4,563	322,350
UK properties (leasehold)	74,095	-	27,698	-	(6,170)	(10,642)	(1,481)	83,500
Global Property	31,360	-	-	-	(1,906)	1,266	-	30,720
Property unit trusts	165,452	-	17,353	-	(4,413)	7,205	(6,305)	179,292
Private equity								
UK unquoted	4	-	-	-	-	(4)	-	-
Overseas unquoted	340,348	-	55,360	-	(61,299)	39,893	35,212	409,514
Infrastructure								
UK unquoted	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Overseas unquoted	392,963	-	274,636	-	(77,931)	(5,013)	22,534	607,189
Timber (Overseas unquoted)	234,178	-	34,128	-	(10,970)	(13,071)	154	244,419
Private Debt								
UK unquoted	25,692	-	-	-	(127)	6,891	-	32,456
Overseas unquoted	109,895	-	22,887	-	(15,568)	3,377	(239)	120,352
	1,697,818	-	434,772	-	(202,229)	44,994	54,438	2,029,793

17.4 Sensitivity of assets valued at Level 3

In consultation with its institutional consultants, Hymans Robertson and the Fund's investment managers, an analysis of historical data and expected return movements during the accounting periods

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

in question was undertaken. The fund has determined that the valuation methods described in Note 17.1 are likely to be accurate to within the following ranges and has set out below the consequent potential impact on the closing value of investments held as at 31 March 2021.

Value at 1 April 2020 Restated £000	Assessed valuation range (+/-)	Value on increase £000	Value on decrease £000		Value at 1 April 2021 £000	Assessed valuation range (+/-)	Value on increase £000	Value on decrease £000
397,925	20.0%	477,510	318,340	Freehold and leasehold properties	405,850	10.0%	446,435	365,265
31,360	14.2%	35,813	26,907	Global property	30,720	14.2%	35,082	26,358
165,452	20.0%	198,542	132,362	Property unit trusts	179,292	10.0%	197,221	161,363
340,352	15.0%	391,405	289,299	Private equity	409,514	15.0%	470,941	348,087
392,964	4.1%	409,076	376,852	Infrastructure	607,190	6.0%	643,621	570,759
234,178	5.0%	245,887	222,469	Timber (overseas unquoted)	244,419	5.0%	256,640	232,198
135,587	7.2%	145,349	125,825	Private debt	152,808	4.6%	159,837	145,779
1,697,818		1,903,582	1,492,054		2,029,793		2,209,777	1,849,809

The assessed valuation ranges shown in the above table were provided by the relevant fund managers, with the exception of:

- Global property and Private debt – In the absence of information from the fund managers, valuation range was based on percentages supplied by Hymans Robertson.
- Infrastructure – The valuation range us a weighted average of the information provided by the three individual Infrastructure managers and their base strategic allocations.

Further information on the assessed valuation ranges can be found in Note 17.1.

18. Financial Instruments

Accounting policies describe how different asset classes of financial instrument are measured and how income and expenditure, including fair value gains and losses, are recognised.

18.1 Classification of financial instruments

The following table analyses the carrying amounts of financial assets and liabilities by category and Net Assets Statement headings.

Statutory debtors and creditors are excluded from the financial instrument note and only contractual debtors and creditors are shown.

The debtor figure of **£23.993m** as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £22.347m) excludes statutory debtors of **£23.597m** (31 March 2020: £21.958m).

The creditor figure of **£8.864m** as at 31 March 2021 (31 March 2020: £9.416m) excludes statutory creditors of **£5.695m** (31 March 2020: £6.599m).

In addition, assets held by the Fund on a direct basis for example direct property and infrastructure has also been excluded for the below note as they are not financial instruments.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

31 March 2020			Asset type	31 March 2021		
Fair value through profit and loss £000	Assets at Amortised cost £000	Liabilities at amortised cost £000		Fair value through profit and loss £000	Assets at Amortised cost £000	Liabilities at amortised cost £000
			Financial assets			
			Pooled Investments			
400,724	-	-	Fixed interest securities	425,110	-	-
1,468,496	-	-	Equities - Unit life assurance policies	2,322,874	-	-
1,462,857	-	-	Equities - ACCESS pooled global equity funds	2,044,184	-	-
285,066	-	-	Index linked securities	222,663	-	-
165,452	-	-	Property unit trusts	179,292	-	-
425,244	-	-	Other managed funds	722,751	-	-
599,583	-	-	Equities - Market Quoted Equities	751,629	-	-
340,352	-	-	Private equity	409,514	-	-
276,564	-	-	Infrastructure	485,539	-	-
234,178	-	-	Timber	244,419	-	-
135,587	-	-	Private debt	152,808	-	-
31	-	-	Derivative contracts	156	-	-
-	266,913	-	Cash deposits	-	255,511	-
9,393	-	-	Other investment balances	10,090	-	-
-	389	-	Debtors	-	396	-
5,803,527	267,302	-		7,971,029	255,907	-
			Financial liabilities			
(31)	-	-	Derivative contracts	(156)	-	-
(1,400)	-	-	Other investments balances	(60,598)	-	-
-	-	(2,817)	Creditors	-	-	(3,169)
(1,431)	-	(2,817)		(60,754)	-	(3,169)
5,802,096	267,302	(2,817)	Balance at the end of the year	7,910,275	255,907	(3,169)
		6,066,581	Total			8,163,013

18.2 Net gains and losses on financial instruments

Assets held by the Fund on a direct basis for example direct property and direct infrastructure has also been excluded from the below note.

The net gains and losses differ from the Fund Account by gains and losses of assets held directly. The gains and losses of these assets were **£26.209m** as at 31 March 2021 (£96,000 loss as at 31 March 2020)

Asset value as at 31 March 2020 £000		Asset value as at 31 March 2021 £000
	Financial assets	
(436,635)	Fair value through profit and loss	1,986,960
3,424	Amortised cost - unrealised gains	(4,827)
(433,211)	Total	1,982,133

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

19. Nature and extent of risks arising

19.1 Risk and risk management

The Fund's primary long term risk is that the Fund assets will fall short of its liabilities (i.e. promised benefits payable to members). Therefore the aim of investment risk management is to minimise the risk of an overall reduction in the value of the Fund and to maximise the opportunity for gains across the whole of the Fund's investments. The Fund achieves this through asset diversification to reduce its exposure to a variety of financial risks: market risk; other price risk; currency risk; interest rate risk and credit risk to an acceptable level. In addition, the Fund manages its liquidity risk to ensure there is sufficient liquidity to meet the Fund's forecast cash flows. The Fund manages these investment risks as part of its overall pension fund risk management programme.

Responsibility for the Fund's overall risk management strategy rests with the Essex Pension Fund Strategy Board (PSB). Risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced by the Fund's pensions operations. Policies are reviewed regularly to reflect changes in activity and in market conditions.

19.2 Market risk

Market risk is the possibility that financial loss might occur as a result of fluctuations in equity and commodity prices, interest rates and foreign exchange. The level of risk exposure depends on market conditions, expectation of future price and yield movements and the asset mix.

Market risk is inherent in the investments that the Fund makes. To mitigate market risk the investments are made in a diversified pool of asset classes and investment approaches to ensure a risk adjusted balance between categories. The Fund takes formal advice from its institutional investment consultant, Hymans Robertson LLP, along with the Fund's independent adviser and the portfolio is split between a number of managers and investment strategies with different benchmarks and performance targets. Full details can be found in the Investment Strategy Statement which is available from the website www.essexpensionfund.co.uk. Investment risk and strategy are regularly reviewed by the Investment Steering Committee (ISC).

19.3 Other price risk

Other price risk represents the risk that the value of a financial instrument will fluctuate as a result of changes in market prices (other than those arising from interest rate risk or foreign exchange risk) whether those changes are caused by factors specific to the individual instrument, its issuer or factors affecting all such instruments in the market.

The Fund is exposed to share and derivative price risk. This arises from investments held by the Fund for which the future price is uncertain. All investments present a risk of loss of capital. The level of volatility will vary by asset class and also over time. The Fund has some diversification in the asset classes in which it invests, which seeks to reduce the Page 228 of 266 movements between different asset

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

types, while employing specialist investment managers to best deploy capital in line with the Fund's overall strategy.

19.4 Other price risk sensitivity analysis

In consultation with its institutional consultants, Hyman Robertson LLP, an analysis of historical data and expected return movements during the accounting periods in question was undertaken. The table below shows the potential price movements deemed possible for the accounting period 2021/22 and 2020/21. Prior year figures have been restated to reflect the removal of non-financial assets.

The percentages shown in the following table are broadly consistent with a movement of one standard deviation in the value of the Fund's assets, and assumes that all other variables in particular foreign exchange rates and interest rates remain unchanged.

31 March 2020 Potential Market movement %	Asset type	31 March 2021 Potential Market movement %
0.3%	Cash	0.3%
8.0%	Fixed interest securities	7.5%
27.5%	UK equities	16.7%
28.0%	Overseas equities	17.4%
7.4%	UK index linked bonds	7.5%
14.2%	Pooled property unit trusts	14.2%
28.4%	Private equity	28.5%
11.1%	Infrastructure funds	9.5%
20.1%	Timber	21.0%
7.2%	Private debt	4.6%
11.1%	Other managed funds	9.5%

Had the market price of the Fund investments increased/ (decreased) in line with the above assumptions the change in the net assets available to pay benefits would have been as follows:

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

31st March 2020 Restated £000	Percentage change %	Value increase £000	Value decrease £000	Asset type	31st March 2021 £000	Percentage change %	Value increase £000	Value decrease £000
266,913	0.3%	267,714	266,112	Cash and equivalents	255,511	0.3%	256,278	254,744
				Investment portfolio assets				
400,724	8.0%	432,782	368,666	UK fixed interest securities	425,110	7.5%	456,993	393,227
41,678	27.5%	53,139	30,217	UK equities	46,565	16.7%	54,341	38,789
557,905	28.0%	714,118	401,692	Overseas equities	705,064	17.4%	827,745	582,383
235,073	27.5%	299,718	170,428	UK equities unit insurance policies	374,439	16.7%	436,970	311,908
751,609	28.0%	962,060	541,158	Overseas equities insurance policies	1,112,830	17.4%	1,306,462	919,198
481,814	28.0%	616,722	346,906	Global equities insurance policies	835,605	17.4%	981,000	690,210
1,462,857	28.0%	1,872,457	1,053,257	ACCESS pooled global equity funds	2,044,184	17.4%	2,399,872	1,688,496
285,066	7.4%	306,161	263,971	UK index linked bonds	222,663	7.5%	239,363	205,963
165,452	14.2%	188,946	141,958	Pooled property unit trusts	179,292	14.2%	204,751	153,833
340,352	28.4%	437,012	243,692	Private equity	409,514	28.5%	526,225	292,803
276,564	11.1%	307,263	245,865	Infrastructure	485,539	9.5%	531,665	439,413
234,178	20.1%	281,248	187,108	Timber	244,419	21.0%	295,747	193,091
135,587	7.2%	145,349	125,825	Private Debt	152,808	4.6%	159,837	145,779
425,244	11.1%	472,446	378,042	Other managed funds	722,751	9.5%	791,412	654,090
-	-	-	-	Net derivative assets			-	-
6,061,016		7,357,135	4,764,897	Total assets available to pay benefits	8,216,294		9,468,661	6,963,927

19.5 Interest rate risk

The Fund invests in financial assets for the primary purpose of obtaining a return on investments. These investments are subject to interest rate risk, which represent the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. Interest rate risk primarily impacts on the valuation of the Funds' bond holdings and, to a lesser degree, the return it receives on cash held. The Fund has three bond mandates; a passive bond mandate with UBS Asset Management and bond mandates with M&G Investments (M&G) and Goldman Sachs Asset Management (GSAM) in which exposure is actively managed. In addition the Fund has an investment in a private debt mandate.

The Fund's direct exposure to interest rate movements is shown below. The underlying assets are shown at their fair value.

Asset value as at 31 March 2020 £000	Asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2021 £000
250,164	Cash and cash equivalents	206,044
16,749	Cash balances	49,467
400,724	Fixed interest securities	425,110
285,066	Index-linked securities	222,663
135,587	Private debt	152,808
1,088,290	Total assets	1,056,092

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

19.6 Interest rate risk sensitivity analysis

Interest rates have remained constant but this is not always the case and can vary. As a result, any variation in interest rates affects the level of income achievable and the value of the net assets of the Fund to pay benefits. The Fund's institutional consultants, Hymans Robertson, have undertaken a sensitivity analysis and advised that it is reasonable in today's climate that a movement increase/(decrease) of not more than 100 basis points on a year to year basis is possible based on past experience.

The table below shows the effect in the year on the net assets available to pay benefits of an increase/(decrease) of 1% change in interest rates assuming all other factors remain unchanged.

Asset value as at 31 March 2020 £000	Impact of 1% increase £000	Impact of 1% decrease £000	Asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2021 £000	Impact of 1% increase £000	Impact of 1% decrease £000
250,164	250,164	250,164	Cash and cash equivalents	206,044	206,044	206,044
16,749	16,749	16,749	Cash balances	49,467	49,467	49,467
400,724	396,717	404,731	Fixed interest securities	425,110	420,859	429,361
285,066	285,066	285,066	Index-linked securities	222,663	222,663	222,663
135,587	134,231	136,943	Private debt	152,808	151,280	154,336
1,088,290	1,082,927	1,093,653	Total change in assets available	1,056,092	1,050,313	1,061,871

The above analysis demonstrates that a 1% change in interest rates will only impact the fair value of fixed interest and private debt, interest received would be unaffected.

A 1% movement of interest rates on cash and index linked securities would not impact the fair value and would have a negligible effect on interest received.

19.7 Currency risk

Currency risk is the extent to which the fair value of future cash flows of a financial asset/liability will fluctuate due to changes in exchange rates. The Fund is exposed to currency risk on all assets that are denominated in any currency other than sterling its reporting currency. To reduce the volatility associated with fluctuating currency rates (currency risk) the Fund invests in hedged overseas regional index funds via its passive provider UBS Asset Management.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The following table summarises the Fund's currency exposure as at 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021:

31 March 2020 £000	Asset type	31 March 2021 £000
557,905	Overseas equities quoted	705,064
751,609	Overseas unit life assurance policies	1,112,830
481,814	Global unit life assurance policies	835,605
1,462,857	ACCESS pooled global equity funds	2,044,184
31,360	Global property	30,720
340,348	Overseas private equity	409,514
392,963	Overseas infrastructure	607,189
234,178	Overseas timber	244,419
109,895	Overseas private debt	120,352
64,499	Foreign currency	60,510
4,427,428	Total overseas assets	6,170,387

19.8 Currency risk sensitivity analysis

In consultation with the Fund's institutional consultant, Hymans Robertson the Fund considers the likely volatility associated with exchange rate movements to be in the region of **9.8%** (2019/20: 13%) (approximately one standard deviation) assuming other factors remain constant.

The table below shows the effect of a **9.8%** (2019/20: 13%) strengthening/weakening of the pound against the investments the Fund holds in various other currencies. The increase/ (decrease) on the net assets of the Fund are as follows:

Asset value as at 31 March 2020 £000	Change in year in the net assets to pay benefits		Asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2021 £000	Change in year in the net assets to pay benefits	
	+13% £000	-13% £000			+9.8% £000	-9.8% £000
557,905	630,433	485,377	Overseas equities quoted	705,064	774,160	635,968
751,609	849,318	653,900	Overseas unit life assurance policies	1,112,830	1,221,887	1,003,773
481,814	544,450	419,178	Global unit life assurance policies	835,605	917,494	753,716
1,462,857	1,653,028	1,272,686	ACCESS pooled global equity funds	2,044,184	2,244,514	1,843,854
31,360	35,437	27,283	Global property	30,720	33,731	27,709
340,348	384,593	296,103	Overseas private equity	409,514	449,646	369,382
392,963	444,048	341,878	Overseas infrastructure	607,189	666,694	547,684
234,178	264,621	203,735	Overseas timber	244,419	268,372	220,466
109,895	124,181	95,609	Overseas private debt	120,352	132,146	108,558
64,499	72,884	56,114	Foreign currency	60,510	66,440	54,580
4,427,428	5,002,993	3,851,863	Total change in assets available	6,170,387	6,775,084	5,565,690

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

19.9 Credit Risk

Credit risk is the possibility that the counterparty to a transaction or a financial instrument might fail in its obligation to pay amounts due to the Pension Fund resulting in a financial loss. The market value of investments reflects an assessment of credit in their pricing and consequently the risk of loss is implicitly provided for in the carrying value of the Fund's financial assets and liabilities.

The Fund is exposed to credit risk in all its operational activities through forward currency contracts, derivative positions (futures) where applicable and treasury management activities. However, the selection of high quality counterparties, brokers and financial institutions minimises credit risk that may occur through the failure to settle a transaction in a timely manner.

19.10 Commercial

Commercial credit risk also arises with those organisations that pay monies over to the Fund (debtors) as part of the administration function, principally contributions from employers and transfers in from other registered pension schemes.

Except in certain bulk transfer cases, the Fund does not apply service credits in respect of transfers in until cash settlement is made.

Monthly receipt of contributions is closely monitored by the Employer team. In addition, member records are updated throughout the year with any new information provided to them. At the end of the financial year employers are required to provide an annual return which is used to reconcile both member information and the contributions paid over in the year by both the employee and the employer.

The Funding Strategy Statement requires safeguards to be in place on all new admission agreements to protect the Fund from an employer default, including through a guarantee from a tax backed scheme employer for any new body. An analysis of debtor balances at 31 March 2021 is provided in Note 14.

19.11 Bonds

Credit risk will also be considered by the Fund's bond managers in their portfolio construction. A bond is a saleable debt instrument issued by a corporation, government or other entity, the instrument may be purchased direct from the issuer or in the secondary market.

In addition to the passive manager, UBS Asset Management, the Fund has two active bond managers M&G and GSAM. The former also manage a financing fund which is in wind up.

Both M&G and GSAM manage pooled assets against a LIBOR plus benchmark. At 31 March 2020, the average credit quality of the M&G bond mandate was **BBB** rated (**BBB+** rated as at 31 March 2020). The

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

portfolio had suffered seven defaults since inception, one within the financial year ended 31 March 2021 and one within the financial year end as at 31 March 2020.

The portfolio managed by GSAM as at 31 March 2021 had an average credit quality of **AA** (AAA rated as at 31 March 2020) and has suffered fourteen defaults since inception, two within the financial year ending 31 March 2021 and none within the financial year ending 31 March 2020.

19.12 Cash held on deposit and current accounts

Cash managed internally – The Fund has operated a separate bank account since 1 April 2010 with Lloyds Bank plc, which is also banker to the Administering Authority. The Bank holds an **A+** (A+ as at 31 March 2020) long term credit rating with Standard and Poor. Cash is invested with Lloyds and is placed with institutions on the Administering Authority's approved counter-party list. The management of cash is carried out by the Treasury Management function of the Administering Authority in accordance with the treasury management policy and strategy approved by the ISC. The ISC have approved the management of cash in accordance with the policies and practices followed by the Administering Authority for its own investments as outlined in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. The Authority sets detailed credit criteria having taken independent advice and has maximum exposure limits to any single institution. Details of such are shown in the following tables.

At 31 March 2021 **£49.467m** (31 March 2020: £16.749m) was under management by the Administering Authority's Treasury Management Team. Over the last five financial years the Pension Fund has no experience of default or uncollectible deposits.

Cash managed externally – The majority of the cash held by the Fund's custodian, the Northern Trust, is swept overnight to one of two AAA rated money market funds. As at 31 March 2021, the total balance held in the Sterling and US dollar AAA money market funds was **£191.575m** with a smaller balance of **£14.469m** held in the custodian current account (31 March 2020: £224.984m and £25.180m respectively). The use of a money market fund provides an underlying diversification of counter-party and avoids exposure to a single institutional Balance Sheet, in this case the custodian.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

The table below provides a breakdown of where the Pension Fund cash is managed:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
Rating	£000		Rating	£000
		Cash managed externally		
		Cash held on deposit (GLF)		
AAA	96,022	BNP Paribas Investment Partners	AAA	76,420
AAA	128,962	Northern Trust	AAA	115,155
		Cash held in Current Account		
AA-	25,180	Northern Trust	AA-	14,469
	250,164	Total cash managed externally		206,044
		Cash managed internally		
		Cash held on fixed term		
AA	-	Essex County Council	AA	16,000
AA	5,006	Peterborough Council	AA	-
		Cash held on deposit		
AAA	10,000	Blackrock	AAA	6,998
AA-	3	HSBC	A+	4,999
A	1	Santander UK	A	4,998
AAA	-	Standard Life (formerly IGNIS)	AAA	9,995
AA-	3	Svenska Handelsbanken	AA-	5,009
		Cash held in Current Account		
A	1,736	Lloyds Bank plc	A+	1,468
	16,749	Total cash managed internally		49,467
	266,913	Total		255,511

The following table summarises the maximum exposure to credit risk of the cash held with Northern Trust and other financial institutions.

31 March 2020		31 March 2021	Maximum limit per Financial Institution	Historical risk of default	Estimated maximum exposure to default and uncollectability
		£000	£000	%	£000
	Cash managed externally				
	Deposit with bank and other financial institutions				
224,984	AAA Rated	191,575	120,000	0.0400%	77
25,180	AA Rated	14,469	-	0.0200%	3
250,164	Total cash managed externally	206,044			80
	Cash managed internally				
	Deposit with bank and other financial institutions				
10,000	AAA Rated	16,993	10,000	0.0400%	7
5,012	AA Rated	21,009	7,500	0.0200%	2
1,737	A Rated	11,465	5,000	0.0500%	3
16,749	Total cash managed internally	49,467			12
266,913	Total cash	255,511			92

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

Whilst the Fund has a cash limit of £120m for each financial institution within the Treasury Management strategy, there is a facility to exceed the limit on a temporary basis while redeploying assets.

19.13 Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the possibility that the Fund might not have adequate cash resources available to meet its financial commitments as they fall due.

The ISC reviews its strategy on a yearly basis and where necessary takes steps to ensure that the Fund has adequate readily realisable resources to meet its financial commitments. The majority of the Fund's investments are quoted on major stock markets and are in readily realisable form. The Fund also has an allocation to alternative investments, which are relatively illiquid.

In 2017 the ISC took the decision to de-risk reducing its equity allocation from 60% to 50% as a result the strategic allocation to alternatives will increase from 27% to 37% as and when opportunities arise. The Fund is relatively immature with almost as many contributors as pensioners, dependants and deferred pensioners. In consequence the Fund has a neutral cash flow and is able to pay benefits from contributions and income received. As the Fund is not in the position of a forced seller, i.e. it does not need to sell assets in order to pay benefits, it is considered appropriate to hold such illiquid investments to increase diversification, minimise risk and improve long-term investment performance.

The Fund as at 31 March 2021 had immediate access to its pension fund cash holdings held internally and externally of **£255.511m** (31 March 2020: £266.913m). These monies are primarily invested on an overnight basis on the money market.

Officers of the Fund prepare periodic cash flow forecasts to understand and manage the timing of the Fund's cash flows. The Investment Strategy Statement outlines the appropriate strategic level of cash balances that the Fund can hold. More detail can be found in the Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts.

19.14 Custody

Northern Trust are the global custodian with responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the Fund. As at 31 March 2021 Northern Trust had **\$11.5 trillion** of assets under custody (31 March 2020: \$10.8 trillion) and had a credit rating of **AA-** (31 March 2020: AA-). Monthly reconciliations are performed between the underlying records of the custodian and all investment managers and partnerships of the Fund.

20. Events after the Reporting date

The Statement of Accounts was certified by the Executive Director, Finance and Technology on **30 June 2021**. Events taking place after this date were not reflected in the financial statements or notes.

Statement of Accounts - Pension Fund Accounts

21. Further information

The Council publishes a separate Pension Fund Annual Report and Accounts. Copies may be obtained from the website www.essexpensionfund.co.uk or by contacting:

Director for Essex Pension Fund
County Hall
Chelmsford
CM1 1QH

Telephone 03330 138501

E-mail fund.manager@essex.gov.uk

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
Accruals	Sums included in the accounts to cover income or expenditure attributable to an accounting period for goods received or work done, but for which payment has not been received / made, by the end of that accounting period.
Actuarial gains and losses	Changes in the net pensions' liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation, or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions.
Actuarial valuation	A type of appraisal which requires making economic and demographic assumptions in order to estimate future liabilities.
Actuary	A suitably qualified independent consultant employed to advise the Council upon the financial position of either the Pension Fund or the Council's insurance arrangements.
Accumulating Absences	Accumulating absences are those that are carried forward and can be used in future periods if the current period entitlement is not used in full. In local authorities, annual leave, flexitime and time in lieu would usually be accumulating. Accumulating absences are typically earned by employees as they provide services.
Additional voluntary contributions	Additional voluntary contributions (AVC's) are an option available to individuals to secure additional pension benefits by making regular payments in addition to those payable on basic earnings.
Amortised cost	A way of measuring financial instruments that ignores changes in fair value. Defined as the amount at which a financial instrument is measured when it is first brought onto the Balance Sheet.
Amortised financial assets	Investments for which any gains and losses in fair value are not accounted for until the investment matures or is sold.
Amortisation	Amortisation is the writing down of costs to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement over several years.
Appropriations	Appropriations are the transfer of resources into and from the various reserves maintained by the Council.
Available for sale financial assets	Financial assets that have a quoted market price and/or do not have fixed or determinable payments.
Billing authority	City, district and borough councils are responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax and Non-domestic rates (NDR).
Cabinet	The Cabinet comprises the Leader and other Members appointed by the Leader. Each member of the Cabinet has a defined portfolio of responsibilities for the discharge of the Council's business; these portfolios are assigned by the Leader and are reported to the Council.
Capital Adjustment Account	<p>This account represents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amounts set aside from revenue resources to repay external loans; ▪ The financing of capital payments from capital receipts and revenue reserves; and ▪ The consolidation of gains arising from the revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment prior to 1 April 2007.
Capital expenditure	This is expenditure on the acquisition of Property, Plant and Equipment (with certain minor exceptions) that will be of use or benefit to the Council in providing its services for more than one year.
Capital financing costs	Costs associated with the financing of Property, Plant and Equipment, representing interest and principal repayments on loans and contributions from revenue reserves towards capital payments.
Capital financing requirement	This is a measure of the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital financing purposes.

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
CIPFA	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is the main professional body for accountants working in the public service.
Collection Fund	Account maintained by billing authorities for the collection and distribution of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.
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 monuments.
Community Schools	Locally maintained schools that are owned and run by the Council. The Council employs the staff, owns the land and buildings and decides upon the schools' admission criteria.
Council Tax	A local tax set by local authorities to finance their revenue expenditure. The level set by a Council will be dependent on the level by which its budgeted expenditure exceeds income from other sources (for example, grants awarded by central government).
Credit losses	A measure of how much the Council would lose if the amounts owed to it by debtors and borrowers are not repaid. Defined as the shortfall between all the cash flows that are due contractually to the Council and those that it expects to receive.
Creditors	Amounts due, but not yet paid, for work, goods received or services received during the financial year.
Current service cost	The increase in pension liabilities because of service earned during the year.
Current value	A measurement reflecting the economic environment prevailing for the service or function the asset is supporting at the reporting date. Current value measurement bases include 'Existing Use Value', 'Depreciated Replacement Cost' and 'Fair Value'.
Debtors	Amounts due, but not yet received, for work done or services supplied, during the financial year.
Defined benefit pension scheme	A defined benefit pension scheme is any scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually the scheme rules define the benefits independently of the contributions payable and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded (including notionally funded).
Defined contribution pension scheme	A pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions fixed as an amount or as a percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have enough assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current or prior periods.
Depreciated Replacement Cost	A method of valuation which provides a measure of the current cost of replacing an asset with a modern equivalent asset, less deductions for all physical deterioration and all relevant forms of obsolescence and optimisation. It involves imagining what the current asset would need to be substituted with to deliver the same level and quality of service currently being delivered.
Depreciation	Depreciation is a measure of the wearing out, consumption or other reduction in the useful economic life of a fixed asset, whether arising from use, passing of time or obsolescence through technical or other changes.
Discount	Arises from prematurely repaying a loan where the prevailing interest rate is above the rate of interest payable on the loan being repaid - the Council is compensated for the interest rate differential, which is referred to as a 'discount' arising from early settlement of the loan.
Discretionary benefits	Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award and which are awarded under the Council's discretionary powers.
Effective interest rate	The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash receipts through the expected life of the financial asset or, when appropriate, a shorter period, to the net carrying amount of the financial asset. It is used to calculate the amortised cost of an asset or liability.

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
Employee benefits	Employee benefits include wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non monetary benefits for current employees.
Existing Use Value	A valuation method that estimates amount for which an asset or liability should exchange on the valuation date between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's length transaction and disregarding potential alternative uses for the asset.
Expected credit losses	The credit losses that the Council estimates will arise from the amounts that it is currently owed. Expected credit losses are calculated by measuring the losses that would arise from different default scenarios and calculates a weighted average loss based on the probability of each scenario taking place.
Fair value	The price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.
Fair value through profit and loss	Defined as financial assets that do not qualify for measurement at amortised cost.
Fees and charges	Charges made to the public for a variety of services such as the provision of school meals, meals-on-wheels, letting of school halls and the hire of sporting facilities.
Finance leases	Finance leases transfer all, or the majority of, the risks and rewards of ownership of a fixed asset to the lessee. Consequently, the fixed asset is included within the Balance Sheet of the lessee, even though the lessor retains legal title of the asset (also see 'Leasing' and 'Operating Leases').
Financial instruments	Any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. Examples include the borrowing or lending of money and the making of investments.
Foundation Schools	Locally maintained schools that are state-funded by the Council. These schools are run by their governing body. The governing bodies employ the staff, determine the school admission policies and own the school land and buildings.
Heritage Assets	Tangible assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.
IAS	International Accounting Standards.
IFRS	International Financial Reporting Standards. These are accounting standards by which the Council prepares its accounts.
Inventories	Assets acquired or produced for resale or to be consumed or distributed in the provision of services.
Investment properties	Properties held solely to earn rentals and/or for capital appreciation purposes. This definition is not met if the property is used in any way to facilitate the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale.
Investments	<p>A long term investment is intended to be held for use on a continuing basis in the activities of the Council. Investments are so classified only where an intention to hold the investment for the long term (greater than one year) can clearly be demonstrated or where there are restrictions as to the investor's ability to dispose of the investment.</p> <p>Investments, other than those related to the pensions fund that do not meet the above criteria, are classified as current assets.</p>
Joint operations	Joint operations are arrangements where the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets and obligations for the liabilities relating to the arrangement.
Lease	An arrangement for securing the use of a use of capital assets without legal title (ownership). There are two main types of leasing arrangements – namely finance leases and operating leases.

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
Lessee	The party in a lease arrangement who secures the use of an asset over an agreed period of time in exchange for payment, but does not secure legal title to the asset.
Lessor	The party in a lease arrangement who retains legal title of an asset but lets out that asset to another party in exchange for rental payments.
Loans and receivables	Assets that have fixed or determinable payments but are not quoted in an active market.
Non Domestic Rates	These rates are how local businesses contribute to the cost of providing local authority services. Business rates are collected by the billing authorities and are distributed in accordance government regulations.
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	The change during the period in the net pension liability that arises from the passage of time. It includes interest income on plan assets and interest costs on the pension liability. It is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the net pension obligation at the beginning of the period to the net pension liability at the beginning of the period – considering any changes in the net pension liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.
Non-current assets held for sale	Property, Plant and Equipment assets that the Council is formally committed to sell and is actively marketing them in their current condition and where sale is expected within the next 12 months.
Operating lease	Operating leases are agreements for the rental of assets where the rewards and risks of ownership of the asset remain with the leasing company. The annual rentals are charged directly to the Income and Expenditure Account (also see Leasing and Finance Leases).
Past service cost	The increase in pension liabilities arising from a current year pension scheme amendment or a curtailment, whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years.
Pooled Budget	A type of partnership arrangement whereby NHS organisations and local authorities contribute an agreed level of resource into a single pot (the 'pooled budget') that is then used to commission or deliver health and social care services.
Precept	The amount the County Council requires the city, borough and district councils to pay from the Council Tax they have collected (on behalf of all authorities that set Council Tax) to meet the cost of County Council services.
Premium	Arises from prematurely repaying a loan where the prevailing interest rate is below the rate of interest payable on the loan being repaid. The differential between the two rates is paid to the lender, in the form of a 'premium' arising from early settlement of the loan.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	A long-term contractual public private partnership under which the private sector takes on the risks associated with the delivery of public services in exchange for payments tied to agreed standards of performance.
Property, Plant and Equipment	Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the provision or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and are expected to be used during more than one financial year.
Provisions	An amount set aside to provide for a liability that is likely to be incurred as a result of a past event, prior to the Balance Sheet date, but where the exact amount and the date on which it will arise is uncertain.
Public Private Partnership (PPP)	An arrangement where the private sector partner agrees to provide a service to a public sector organisation.
Public Works Loan Board	The PWLB is a government agency that provides longer-term loans to local authorities, at interest rates marginally above the Government's borrowing rate.

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
Remuneration	Remuneration includes all amounts paid to or receivable by a person, including sums due by way of expense allowances (so far as these are chargeable to tax) and the estimated money value of any other benefits received by an employee otherwise than in cash.
Return on plan assets	Interest, dividends and other income derived from the Local Government Pension Scheme's assets (excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability), together with realised and unrealised gains or losses on those assets, less costs of managing the assets and any taxes payable.
Reserves	<p>The Council's accumulated surplus income in excess of expenditure, which can be used to finance future spending and is available to meet unforeseen financial events.</p> <p>Earmarked reserves are amounts set aside for a specific purpose in one financial year and can be carried forward to meet expenditure in future years.</p>
Revenue provision for repayment of debt	The minimum amount which must be charged, by Regulation, to the revenue account each year for repaying external loans.
Revenue Support Grant	This is the central government financial support towards the general expenditure of local authorities.
Retirement benefits	All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after the completion of employment. Retirement benefits do not include termination benefits payable. This is because these are not given in exchange for services rendered by employees.
RICS	The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) is the professional body for qualifications and standards in land, property, infrastructure and construction.
Salary	Salary represents the amounts received under contract of employment for services rendered, other than bonuses, allowances, benefits in kind or compensation payments.
Scheme liabilities	The liabilities of a defined benefit pension scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the 'projected unit method' reflects the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.
SeRCOP	CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice provides a framework for consistent financial reporting by local authorities in order that consistency and comparability are achieved.
Settlement	An irrevocable action that relieves the employer (or the defined benefit scheme) of the primary responsibility for a pension obligation and eliminates significant risks relating to the obligation and the assets used to effect the settlement.
Specific government grant	These represent central government financial support towards local authority services, which the Government wishes to target.
Surplus properties	Properties not being used to deliver services but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either investment properties or non-current assets held for sale.
Termination benefits	Termination benefits are payable either because of an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date, or an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits. They are often lump-sum payments, but also include enhancement of retirement benefits; and salary until the end of a specified notice period if the employee renders no further service that provides economic benefits to the entity.
Voluntary aided schools	In these schools, all the running costs and most of the building costs are funded by central government via the Council. The remaining building costs are met by the religious body that owns the school land and buildings. The governing body, comprising most governors appointed by the religious body, employs the school staff and sets the school's admission arrangements in consultation with the Council.

Statement of Accounts - Glossary

Term	Explanation
Voluntary controlled schools	These schools are state funded via the Council. A religious body has some formal influence in running the school, including appointing a proportion of the school governors, and owns the school land and buildings. The Council employs the school staff though, and has primary responsibility for the school's admission arrangements.

Annual Governance Statement

Annual Governance Statement

Introduction

This statement summarises the outcome of Essex County Council's (ECC) review of the governance arrangements that have been in place during 2020/21.

ECC is responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance which incorporates the system of internal control. The local [code of governance](#) is underpinned by the seven principles of good governance set out in the CIPFA/SOLACE publication 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework 2016'.

The local code of governance comprises a collection of systems, policies, procedures, rules, processes, behaviours and values by which ECC is controlled and governed. This was reviewed in April 2021 in line with current CIPFA guidance and the [code of governance](#) external webpage was refreshed at the same time.

The effectiveness of key elements of the governance framework are assessed throughout the year by the Corporate Governance Steering Board, the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, Internal Audit and other Officers and Members as required. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of senior Officers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Assurance's annual report, Service Assurance Statements (completed by all Executive Directors) and from comments received from external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The review demonstrates that the arrangements provide satisfactory assurance and continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. Detailed findings are outlined under points 1 – 20 below:

Findings

The findings of this review are outlined under points 1 – 20 below:

- 1. Developing codes of conduct which define standards of behaviour for members and staff, and policies dealing with whistleblowing and conflicts of interest and that these codes and policies are communicated effectively.**

All ECC employees and Members must conduct themselves in accordance with the terms of the [Officer Code of Conduct](#) and Member Code of Conduct (part 5 of the [Constitution](#)).

All Members have attended training on the Code of Conduct and refresher sessions are offered annually. A session is programmed for May 2021 as part of the induction of all Members, following the May 2021 election.

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee advises the Council on the local Code of Conduct for Members and promotes high standards of conduct by Members. The Committee's

Annual Governance Statement

terms of reference are set out in the [Constitution](#). Records of the Committee's meetings and decisions are available online. One standards complaint was made during 2020/21, but that was not investigated as it was a service complaint.

In December 2020 the Local Government Association published a model code of conduct, following the recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. A meeting of the Essex monitoring officers concluded that the rules in LGA model code relating to declaring interests were considerably more complex than the current rules and collectively we were unable to recommend adoption. The position is similar to that taken in other areas across the country, though for some councils the LGA model code represents an improvement over their current arrangement. We are in discussion with the LGA about the future of the model code. In March 2021 the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee decided not to recommend to the Council that the model code was adopted.

ECC corporate governance e-learning training includes modules called 'How We Behave' and 'Good Decision Making' which cover the Code of Conduct and other expectations for Councillors and employees. Completion rates for all governance e-learning modules for officers and Members are monitored at Corporate Governance Steering Board.

In May 2016 the Council adopted a [Policy](#) that all Members are asked to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check when elected. This was followed up after the May 2017 elections and subsequently after the by-election in October 2019, and all Members were DBS checked. All Members will be DBS checked again within three months of the May 2021 elections.

ECC has arrangements in place for employees, consultants or contractors to raise any concerns they have in the workplace. The [Whistle-Blowing Policy](#) is available for employees online and provides advice and guidance about informal and formal ways to raise concerns relating to possible wrongdoing. An Internal Audit review of the Council's whistleblowing arrangements received an overall assurance opinion of "satisfactory" during the 2020-21 financial year.

An external company called Expolink provides an independent and confidential route for any whistle-blowing allegations from staff and contractors. Any referrals through this route are rigorously investigated through a set process. These arrangements are also covered in the Anti-Fraud and Corruption corporate governance e-learning.

ECC has a strong Counter Fraud Team that supports investigations into allegations and instigates appropriate recovery action where necessary. The counter fraud service was independently audited in 2019/20. The audit's objective was to assess whether the Counter Fraud Team has effective proactive and reactive processes to deter, prevent, detect, and investigate and prosecute, where appropriate, potentially fraudulent and corrupt behaviour. The overall opinion given was Satisfactory Assurance.

All employees must declare any interests in line with the Declaration of Interests Policy, all employees are asked to complete this once a year or whenever their situation changes.

Annual Governance Statement

Members are required to register details of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and a series of interests defined by the Code of Member Conduct. Declarations are required to be completed within 28 days of becoming a member (or being re-elected or reappointed) in the Authority's Register of Members' Interests. This is set out in section 24.6 of the Constitution. In May 2017 ECC moved to an online form to aid efficient reporting of member interests. All registers are published on the Council's website, under the individual [Councillor's profile](#).

2. Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.

The Monitoring Officer is the Director, Legal and Assurance, and is responsible for ensuring lawfulness in decision making. The Section 151 Officer is the Executive Director for Finance and Technology and is responsible for financial administration and financial probity and prudence in decision making. Both roles are defined within Part 2 of the [Constitution](#).

The Chief Audit Executive is responsible for providing assurance on internal controls and ensuring that there are adequate mechanisms in place for the investigation and reporting of fraud. The Chief Audit Executive is the Head of Assurance.

Each Executive Director is required to complete and formally sign off a Service Assurance Statement (SAS) accompanied by a plan setting out actions to be taken to strengthen any areas of weakness identified. The SAS covers key lines of enquiry on governance arrangements including service planning, budget, people, information, partnerships, risk, business continuity, equalities and health and safety. This gives an overall picture of assurance across the authority.

These Statements were completed in April 2021, collated and analysed. The organisation's 2020/21 Service Assurance Statements returned a **satisfactory overall assessment**. Where necessary improvements have been identified and the relevant directors are responsible for securing remedial action in these areas.

All reports prepared for Cabinet require legal advice to be sought prior to their submission, and all reports to Cabinet or Cabinet Members must incorporate comments from both the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer before they are submitted for consideration. The reports are also considered at a Cabinet Agenda Setting Meeting before the public meeting.

The scheme of delegations to Officers, to committees and to Cabinet Members helps ensure that decisions are not *ultra vires* whilst allowing ECC to exercise its powers in a convenient way.

The Council seeks to comply with both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on us by the common law and public law, bringing the key principles of good administrative law into processes and decision making.

3. Documenting a commitment to openness and acting in the public interest

Annual Governance Statement

ECC's [Publication scheme](#) details the different classes of information which ECC routinely makes available and the '[request information](#)' webpage provides guidance for the public about what information is available to them and how they can access it, including via Freedom of Information (FOI), Environmental Information and Subject Access Requests. ECC publishes responses to FOI requests which can be found on the [Request information](#) search online.

The [ECC website](#) is accessible to a wide audience, with relevant and regularly updated news articles online. ECC's [Accessibility Statement](#) can be found online.

Copies of the agendas, documents, minutes and decisions of all Committees, Cabinet and Council are available promptly online and an interactive online calendar of future meetings enables public attendance where appropriate. During 2020/21 we maintained our full programme of meetings on a remote basis. Audio of all Council, Cabinet and most other committee meetings are broadcast live on the website and are [available to listen to after the meeting](#), in the latter part of 2020 and in 2021 we also streamed our meetings live on YouTube, they can be viewed on the [ECC Democracy YouTube channel](#).

ECC publishes data under the [Government's Transparency Code](#) including [Council spending](#), [Council contracts](#) and [senior salaries](#).

The [Vision for Essex](#), developed with partners and ECC's [Organisation Strategy](#) (see section 5) outlines how ECC commits to work in the public interest. ECC's commitment to transparency, as detailed above, enables the public to assess this and they can then use the [complaints policy](#) and the consultation process to feedback their views. An Internal Audit review of Complaints Handling in 2019/20 gave an overall opinion of Satisfactory Assurance.

4. Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation

The [Communications and Marketing Strategy](#) outlines how ECC communicates with all sections of the community, employees and stakeholders.

A [budget consultation](#) was undertaken for 2020/21. It was open to the public and promoted through social media, print media, business, voluntary and charity sector networks.

All communications are branded to ensure that they are easily recognised, and the information can be translated into different languages and alternative formats as required.

The [constitution](#) allows public speaking on items on the agenda of Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and Development and Regulatory Committee for public questions to be asked at Full Council. ECC's social media feeds have encouraged people to listen to public meetings as they are simultaneously audio-broadcast online. At many meetings members of the public can ask a question and expect their elected representatives to respond. Within the last few years there has been a steady increase in the number and frequency of questions from members of the public. During 2020-21 all formal meetings were held remotely. We maintained the ability for members

Annual Governance Statement

of the public to be able to ask questions during the pandemic on a remote basis and this led to an increase in questions asked. It is likely that we will allow remote questions to continue once we return to face to face meetings.

The [Petitions Policy](#) is available online. In 2020/21 ECC received 8 petitions.

ECC proactively engages with communities in order to seek out their views, actively listen to them and support them to respond. There are a range of ways in which people can be involved in shaping decisions. This includes statutory consultations, surveys which can be completed online or paper questionnaires plus telephone and accessible format options, focus groups, face to face interviews, ethnographic work, workshops and consultation/discussion events.

A group of Officers hold an oversight role for all consultations that ECC is currently undertaking or planning to undertake. They seek to ensure that the consultation that is presented to the public engages with the target communities and seeks a full set of responses which can be used to inform the Council's decision making. All consultations are signed off by cabinet Members prior to release.

The consultation portal '[Consultations in Essex](#)' also known as [Citizen Space](#) is used by ECC for both public and internal consultations and for truly collaborative partnership consultations, to manage online consultations. There is a list of open and closed consultations and the purpose of each consultation is described so it is possible to take part in those that are open. The contact details of the consultation owners are given so that anyone with a question can contact the owner and there is a 'We Asked, You Said, We Did' section so that citizens can view information about what happened as a result.

ECC has been working collaboratively with adults with an experience of disability to ensure users with disabilities are involved in the design of appropriate services. The new model for engagement is known as 'Collaborate Essex' and provides various channels of engagement that give opportunities to a much wider range of people. This includes new county-wide local learning disability groups called Ability Before Disability (AB4D). These groups are completely user-focused and aim, empower and enable adults with a learning disability and autism to be involved in meaningful engagement activity. There is also A Collaboration In Action Forum, which has representatives across all disabilities, who meet with senior ECC Officers and Members to set a forward plan engagement activity and to discuss issues that are important to people with disabilities across the county. ECC launched the [Essex Residents' Panel](#) in 2020/21 which aims to have a representative sample of Essex residents who are looking to take part in research and engagement activities across the council. The panel will provide on-going dialogue and provide insight into ongoing council projects.

ECC also supports young people to provide views through a range of groups including the Young Essex Assembly and the Children in Care Council.

Annual Governance Statement

Although the pandemic has affected consultations from a face-to-face perspective, residents have adapted to moving to digital engagement during this period. The Research and Citizen Insight Team have used digital methods to actively seek thoughts and feelings of Essex residents.

5. Developing and communicating a vision which specifies intended outcomes for citizens and service users and is used as a basis for planning.

A [Vision for Essex](#) called 'the Future of Essex' is available online. The Essex Vision was co-created alongside partners in 2017 and sets out ambitions for the County until 2035. It comprises a set of ambitions which can only be delivered through effective, joined-up partnership. ECC is clear that 'whole system thinking' is the key to improving public services, reducing costs to taxpayers and getting the best outcomes for residents.

6. Translating the vision into courses of action for the authority, its partnerships and collaborations

The [Organisation Strategy](#) 2017-21 can be found online, this articulates ECC's strategic aims and priorities and integrates the authority's Equality objectives. A new Strategy will be presented to Council in July 2021 in draft form with the input of the administration elected in May 2021. It is expected that it will be presented to Council in October 2021 for final sign-off.

ECC's [Organisation Plan and budget 2021/22](#) was endorsed at Full Council on 23 February 2021.

In addition the [Essex Joint health and wellbeing strategy 2018-22](#) was considered and endorsed by the Health and Well-being Board in July 2018 and at Cabinet in September 2018.

Further detail in terms of partnerships and collaborations can be found in section 20.

7. Reviewing the effectiveness of the decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision-making in partnerships, information provided to decision makers and robustness of data quality

Article 5 of the [Constitution](#) defines the responsibilities for decision making and the principles in accordance with which decisions must be made.

The Strategy, Insight and Engagement Team provides ECC with the evidence it needs to inform decisions affecting commissioning and operational service delivery, such as population analysis, demand forecasting and needs assessments, as well as enabling the organisation to manage performance, engage with citizens and service users and maintain key business intelligence systems. All reports are reviewed and signed off by the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer to ensure the financial impact of any decision is properly recognised before that decision is taken, and the Council's decisions are lawful.

All agendas, minutes and decisions taken by Cabinet Members are available to the public through ECC's [website](#). The online committee management system which ensures easily accessible and

Annual Governance Statement

good quality information is always available about decisions and Member meetings, this also ensures that the committee process is efficiently managed.

Reports to Cabinet are considered at an informal Cabinet Agenda Setting Meeting before the formal Cabinet meeting. This allows Members of the Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team to review the quality of reports and ensure they are easy for the public to understand before they are formally submitted to a Cabinet meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees play a key role to inform and challenge decisions carried out within each service. Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee has its own terms of reference and these are set out in the [Constitution](#). All relevant papers can be found on ECC's [Committee Management Information System](#).

ECC intranet pages provide Officers and councillors with access to information about decision making, including an easy to use decision tree on how to make formal decisions. The Corporate Governance E-learning also covers decision making (see section 13).

In 2020/21 248 decisions requiring an Equality Impact Assessment were published of these 243 or 98% had one completed.

ECC has a robust Data Quality Strategy in place, it was reviewed in 2020 in line with the introduction of a new Information Governance Policy Booklet which was designed to streamline the presentation and communication of these policies.

ECC's decision making processes were the subject of an Internal Audit review in 2019, the final report, issued in December 2019 gave a 'Good Assurance' opinion and found that there are good processes in place so that decisions are made in line with the Constitution's requirements of who makes the decision and that such decisions are made openly and transparently with evidence of required consultation and equality analyses.

8. Measuring the performance of services and related projects and ensuring that they are delivered in accordance with defined outcomes and that they represent the best use of resources and value for money

The Organisation Performance Report is reviewed by The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on a quarterly basis. ECC publishes an [annual report](#) which measures progress against the goals set in the organisation strategy. Alongside this ECC publishes the detailed data in the annual [performance tables](#). The 2019/20 report can be found online, and the 2020/21 report will be published later in the year.

Corporate Governance issues are monitored in a quarterly performance report to the Corporate Governance Steering Board. For 2021/22 ECC will be introducing an Organisational Health report, it will set out information on key themes relevant to Organisational Health and Assurance on a quarterly basis. It is intended to be a single, authoritative report setting out key issues for senior officers and members.

Annual Governance Statement

Scrutiny plays a key role in ensuring quality is delivered, providing an independent and robust challenge to delivery of ECC's objectives and holding Cabinet to account for delivery.

The Procurement Strategy and procedures provide a framework of best practice for all procurement activities which support ECC in achieving value for money and delivering on corporate objectives.

ECC Service Quality has been recognised nationally during 2020/21:

- Essex Libraries Baby and Toddler Rhymetimes won the Highly Recommended Award in the category Best Baby and Toddler group for the Essex Mums Awards in September 2020
- Bronze Winner: Recruitment Team, Large: Inhouse Recruitment Awards
- Gold Winner: Future Talent Initiative: Inhouse Recruitment Awards
- Highly Commended: Inclusion Project 2020: Genius Within
- Highly Commended: Making a Difference, Public Sector 2020, RIDI Awards

9. Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of members and management, with clear protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnership arrangements

The law and [Constitution](#) clearly defines the responsibilities of key member and officer roles.

Part 3 of the [Constitution](#) sets out how Councillors' authority is delegated to Cabinet Members and Officers. Chief Officers are in turn responsible for authorising delegations to their Officers. All delegations are updated when roles or structures change.

The protocol on member/officer relations contained within Part 5 of the [Constitution](#) further defines the day-to-day roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members.

The Council has [Financial Regulations](#) which provide a framework to identify financial responsibilities and the financial limits assigned to individual Officers. These also outline the responsibilities in relation to partnerships and commissioning arrangements. The Financial Regulations are kept under regular review, with the last update approved at Full Council on 11 July 2017.

10. Ensuring that financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (April 2016), where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact

Financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (April 2016). The Chief

Annual Governance Statement

Financial Officer in 2020/21 was the Executive Director for Finance and Technology. The Director, Finance was the deputy Section 151 Officer.

11. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function

For 2020/21 the Monitoring Officer was the Director, Legal and Assurance and both the Head of Legal and the Head of Democracy and Transparency were the deputy Monitoring Officers.

12. Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the head of the paid service function

For the year 2020/21 the Head of the Paid Service was the Chief Executive.

13. Providing induction and identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training

The Member Development Steering Group takes ownership of Members' development and is responsible for shaping the Member Development Strategy and Programme. ECC has held Member Development Charter Plus status since November 2014, this was reaccredited in March 2018 and, more recently, ECC passed a mid-point review in September 2019.

Following elections in May 2017 all Members were asked to complete a personal development planning questionnaire and then supported in developing a Personal Development Plan. By March 2018 87% of Members had a Personal Development Plan in place. Members were offered a comprehensive Induction after the May 2017 Election and there are regular briefing and development sessions throughout their term of office. This will be replicated following the May 2021 elections. Throughout 2020, member development continued to be delivered to support the development needs of Members, this took place on a virtual basis.

Throughout 2020, ECC continued to build on the strong foundations of the People Plan which was launched in November 2018, this workforce strategy sets out how ECC will build employee capability, skills and culture for the future. The People Plan is a key building block of the [Organisation Strategy](#) and will help ensure ECC achieves the strategic priority to transform the council to achieve more with less. A key strand of this plan is enabling growth and development which focuses on three areas:

- Management and leadership development
- Learning organisation
- Career development

ECC has updated the leadership and management development framework and is currently developing the learning to support the key skills and capabilities identified within it. My Learning continues to flourish, with new content to reflect the requirements of ECC's ever changing

Annual Governance Statement

context, for example; to support a working environment where people feel able to contribute their thoughts and ideas.

ECC have successfully moved all learning opportunities to the virtual environment. These have included senior leadership briefings, corporate onboarding sessions, management development sessions, on demand resources aimed at supporting managers and leaders to manage remote teams. ECC also ran a dedicated learning campaign centred on remote working in the summer of 2020 and delivered LearnFest 2020 in the autumn as a fully virtual festival, where one of the four key elements focused on re-imagining leadership in this new, hybrid-working world.

ECC has also focused on embedding its approach to Performance Development. The focus has been on ensuring that regular, flexible and meaningful check-in conversations take place a minimum of every eight weeks – either virtual or physically in person, where restrictions have allowed. The four key elements of the conversation are: performance, wellbeing, development and two-way feedback. ECC has made available to all employees learning and development opportunities, such as workshops and bite-sized webinars, to help ensure both parties share accountability for ensuring these conversations are effective. There has been a broader offer for those with line management responsibilities. The My Performance Development system, as part of Cornerstone on Demand, has been introduced to enable employees and their line managers to capture key points and actions from the check-in conversations.

Finally, ECC is currently developing its approach to succession and talent management with a high-level strategy agreed and elements being tested with individual functions and services. This activity will continue throughout the year with overall delivery expected in the second half of 2021. The approach combines robust methodology with the functionality provided through Cornerstone on Demand and is integrated with approaches to performance development and the leadership and management development framework.

14. Reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and for performance and demonstrating clear accountability.

ECC's Risk Management Strategy was fully reviewed and refreshed and approved at Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in March 2021. It is available to staff with an accompanying Risk Management Toolkit and these are reviewed at least annually to ensure they remain fit for purpose. Training on risk management is provided on request

Comments on the effectiveness of the Council's risk arrangements are included in the Head of Assurance Annual Report which is presented to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in June 2021. The Internal Audit review of the Council's risk management arrangements for 2020/21 received a Satisfactory Assurance opinion.

ECC has a corporate risk management system that records both strategic and service risks and the assigned owners. The system provides automated prompts to risk owners for updates to recorded risks.

Annual Governance Statement

A Strategic Risk Report is formally considered monthly by the Corporate Leadership Team where they consider current and emerging risks and issues and determine appropriate action. This report is informally discussed by members of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

15. Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption (CIPFA, 2014).

ECC has a dedicated Counter Fraud Team within the Assurance Service. The Counter Fraud Team have undertaken proactive prevention and detection work, including participation in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI), data matching exercises with other Essex authorities and internal data matching exercises. The team also deliver directed fraud awareness training in addition to the mandatory Corporate Governance e-learning modules which includes Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Anti-Bribery and Money Laundering.

An external company called Expolink provides an independent and confidential route for any whistle-blowing allegations from staff and contractors. Any referrals through this route are rigorously investigated through a set process.

A total of **159** referrals have been received and investigated by the Counter Fraud Team during 2020/21.

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee received quarterly updates in respect of counter fraud activity and a summary is included in the Head of Assurance Annual Report.

The Council's counter fraud arrangements have been assessed against the CIPFA Counter Fraud Code of Practice and the organisation has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud.

16. Ensuring an effective scrutiny function is in place.

Essex County Council has four policy and scrutiny committees. In addition, there is currently one Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (JHOSC), looking at proposals arising from local Sustainability and Transformation Plans, with Suffolk County Council. Details of the previous Joint Health Scrutiny Committees can be found [online](#).

Three of the policy and scrutiny committees are chaired by the governing administration. The Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee is chaired by the Leader of the largest opposition group. Each of the Committees has two vice-chairmen, one opposition member and one administration member.

Induction, training and support is provided to individual Members and whole committees to support them in their policy development and holding-to-account roles. In anticipation of the election to take place in May 2021 a robust induction is being planned. Following discussion and feedback from Members this will be structured differently from the induction offered following

Annual Governance Statement

the election in 2017, with introductory sessions covering the fundamentals of the scrutiny function itself, and later sessions then focussing on the remits and responsibilities of the individual scrutiny committees. It is intended that this approach will enable the committees to get up to speed more quickly and therefore commence their work programmes earlier. Sessions will be open to all Councillors, whether or not they are new or serving on a committee, to also act as a refresher for those with current or previous experience.

The Chairmen of the four committees (and the Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee) meet as the Scrutiny Board on a bi-monthly basis, to oversee the coordination of scrutiny activity, consider its development strategically and share best practice.

There is close working between committee Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and their cabinet counterparts, with meetings scheduled on request to discuss key areas of work and direction. Scrutiny Members are involved in influencing policy development (pre-decision scrutiny) and well as post decision scrutiny.

In 2020/21 scrutiny in ECC was supported by Officers within Democratic Services and the Head of Democracy and Transparency was the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

It is of great credit to both Members and Officers that the scrutiny function continued uninterrupted throughout the disruption caused by the pandemic, commencing in March 2020. Members and Officers were quick to embrace remote working solutions and public access to meetings was effectively continued. Two significant pieces of work were completed by Task and Finish groups in addition to the regularly scheduled formal committee meetings and ad hoc briefings. At all times the impact of the pandemic on frontline staff was considered when Committees and working groups made requests for information and great care was taken not to unduly add to this burden.

More detail on the work of Scrutiny can be found in the Scrutiny Annual Report, the [2019/20 report](#) can be found online and the 2020/21 report will be published with the Annual Council meeting papers in May 2021.

17. Ensuring that assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact

The role of the Chief Audit Executive was fulfilled by the Head of Assurance during 2020/21. The Head of Assurance also has responsibilities for other operational services including Health & Safety, Risk Management, Insurance, Counter Fraud, Emergency Planning and Resilience. The arrangements for ensuring independence were outlined in the [Audit Charter](#) which was reviewed, updated and presented to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in March 2021.

Assurance arrangements for 2020/21 conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit. The UK Public Sector Internal Audit

Annual Governance Statement

Standards (PSIAS) provide clear standards for internal audit which ECC complies with. ECC undertakes an annual self-assessment against the standards and had an external review carried out by CIPFA in 2018 which demonstrated compliance with the Standards in all material aspects.

18. Undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (CIPFA, 2013).

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee has undertaken the key functions required of it by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance's (CIPFA) guidance on the role of audit committees. The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's role and purpose is set out in Articles of the [constitution](#).

The Committee continues to have a close working relationship with the internal and external auditors and has played an active role in relation to counter-fraud, as stated above.

The Committee met five times during the 2020/21 financial year, in public. [Their work](#) has included receiving internal audit and counter fraud progress reports, including detail of all Limited Assurance reviews from the Head of Assurance and the extent to which remedial recommendations have been implemented. In July 2020 it approved ECC's 2019/20 [Statement of Accounts](#).

All recommendations arising from internal audit activity are tracked with monthly automated emails sent to owners of recommendations to request status updates via a web-based system. Summary reports on outstanding recommendations are presented to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. The Corporate Governance Steering Board also monitor implementation of recommendations as one of their indicators of effective organisational governance. This provides good accountability and visibility of Internal Audit recommendations.

All reviews with a 'No' or 'Limited Assurance' opinion are also subject to a follow-up audit review. During 2020/21 for any reviews receiving limited assurance the relevant Officers from the service area reviewed were invited to Audit, Governance and Standards Committee to give an overview of the issues raised and actions agreed to remedy them. (There were no 'No Assurance' reviews in 2020/21)

In 2019 the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee agreed to commission CIPFA to support the Committee to undertake a review of its effectiveness. During 2020 an action plan was agreed and all actions completed within the 2020/21 financial year, with the exception of a skills audit which was deferred until after the May 2021 election, this included appointing an independent member to the Committee and the Committee now produce an annual report on their activities.

In 2020 the Redmond Review was published. This made a number of recommendations, three of which were addressed to Local Authorities. The implementation of these recommendations was completed in May 2021 when the annual audit letter was presented to the Annual meeting of the Council.

Annual Governance Statement

19. Ensuring that the authority provides timely support, information and responses to external auditors and properly considers audit findings and recommendations.

The Chief Accountant and the Chief Audit Executive meet with the external auditors on a regular basis to discuss audit activity and ensure that appropriate support is being provided. Quarterly meetings are also held with the S151 Officer to review the audit plan and key recommendations.

The external audit of the 2019/20 financial year took place within 2020/21. Although completion of the audit was delayed, BDO LLP, the external auditors, were clear that they received good support from the Council and the principal reason for the delay was the pandemic and working remotely.

20. Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working and ensuring that they are reflected across the authority's overall governance structures

Essex is committed to a shared vision called 'the Future of Essex' which comprises a set of ambitions which can only be delivered through effective, joined-up partnership. As a Council we are clear that 'whole system thinking' is the key to improving public services, reducing costs to taxpayers and getting the best outcomes for residents.

Governance of our shared vision is the responsibility of the Essex Partners Board, who meet at least three times per year to steer the work of partners together to deliver shared priorities for Essex communities. The Essex Partners Board directs and oversees progress on, strategic plans which influence the decisions made to shape the future direction of policy and the provision of services within the county. Over the last year the Essex Partners have worked to refocus their priorities for the short term focusing in on the ambitions that will have the greatest impact on recovery from the pandemic. The ambitions of sharing prosperity with everyone, providing an equal foundation for every child, and strengthening communities through participation will form the core of the boards work over the next 12 months.

In addition Essex Partners will continue to support a culture of system learning and in place of the Essex Assembly previously held twice per year, the partners will oversee a series of virtual learning events bringing together local and national best practice to support whole systems working.

Essex Partners and the Essex Health & Wellbeing Board are supported by Essex Strategic Coordination Group, who coordinate action responding to priorities identified by partners and partnerships across the whole Essex system. This year we have also put in networks aligned to the priorities of Essex Partners to help support co-ordination at an operational and project delivery level. These networks will provide greater join up between the shared vision and the activity we take forward as organisations individually and collectively.

The County Council is the accountable body for the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), SELEP became a limited company as of February 2020. An ECC Internal Audit of SELEP

Annual Governance Statement

received Good Assurance in 2021, it concluded that governance arrangements and decision making, financial and project management processes are designed and working satisfactorily. No recommendations were made.

Each of the three Essex-based sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) has now been designated by NHS England as an integrated care system (ICS).

Each ICS has an independent Chair, their role is to chair the partnership board meetings, to help local systems develop their visions and strategies, and to informally hold organisations to account for their commitment and collaborative working within the STPs. Each ICS is a member of, and reports to, the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board.

Each ICS has a single accountable officer who oversees the clinical commissioning groups. This means there is a single accountable officer for Hertfordshire and West Essex; for Mid and South Essex (including Southend and Thurrock); and for Suffolk and North East Essex. Each ICS has also established local partnerships or alliances that bring together local government, primary, secondary and acute health services, and the voluntary and community sector. The NHS has appointed local managing directors for each alliance/partnership – for clarity, these are the Mid Essex Live Well Partnership; the North East Essex Alliance; the One Health and Care Partnership in West Essex; the South East Essex Alliance (covering Castle Point, Rochford and Southend); the South West Essex Alliance (covering Basildon and Brentwood); and the Thurrock Alliance.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, all Essex-based NHS and local government partners have worked collaboratively together through the Essex local resilience forum and also through a dedicated tactical co-ordination group for health and social care. ECC, Southend and Thurrock and NHS partners have also established a capacity planning group, where demand pressures and forecasts can be understood and responded to.

The Government has published a white paper in February 2021 indicating an intention to pass legislation in 2021 to make the ICS's statutory from April 2022. This would abolish the existing clinical commissioning groups and replace them with a new statutory NHS ICS body and a new statutory ICS Health and Care Partnership Board, which NHS, public health and social care would need to have regard to. It is expected that health and wellbeing boards will sit alongside the proposed statutory health and care partnership board.

The Essex Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) receives regular updates from the three ICS's and also has established joint working with neighbouring HOSCs when an issue has crossed local authority boundaries.

As part of the Better Care Fund (BCF), ECC has established pooled funds with the five clinical commissioning groups in Essex. The BCF is "owned" by the Health and WellBeing Board (HWB) on behalf of ECC and the five Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), NHS England require that it is approved by the HWB before submission. BCF is also approved by Cabinet and the individual CCG

Annual Governance Statement

Boards. ECC are the administrative body for the BCF. An Internal Audit of the arrangements in 2021 received a Good Assurance opinion

Head of Assurance Opinion

The Head of Assurance's overall audit opinion on the internal control environment (framework of governance, risk management and internal control) is one of **Satisfactory Assurance** which means that although there are some weaknesses which may put individual system/process/service objectives at risk of achievement, there is an overall satisfactory system of internal control, appropriately designed to meet the Council's objectives, and controls are generally being applied consistently.

The Head of Assurance Annual Report provides a summary of the activity used to support this opinion is published in June 2021.

External Audit

The External Auditors BDO LLP provided an [unqualified opinion](#) on the 2019/2020 financial statements. This was reported to the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in 2020. The external auditors for the 2020/21 financial year remains BDO LLP.

External inspections

None during 2020/21.

COVID-19 Response

The Coronavirus had a significant impact on ECC operations throughout 2020/21. ECC has chosen to respond in a different way to many local authorities. In particular:

- Decision making arrangements were maintained in their current format. A policy decision was taken that ECC would not delegate more powers to officers. This has led to:
 - Strong member engagement in the decisions that the Council has had to take in response to the pandemic including
 - Decisions to close and re-open services
 - Funding decisions
 - Allocation of government funding
 - Support for social care
 - The Council has not suspended its programme of meetings.

ECC missed one cycle of scrutiny meetings, but otherwise scrutiny activities were able to continue, albeit in a way which had regard to the pressures of the rest of the authority.

Annual Governance Statement

- The Council relied upon the willingness of the Leader of the Opposition, in his capacity of Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Scrutiny Committee to
 - Receive abridged notice of urgent key decisions
 - Agree that very urgent key decisions could be taken without being on the forward plan
 - Exempt urgent decisions from call-in

Anecdotally we are aware of reports that members of other authorities have become less involved in their authority during the pandemic. That is not the experience of members of Essex CC. Members have continued to lead and be extremely engaged in the running of key public services and the organisation.

Remote meetings were a success. Members engaged well with remote meetings which led to an increase in attendance at meetings by members and an increased interest in meetings from members of the public and from the media.

Whilst the Council would want to hold face to face meetings where appropriate, it had hoped to be able to continue with the remote meetings in some cases – for example short meetings of minor committees where possible given the environmental, financial and time savings. Members are disappointed that the Government did not legislate to extend the powers notwithstanding that it has the power to make regulations.

ECC has produced a COVID-19 risk register to ensure risks and issues are properly considered and at the time of writing the Council continues to assess the longer-term governance issues associated with the impact of the pandemic such as financial resilience, pausing of certain projects and long term home working. From mid May 2020 ECC began carefully moving forward with a recovery plan, initially with the re-opening of Recycling centers and County Parks. Whilst most services reopened by the end of the summer, the second wave led to things being closed during the third national lockdown.

Essex has acted as a community leader during the pandemic with the Director of Public Health becoming a trusted source of advice to our residents. Increasing case numbers in October 2020 led to Essex brokering support from council leaders to increase the restrictions in Essex from 'tier 1' to 'tier 2'. This led to challenging correspondence from some members of the public but Essex's move into tier 2 was shortly superseded by the second national lockdown during November 2020.

During Summer 2020 Essex supported colleagues in district authorities to protect public health by issuing warning letters of directions under the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 3) (England) Regulations 2020. Five formal directions were issued. These directions were allowed to lapse when the lockdown started. In other cases the warning of a direction was sufficient to secure the necessary compliance.

Information Governance

There were three decision notices received in 2020/21 from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) regarding complaints made to them about ECC compliance. All were Environmental Information Request related. Two were not upheld i.e. ECC had been found not to have breached the

Annual Governance Statement

law), and one was confirmed as upheld. The upheld complaint required ECC to disclose information that it had previously withheld, no further action was required for the remaining notices. None resulted in monetary penalties or enforcement action.

ECC also received one ICO complaint relating to Subject Access Requests for which we await an ICO decision.

The Council has not recorded any major security incidents this year. However, there was one incident involving an ECC staff member who used a third-party system (Searchlight) to look up sensitive information about themselves and their family member. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) suspended access to the ECC user's account for six months as the agreement in place was breached. If any more inappropriate use is detected this could cause further action taken against ECC. This may include ECC's access to this system being revoked. Further action is being taken to ensure all users are aware of their responsibilities when using this system to avoid the possibility for further action being taken.

The average monthly performance in responding to statutory requests under FOI/EIR has met the corporate target during 2020/21 at 90%. The average monthly performance in responding to statutory requests under GDPR (SAR) has exceeded the corporate target at 91%. This is a 14% improvement in performance from 2019/20. All other individual rights requests were dealt with in the statutory timeframe. This is monitored by the Corporate Governance Steering Board on a quarterly basis.

COVID-19 did impact Information Governance activity, this included the rollout of the Information Governance eLearning. This will now be released in Q1 of 2021/22 as part of the Corporate Governance training modules. This course has been updated and redesigned to combine the two existing GDPR modules into one interactive module. This now focuses on the safe handling and protection of personal information that is necessary for our staff to know.

All our information policies have been reviewed and combined into one information policy booklet which allows staff to search for the information and guidance they need. We have redeveloped our communication plan and procedure, working with the Communications Team to ensure monthly Information Governance communications are provided to Council staff to increase their knowledge and awareness.

We continue to improve our compliance with the requirement to delete data as soon as it is no longer required. We have decommissioned and deleted data held within legacy social care systems, which has greatly improved our compliance. However, further work in this area will continue throughout 2021/22.

The Data Security and Protection Toolkit 2019/20 was successfully submitted in August 2020, all standards were met, the submission was moved to September due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020/21 toolkit is now due to be submitted in June 2021, the Council is on track for another successful submission.

Annual Governance Statement

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

Between 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 Essex County Council received 111 contacts from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). From the 111 contacts received, 34 escalated to formal investigation and from outcomes received to date 17 cases were upheld with two relating to Adult Social Care, five for Children and Families, one Passenger Transport, five School Transport and four about Special Education Needs. As a result of COVID-19, in March 2020 the Ombudsman suspended all casework activity that demanded information from, or action by, local authorities and care providers to allow those organisations to concentrate on their response to the crisis. The Ombudsman resumed with all existing casework and new complaints in June 2020.

Health and Safety

There has been one improvement notice served, under health and safety legislation, against the Council during the financial year 2020/21. This was in relation to an incident that took place in July 2018. The incident related to a breach of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. This has resulted in Fee for Intervention (FFI) totalling **£12,430.90**. There has been no further communication from the HSE on this matter since November 2020.

ECC also responded to two other matters that occurred in previous years. In Jan 2019 a member of staff was knocked unconscious by a pupil. In February 2021, the HSE invited ECC to provide written submissions under caution prior to them taking enforcement action, ECC responded on 26 April 2021. This has resulted in an FFI totalling **£17,699.50**.

Another incident occurred in August 2017 when a school used a contractor, who was not gas safe registered, to undertake work refurbishing a gas boiler for their swimming pool. This case has now been closed but resulted in an FFI totalling **£3,389.90**.

So far, these three incidents have cost **£33,490.30**.

ECC Owned Companies

ECC has interests in and is involved in companies for many different reasons. For example, to trade services for profit or to set up a joint decision-making forum with partners. The Council has adopted company guidance which sets out requirements about creating new companies or joining a new company. The creation of an ECC company is a significant step. No ECC company may be created or dissolved without a formal decision of the Cabinet or the Leader. ECC has a Shareholder Board chaired by the Leader which oversees relationships with ECC companies, delivery of each ECC company's business plan, performance, financial issues, investments and governance arrangements.

Annual Governance Statement

Name and date of incorporation	Type of Organisation/ ECC Involvement	Main Objective	Company Directors/ Secretaries Connected with ECC	Board Minutes published
Active Essex 21 April 2016	Charitable incorporated organisation. ECC is a subscriber, entitled to appoint one director. ECC provides support to the organisation but does not own shares or have any proprietary interest in the body.	To make sport and physical activity accessible to all Essex residents	Cllr Ray Gooding	CMIS
Essex Cares Limited 14 October 2008	Private limited company. ECC is sole shareholder with the right to appoint one director. Key company activities require the approval of ECC as shareholder ECL has four subsidiary companies.	To deliver high quality community support services to vulnerable, disabled, disadvantaged and elderly people in the community to help them live independent lives	Essex Legal Services Limited (Secretary) Cllr Ian Grundy is a director of the company	ECL's Website
Essex Housing Development LLP 26 August 2020	LLP - constitution is set out in the LLP Agreement between ECC, Seax Trading Limited and Essex Housing Development LLP. The LLP does not have its own staff and ECC seconds staff to it. ECC may transfer land to the LLP for development	To develop housing, which will deliver economic growth for the benefit of the area or persons resident or present in the Essex area. Following development of the schemes, the LLP will either sell the units on the open market or rent them out	Essex Legal Services Limited (Secretary)	

Annual Governance Statement

Name and date of incorporation	Type of Organisation/ ECC Involvement	Main Objective	Company Directors/ Secretaries Connected with ECC	Board Minutes published
Essex Legal Services Limited 3 December 2009	Private limited company by shares. ECC is the only shareholder. The company does not have its own staff and ECC seconds staff to it.	To provide legal services. It provides legal services for customers when ECC is unable to act.	Katie Bray, Joanna Gent, Julie Roberts are directors	CMIS
Essex Trade and Investment Ltd 9 June 2009	Company is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. ECC is the only member of the company. The company does not have its own staff and ECC seconds staff to it as required.	The purpose of the company is to promote commerce, science, art, education, religion, charity or any profession and to promote social, political or sporting activity	Peter James Manning	CMIS
Medtech Accelerator Limited 24 June 2016	Private limited company. ECC is a minority shareholder	The Medtech Accelerator will provide initial proof of concept support funding to NHS organisations with the aim of developing commercial companies to deliver innovative clinical products to market	Nicole Wood is a director appointed by ECC.	
Seax Trading Limited 10 January 2017	Private limited company. ECC is the only Shareholder. The company does not have its own staff and ECC seconds staff to it as required. Seax Trading Limited is a member of the Essex Housing LLP	This is a general trading company. At present it mainly undertakes environmental consulting for other organisations when ECC is unable to do the work directly. It is also a member of Essex Housing LLP	Tina French is director.	CMIS

Annual Governance Statement

Governance Issues

In summer 2021 we became aware that an Essex district council had issued an application in court proceedings in the name of ECC without any authority. Although there were existing court proceedings issued in the joint names of the County Council and the district council, ECC had not authorised this application to be issued. Although an officer of the district council had spoken to an officer of ECC outside the legal department, it was not made clear that an application would be issued by ECC. The officer of the district council apologised for this. We have put actions in place to stop this recurring.

Previous Governance Matters Arising

All actions identified in the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement have been adequately addressed, with implementation being reviewed by the Corporate Governance Steering Board. Areas where actions are ongoing have been updated in the table below.

Action Plan

We do not consider that there have been any significant governance issues arising in 2020/21. However, the actions detailed below are in place to maintain good governance arrangements throughout 2021/22.

Subject	Action(s)	Responsible Officer	Target completion date
Standards	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendations for the Committee in Standards in Public Life. Currently awaiting a formal response from government on the recommendations.	Monitoring Officer	Ongoing
Assurance	Implement actions identified as part of the 2020/21 Service Assurance Statement process.	CLT	March 2022

We have been advised on the outcome of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework and consider that the arrangements provide satisfactory assurance and continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. We are committed to monitoring the implementation of the action plan, via the Corporate Governance Steering Board, as part of the next annual review.



CLlr Kevin Bentley
(Leader of the Council)



Gavin Jones
(Chief Executive)

Independent Auditor's Report

To be added upon conclusion of the external audit

Report title: Members Gifts and Hospitality Register April 2020- May 21	
Report to: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee	
Report author: Paul Turner, Director Legal and Assurance	
Date: 28 June 2021	For: Discussion
Enquiries to: paul.turner@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: 'All Essex'	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the annual review of the Member Gifts and Hospitality register.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Committee are asked to note the findings of the review and make any recommendations they may have.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 All Members must, within 28 days of receipt, notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer in writing of any gift, benefit or hospitality with a value in excess of £25 which they have accepted as a Member from any person or body other than the Authority. The Monitoring Officer places the notification on a public register of gifts and hospitality. This duty to notify the Monitoring Officer does not apply where the gift, benefit or hospitality comes within any description approved by the Authority for this purpose. This is set out in part 5 of the Constitution. Members are not required to register the value of the hospitality.
- 3.2 In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 May 2021 there were 2 instances of gifts or hospitality declared and these were logged on register of gifts and hospitality and published on the individual Councillor's profile on the Committee Management System. In the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 there were 12 instances. 73 Members did not declare any gifts or hospitality in comparison to 68 in 2019-20.
- 3.3 An examination does not reveal any particular concerns relating to the acceptance of significant hospitality from ECC contractors or those seeking funding from ECC. The register does not demonstrate any trends in terms of those offering the gifts and hospitality. Nonetheless members may wish to

consider whether or not they wish to express any view on any of the hospitality accepted.

- 3.4 Although this report covers the period to 31 May 2021, The appendix does not include any members who were newly elected on 6 May 2021. No registrations have been received from any new member within the period covered by this report.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 This report has no financial implications

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 Registration of gifts and hospitality is required by the ECC Code of Conduct.

6. Equality and Diversity implications

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 This report simply presents the register of gifts and hospitality to the Committee.

7. List of appendices

Member gifts and hospitality register 2020-21.

Member Gifts and Hospitality April 2020 - May 2021

Surname	Forename	District	Division	Entries	Date	From	Description	Value
Abbott	James	Braintree	Witham Northern	Nil				
Aldridge	John	Chelmsford	Broomfield and Writtle	Nil				
Aspinell	Barry	Brentwood	Brentwood North	Nil				
Baker	John	Colchester	Parsons Heath and East Gates	Nil				
Ball	Tony	Basildon	Wickford Crouch	Nil				
Barker	Susan	Uttlesford	Dunmow	Nil				
Beavis	Jo	Braintree	Halstead	Nil				
Bentley	Kevin	Colchester	Stanway and Pyefleet	1	18 May 2021	Mark Bauman of La Bourgee Restaurant in Chelmsford	Meal and drinks	£60
Blackwell	Dave	Castle Point	Canvey Island East	Nil				
Brown	Anne	Colchester	Constable	Nil				
Buckley	Malcolm	Basildon	Wickford Crouch	Nil				
Butland	Graham	Braintree	Three Fields with Great Notley	Nil				
Canning	Stephen	Braintree	Bocking	Nil				
Chandler	Jenny	Chelmsford	Great Baddow	Nil				
Channer	Penny	Maldon	Maldon	Nil				
Cutmore	Terry	Rochford	Rochford North	Nil				
Davies	Allan	Basildon	Laindon Park and Fryerns	Nil				

Deakin	Jude	Chelmsford	Chelmsford West	Nil				
Durham	Mark	Maldon	Heybridge and Tollesbury	Nil				
Egan	Beverley	Castle Point	Thundersley	Nil				
Erskine	Andrew	Tendring	Tendring Rural East	Nil				
Finch	David	Braintree	Hedingham	Nil				
Gadsby	Ricki	Epping Forest	Waltham Abbey	Nil				
Garnett	Mike	Harlow	Harlow North	Nil				
Goggin	Alan	Tendring	Brightlingsea	Nil				
Gooding	Ray	Uttlesford	Stansted	Nil				
Grundy	Ian	Chelmsford	Stock	Nil				
Guglielmi	Carlo	Tendring	Tendring Rural West	Nil				
Hardware	Michael	Harlow	Harlow West	Nil				
Harris	Dave	Colchester	Maypole	Nil				
Hedley	Tony	Basildon	Billericay and Burstead	Nil				
Henderson	Ivan	Tendring	Harwich	Nil				
Henry	Jeff	Basildon	Laindon Park and Fryerns	Nil				
Hillier	Stephen	Basildon	Pitsea	Nil				
Honeywood	Paul	Tendring	Clacton West	Nil				
Jackson	Anthony	Epping Forest	North Weald and Nazeing	Nil				
Johnson	Eddie	Harlow	Harlow South East	Nil				

Jowers	John	Colchester	Mersea and Tiptree	Nil				
Kendall	David	Brentwood	Brentwood South	Nil				
Lissimore	Sue	Colchester	Drury	Nil				
Louis	Derrick	Braintree	Witham Southern	Nil				
Lumley	June	Rochford	Rayleigh South	Nil				
Mackrory	Michael	Chelmsford	Springfield	Nil				
Madden	Richard	Chelmsford	Chelmsford Central	Nil				
Maddocks	Malcolm	Rochford	Rayleigh North	Nil				
Massey	Bob	Chelmsford	South Woodham Ferrers	Nil				
May	Peter	Castle Point	Canvey Island West	Nil				
McEwen	Maggie	Epping Forest	Ongar and Rural	Nil				
McKinlay	Louise	Brentwood	Brentwood Hutton	Nil				
Metcalfe	Valerie	Epping Forest	Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South	Nil				
Mitchell	Robert	Braintree	Braintree Eastern	Nil				
Mohindra	Gagan	Epping Forest	Chigwell and Loughton Broadway	Nil				
Moore	Richard	Basildon	Billericay and Burstead	Nil				
Moran	John	Uttlesford	Saffron Walden	Nil				
Platt	Mark	Tendring	Frinton and Waldon	Nil				
Pond	Christopher	Epping Forest	Loughton Central	Nil				

Pratt	Ron	Maldon	Southminster	Nil				
Reeves	Jillian	Castle Point	Hadleigh	Nil				
Reid	Patricia	Basildon	Pitsea	Nil				
Robinson	Stephen	Chelmsford	Chelmsford North	Nil				
Stephenson	Mark	Tendring	Clacton East	Nil				
Schmitt	Wendy	Braintree	Braintree Town	Nil				
Scordis	Lee	Colchester	Abbey	Nil				
Sheldon	Andrew	Castle Point	South Benfleet	Nil				
Smith	Kerry	Basildon	Westley Heights	Nil				
Souter	Clive	Harlow	Harlow West	1	29 January 2021	GD International	Wine	Over £35
Spence	John	Chelmsford	Chelmer	Nil				
Steptoe	Mike	Rochford	Rochford South	Nil				
Turrell	Anne	Colchester	Mile End and Highwood	Nil				
Wagland	Lesley	Brentwood	Brentwood Rural	Nil				
Walsh	Simon	Uttlesford	Thaxted	Nil				
Weston	Carole	Rochford	Rochford West	Nil				
Whitbread	Christopher	Epping Forest	Epping and Theydon Bois	Nil				
Wood	Andy	Tendring	Clacton North	Nil				
Young	Julie	Colchester	Wivenhoe St. Andrew	Nil				

Report title: Annual Report of the Audit Governance and Standards Committee	
Report to: Audit Governance and Standards Committee	
Report author: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance	
Date: 28 June 2021	For: Approval
Enquiries to: Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance, paul.turner@essex.gov.uk or Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance, paula.clowes@essex.gov.uk	
County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

This report asks the Audit Governance and Standards committee to review and approve the Annual Report of the Audit Governance and Standards Committee, attached at appendix 1, prior to it being presented to Full Council in July 2021.

2. Recommendation

That the Audit Governance and Standards committee review and approve the Annual Report of the Audit Governance and Standards Committee, prior to it being presented to Full Council in July 2021.

3. Background

- 3.1 In order to effectively discharge its responsibilities the Audit Governance and Standards Committee should report annually on its work to those charged with governance. As such, an annual report is presented to Full Council outlining the committee's purpose and role as well as the activities that it has undertaken throughout the preceding financial year to support good governance and strong public financial management.
- 3.3 The 2020/21 report has been drafted on behalf of the Committee and the draft is attached at appendix 1 for the committee's consideration and approval.

4. Summary

- 4.1 The report provides Full Council with the following:
 - Committee Membership
 - Terms of Reference and Purpose of the Committee
 - Details of the Committee's work during the financial year ending 31 March 2021.
 - An update on the Effectiveness Review Action Plan.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Audit Governance and Standards Committee is a key way in which the Council provides assurance that it is providing value for money and has proper systems of control. Without effective assurance Councillors will not know that the Council is effectively carrying out its statutory duties. Whilst the production of an annual report is not a legal requirement it is considered best practice and provides assurance that the Committee is fulfilling its function effectively.

7. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to: (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. Equality and diversity matters have been considered in the production of the progress report.

8. List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Draft Annual Report of the Audit Governance and Standards Committee

9. List of Background Papers

- CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police¹

¹ <https://www.cipfa.org/services/support-for-audit-committees> Page 270 of 288

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee

DRAFT

Annual Report 2020/21

Foreward by the Chairman of the Committee



I present to you this annual report which provides an overview of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee's activity and achievements during the financial year 2020/21. In line with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Practical Guidance for Audit Committees (2018 edition), it serves to demonstrate how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities.

I was appointed Chairman of the Audit Governance and Standards Committee by the Council on 14 July 2020. Prior to this I was the Vice Chairman and due to the untimely death of the previous Chairman I chaired all meetings that took place during the period referenced in this report.

This report highlights the important work of the Committee in providing an independent overview of the Council's governance arrangements. This role includes detailed consideration of the work of external audit, internal audit and counter fraud, plus robust scrutiny and challenge of the Council's financial performance and, through our Standards role, the approach the Council takes in upholding standards and investigating any complaints made about Members.

During 2020/21 the Committee met six times having had to hold an additional meeting at the end of November 2020 to approve the Council's financial statements. Among the highlights, were the appointment of our first Independent Member; receiving unmodified opinions from our external auditor on the 2019/20 financial accounts and use of resources opinions of the Council and the Essex Pension Fund; a satisfactory conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources; and a positive conclusion on the Council's internal control, governance and risk management arrangements from our Internal Auditors.

I would like to express my thanks to those officers and Members who, throughout this most difficult and challenging of years, have supported the work and achievements of the Committee.

*Councillor Anthony Hedley,
Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Governance Committee*

May 2021

Introduction

The Audit, Governance and Standards Committee undertakes the role of audit committee as well as having responsibility for standards issues at Essex County Council.

In January 2020 the Committee undertook its first Effectiveness Review, in line with recognised best practice. As part of that process the Committee committed to provide an annual report to Full Council outlining how it has discharged its responsibilities during the preceding financial year and to provide assurance to the Council that it is fulfilling its key objectives. This is the second such report.

Membership

During the 2020/21 financial year the Committee comprised of ten elected Members. Membership was made up of seven Conservative Members, one Labour, one Liberal Democrat and one independent. Committee members were as follows:

- Councillor Hedley (Conservative), Chairman
- Councillor Platt (Conservative), Vice Chairman
- Councillor Butland (Conservative), Committee Member
- Councillor Davies (Labour), Committee Member
- Councillor Channer (Conservative), Committee Member
- Councillor Jackson (Conservative), Committee Member
- Councillor Mitchell, (Conservative), Committee Member
- Councillor Moore (Conservative), Committee Member
- Councillor Smith (Non-aligned Group), Committee Member
- Councillor Turrell (Liberal Democrats), Committee Member
- Atta Ul Haque Independent Committee Member, appointed in November 2020

Terms of Reference and Purpose

The terms of reference for the Committee are included in the Council's Constitution and extracted in full at Appendix 2.

The Committee is a key component of the authority's governance framework. It provides independent assurance, to Members and the public, on the adequacy of the Council's risk management framework, internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes. By overseeing both internal and external audit it makes an important contribution to ensuring that effective assurance arrangements are in place.

The Committee monitors internal and external audit activity, reviews and comments on the effectiveness of the Council's regulatory framework and reviews and approves the Council's annual statements of accounts.

Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires the Council to "make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs". The Council's Section 151 Officer is key to discharging these requirements but to be truly effective,

she requires an effective audit, governance and standards committee to provide support and challenge, as well as an adequate and effective internal audit.

The Committee brings many benefits:

- ✓ Demonstrates how good governance supports the authority in achieving its corporate objectives
- ✓ Reinforces the importance and independence of internal and external audit and supports an effective relationship between the two
- ✓ Provides additional assurance through the process of independent review and challenge
- ✓ Increases emphasis and awareness of internal control, governance and risk management
- ✓ Promotes anti-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements
- ✓ Promotes, develops and upholds high standards and ethics for Members

The Work of the Committee

The Committee has a Work Plan designed to cover its responsibilities, appropriately timed, over the financial year. Agendas for the meetings are published on the Council's website no later than 5 working days before each meeting. Due to restrictions in place related to the Covid-19 pandemic all six Committee meetings during 2020/21 took place on-line via Zoom and were open to the public to virtually attend or view via you tube.

All the Committee agenda papers, minutes and audio recordings are available on the Council's website: [Link](#)

During the course of the year, the Committee has undertaken work covering the full range of its responsibilities. A full list of reports considered is at appendix 2 with key activities outlined below.

Financial Statements and Accounts

The Committee has responsibility for reviewing, on behalf of the Council, the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. They have specific responsibility to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are any concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.

The Committee's Activity in 2020/21:

- Considering a report from the Section 151 Officer and the Chief Accountant on the process for compiling the Council's and the Essex Pension Fund's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, prior to the Committee's approval of the financial statements at the meeting in November 2020.

- Considering and approving the Annual Governance Statement (a statutory document that explains the processes and procedures in place to enable the Council to carry out its functions effectively). The statement (and action plan to address any significant governance issues identified) is produced following a comprehensive review of the Council's governance arrangements, including an annual self-assessment by each Executive Director.

External Audit

The Committee is responsible for receiving external audit plans, reports about the effectiveness of the Council's financial and operational arrangements and for considering the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter. They are further responsible for reviewing, commenting on and monitoring these and providing advice to the Cabinet and Council where the Committee believes appropriate.

The Committee's Activity in 2020/21:

- Considering the audit plans presented by the external auditors for their audit of the Council and Essex Pension Fund for the 2019/20 financial year.
- Reviewing and scrutinising the Audit Completion Reports for the Council and Essex Pension Fund and the Annual Audit Letter that confirmed an unmodified opinion on the Group and the Council's Financial Statements and on the Essex Pension Fund's.
- Considered the use of resources conclusion (a positive opinion on the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness).
- Providing effective challenge to the external auditors as appropriate and gained assurance from the reports and updates provided during the year.

Internal Audit and Counter Fraud

The Committee is responsible for receiving reports from the Council's Internal Auditors on the outcome of audit reviews and investigations and the implementation of recommendations, including the annual report and Opinion of the Chief Audit Executive.

The Committee's Activity in 2020/21:

- Reviewing and commenting on the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan for 2020/21 prior to endorsing the Plan for delivery.
- Considering and agreeing changes to the plan due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Monitoring the delivery of the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Plan via quarterly update including outcomes of individual audits.
- Monitoring implementation of major and critical internal audit recommendations.
- Considering the annual report from the Head of Assurance, in her role as Chief Audit Executive giving a 'Satisfactory Assurance' annual audit opinion for 2019/20 (reported at the meeting in July 2020).

- Monitoring counter fraud activity and the progress / outcomes of investigations.
- Agreeing the updated Internal Audit Charter.

Governance and Risk Management

The Committee is responsible for considering the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and risk management and advise on any action necessary to ensure compliance with best practice.

Committee Activity 2020/21

- Approving the revised Risk Management Strategy in order to promote effective risk management as a key component of good corporate governance. The Committee ensured that the strategy was fit for purpose and in line with current best practice.
- Reviewing activity under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to ensure that members have oversight of how the Council is exercising its statutory powers to carry out some surveillance activity for law enforcement purposes. At present the Council does not use these powers, but the Code of Practice requires members to have oversight of this area.
- Reviewing the register of gifts and hospitality.

Committee Effectiveness

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) states that it is best practice for the Committee to regularly review its performance and effectiveness.

Accordingly, the committee undertook its first comprehensive effectiveness review in March 2020 producing an Action Plan of agreed actions that were formally adopted by the committee for implementation over the year 2020/21. These included the recruitment of an independent member to the committee and the introduction of a pre-meeting and member briefing sessions on matters of interest and value to the Committee. The full action plan with a progress update can be found at appendix 3.

Recruitment of Independent Member

The process for recruiting an independent member was agreed by Committee in March 2020 and the new independent member was formally appointed to the Committee in November 2020 after an open advertisement was placed and several potential fully qualified candidates were interviewed by the Chairman and two supporting committee members. The independent member has a background in accountancy and has received induction training. The appointment of an independent member to all Local Authority Audit Committees was recommended by the Redmond Review although we are proud to note that ECC had already understood the value of appointing an independent member and had begun the recruitment process prior to Redmond reaching his conclusion.

Professional Development

Continued professional development is key to the effective operation of the Committee. Being effective means having well informed Members able to confirm to the Council that the right processes are in place to give confidence that the authority's financial stewardship and overall governance arrangements can be relied upon. Briefings enable members of the Committee to be kept up to date on the latest developments in the areas of governance, risk and internal control as well as other activities of the Council. During 2020/21 members attended briefing sessions on the following matters:

- The Council's Financial Statements
- The Strategic Risk Register and the ECC process for risk management

In addition, members kept up to date via CIPFA newsletters and ad hoc updates from officers on matters of interest.

Audit, Governance Standards Committee - Terms of Reference

Membership: Ten Members

No member of the Cabinet may be appointed to the Committee or any of its Sub-Committees

Purpose

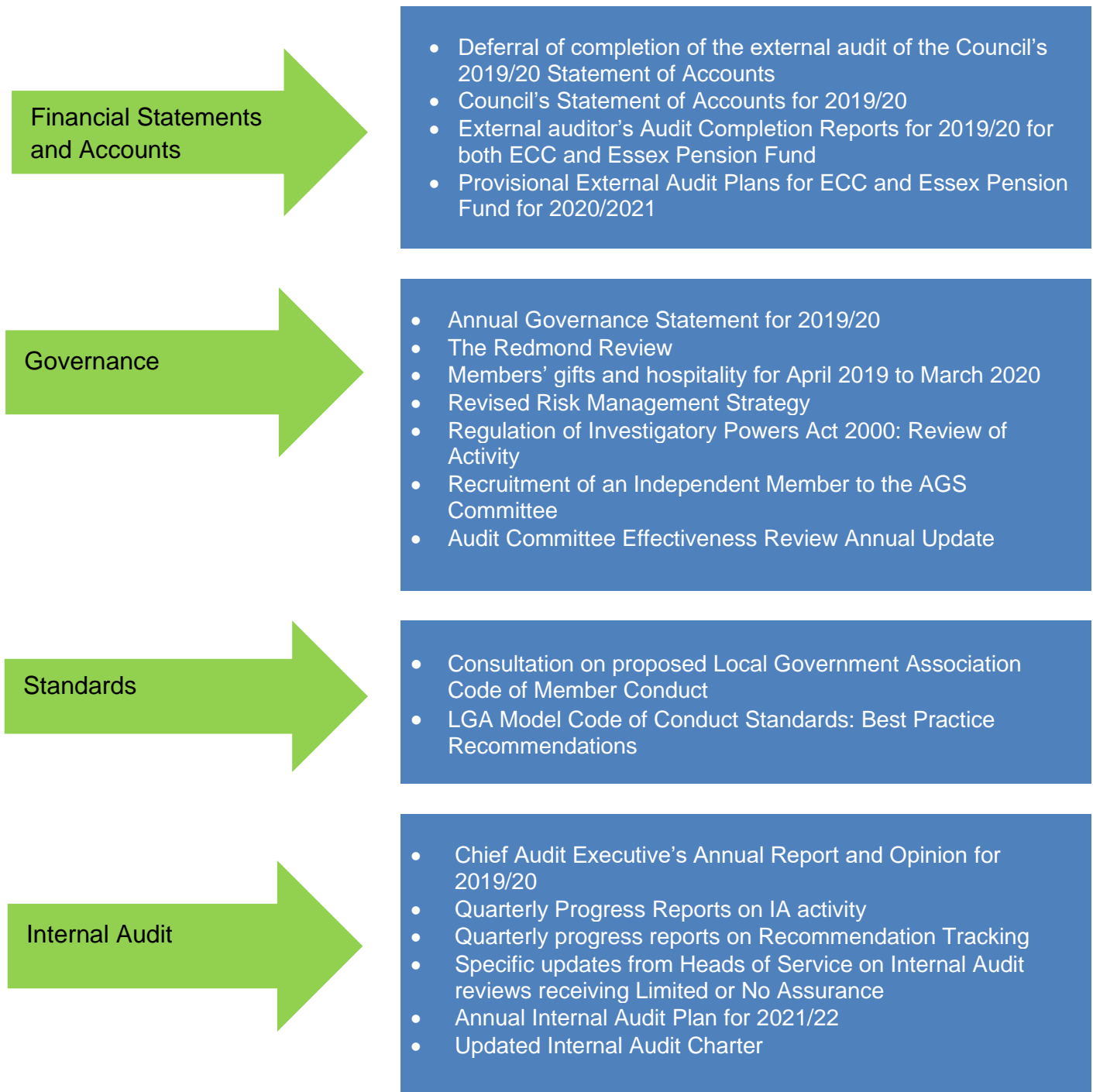
1. To review the Council's Annual Statement of Accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
2. To receive and approve the Council's Annual Governance Statement ensuring that it reflects the Council's governance arrangements.
3. To receive and approve the Final Accounts, Memorandum and the Report to those charged with Governance from the External Auditors.
4. To consider the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter from the External Auditors and to provide such advice and comments on the Letter to the Cabinet and Council as the Committee believes appropriate.
5. To receive the internal and external audit plans and comment on these plans, including the extent to which they provide value for money.
6. To ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit is actively promoted.
7. To receive reports from the Council's Internal Auditor on the outcome of audit reviews and investigations and the implementation of recommendations, including the annual report of the Head of Internal Audit.
8. To receive any reports from the External Auditor about the effectiveness of the Council's financial and operational arrangements and monitor Management's response to the issues raised by External Audit.
9. To monitor the effectiveness of the Council's Financial Regulations, and Procurement Procedure Rules and recommend changes to Council.
10. To approve and monitor the effectiveness of strategies for anti-fraud and corruption, whistle blowing and any legislation relating to the regulation of investigatory powers.
11. To consider the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and risk management, and advise on any action necessary to ensure compliance with best practice.

12. To advise the Council on the local Code of Conduct for members and to promote, develop and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
13. To keep the Code of Member Conduct under review and recommend changes to the Code or the Constitution to support high standards of Conduct.
14. To grant dispensations under Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 and under the Code of Member Conduct to councillors and co-opted members.
15. To approve processes for considering complaints that any Councillor or Co-opted Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct.
16. To create one or more sub-committees as required to receive and consider allegations of misconduct of elected members, to take further oral and written evidence, adjudicate and make recommendations to the Leader of the Council and others.
17. To make arrangements for the appointment of Independent Persons under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
18. To make arrangements for training of Members relating to standards issues.

Standards Sub-Committee – Terms of Reference

Membership: Between 3 and 5 members of the Council appointed by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and the Leaders of relevant political groups in accordance with the political balance rules.

1. To exercise any of the Committee's powers with respect to decisions about individual complaints about breaches of the Code of Member Conduct.





Counter Fraud

- Annual Counter Fraud Plan for 2020/21
- Quarterly progress reports on counter fraud activity
- Updated Counter Fraud and Corruption Strategy
- Prosecution and Sanctions Policy

Effectiveness Review - Annual Progress Update**Action plan from the Audit Governance and Standards Committee.**

No.	Action	Progress Update	Status
1	Introduce a pre-meeting session immediately prior to the start of the AG&S Committee to take the form of a briefing session and a pre-meeting	Meetings now start at 10.30, with a pre-meet and briefing session at 9.30am Members have received briefings on matters such as Financial Statements and Risk Management.	Complete
2	Review the work programme for the committee and plan when reports are due to be presented to avoid 'heavy' agendas. Consider increasing the frequency of AG&S committees to spread the workload and reduce the size of the agenda packs.	Committee review the work plan at every meeting and additional meetings are added where necessary.	Complete
3	Ask officers to try to reduce the size of the agenda packs if possible – consider receiving executive summary reports instead of more detailed reports	Contributing Officers now work to reduce the length of documents and covering reports contain summaries of the main issues.	Complete
4	Undertake an annual skills and knowledge self-assessment to determine where skills and knowledge need to be enhanced on an annual basis	Due to the impending election it was agreed that this would add more value if carried out after the election to account for the training needs of any new committee members.	In Progress
5	Look to co-opt at least one independent member to the AG&S committee to provide expertise and steer the	Independent member now appointed.	Complete

No.	Action	Progress Update	Status
	members to ask the challenging questions		
6	Produce a standalone annual report on the work of the AG&S committee for full council	The first such report was presented to full council in December 2020.	Complete
7	Increase the AG&S committee's visibility with officers and members by include a presence on the Essex CC intranet.	Page now live on intranet. https://intranet.essex.gov.uk/Pages/Audit_governance_and_standards_committee.aspx	Complete
8	AGS committee are considering requiring Directors or Heads of Service to attend the committee to do a joint presentation for all internal audit reports that have a limited or no assurance opinion. They want to get the service's view on the root cause of the issues identified in the audit, what action they are taking to remedy the situation, and how can the AGS committee help them	This now happens on a regular basis. Committee have received presentations from Tech Services, Finance and ASC in recent meetings.	Complete
9	AGS are considering using working groups (similar to those used at Basildon) to do in-depth look at issues outside of the committee, and report back to the committee on what they found	Committee received a report on this in September 2020 and are moving forward with an issue of interest.	Complete
10	The Committee have visibility of full strategic risk register at least once a year	Committee reviewed the Strategic Risk Register in September alongside a briefing session on the ECC approach to Risk Management This will be repeated annually.	Complete

No.	Action	Progress Update	Status
11	The Committee to undertake an annual review of its effectiveness and to consider how best to do it.	Committee completed a full review of its effectiveness with support and guidance from CIPFA in March 2020. A review of progress and consideration of effectiveness will be undertaken annually.	Complete
12	Changes to the audit and counterfraud plan to be referred to committee in future for approval rather than for information as at present.		Complete
	Training and Knowledge Enhancements		
	AGS committee identified areas where they were keen to have more training and briefing sessions. Topics requested initially by members detailed below.		
13	Briefing on corporate risk register and risk maturity to be provided.		Complete
14	Training session on understanding the financial statements, what they should be looking for, and what sort of questions they should be asking, prior to receiving the financial statements in June.		Complete
15	Briefing session on CIPFA/ALARM risk management benchmarking club	Not actioned as no relevant benchmarking undertaken in 2020	On hold - pending activity to report
16	Briefing on contract risks.	This was covered in Strategic Risk Session.	Complete

No.	Action	Progress Update	Status
17	Briefing on about Investment Risks faced by ECC.	Session to take place March 2021	Deferred due to election

Audit, Governance and Standards Committee – Work Programme 2021 - 2022

The Work Programme is a document that is subject to revision as circumstances change.

Agenda item 8
AGS/16/21

Meeting	Topic	Author	Notes
27 September 2021	Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress report	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	
	To Approve the Statement of Accounts 2020/2021 and the Annual Governance Statement	Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology, Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance and Christine Golding, Chief Accountant.	
	2020/2021 Audit Completion Report for Essex County Council (from external auditor)	Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and Christine Golding, Chief Accountant.	Annual report
	2020/2021 Audit Completion Report for the Essex Pension Fund (from external auditor)	Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and Christine Golding, Chief Accountant.	Annual report
	Annual skills and knowledge self-assessment To determine where skills and knowledge need to be	Paul Turner, Director,	

enhanced on an annual basis

Legal and Assurance

Meeting	Topic	Author	Notes
15 November 2021	Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress report	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	
	Annual Audit Letter – 2020/21 To formally present the External Auditor's Annual Audit Letter for the year ending 31 March 2021	From external auditors	Annual report

Meeting	Topic	Author	Notes
17 January 2022	Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress report	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	

Meeting	Topic	Author	Notes
21 March 2022	Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress report	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	
	Updating of Risk Management Strategy	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance	Annual report
	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 - review of activity on use of Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS)	Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance	
	Approval of annual Internal Audit and Counter Fraud	Paula Clowes, Head of	

Plan for 2022/23	Assurance
Annual Review of Internal Audit Charter	Paula Clowes, Head of Assurance
Effectiveness Review	Paul Turner, Director, Legal and Assurance
Arrangements for the closure of the 2021/2022 Accounts	Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and Christine Golding, Chief Accountant.
2021/2022 External Audit Plans for Essex County Council and the Essex Pension Fund	Nicole Wood, Executive Director, Finance and Technology and Christine Golding, Chief Accountant.