

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

AGENDA



Thursday 29 July 2021

at 2.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.**

A limited number of members of the public will be able to attend the meeting with spaces being available on a first come, first served basis. Those wishing to attend the meeting should phone (01429) 523568 or (01429) 523193 by midday on 28 July 2021 and name and address details will be taken for NHS Test and Trace purposes.

MEMBERS: AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Councillors Ashton, Cook, Feeney, B Loynes, D Loynes, Richardson and Riddle.

Standards Co-opted Independent Members: - Ms Gillian Holbrook, Mr Martin Slimmings and Ms Tracy Squires.

Standards Co-opted Parish Council Representatives: Parish Councillor John Littlefair (Hart) and Parish Councillor Alan O'Brien (Greatham).

Local Police Representative: Superintendent Sharon Cooney.

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 3. MINUTES**
 - 3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021 *(to follow)*
- 4. AUDIT ITEMS**
 - 4.1 The 2020/2021 Financial Report (Including The 2020/21 Statement Of Accounts)
- Director of Resources and Development

CIVIC CENTRE EVACUATION AND ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire alarm or a bomb alarm, please leave by the nearest emergency exit as directed by Council Officers. A Fire Alarm is a continuous ringing. A Bomb Alarm is a continuous tone.

The Assembly Point for everyone is Victory Square by the Cenotaph. If the meeting has to be evacuated, please proceed to the Assembly Point so that you can be safely accounted for.

5. STANDARDS ITEMS

No items.

6. STATUTORY SCRUTINY ITEMS

6.1 Covid-19 Update Presentation – *Director of Public Health*

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny

6.2 Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance 2020/21, Quarter 3 and 4 - *Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services*

Health Scrutiny

6.3 Healthwatch Work Programme 2021/22 - *Healthwatch Hartlepool CIO*

6.4 Scoping of Scrutiny Investigations 2021/22:-

- (i) Covering Report - *Statutory Scrutiny Manager* (to follow)
- (ii) Child Poverty Investigation Scoping - Presentation - *Statutory Scrutiny Manager*

7. OTHER ITEMS FOR DECISION

No items.

8. MINUTES FROM THE RECENT MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

No items.

9. MINUTES FROM THE RECENT MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE RELATING TO PUBLIC HEALTH

No items.

10. MINUTES FROM RECENT MEETING OF TEES VALLEY HEALTH SCRUTINY JOINT COMMITTEE

10.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2021

11. MINUTES FROM RECENT MEETING OF SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP

No items.

12. REGIONAL HEALTH SCRUTINY UPDATE

No items.

13. DURHAM, DARLINGTON AND TEESSIDE, HAMBLETON, RICHMONDSHIRE AND WHITBY STP JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

No items.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

For information: -

Date and time of forthcoming meetings

Thursday 9 September, 2021 at 10.00 am
Wednesday 29 September, 2021 at 10.00 am
Thursday 11 November, 2021 at 10.00 am
Thursday 16 December, 2021 at 10.00 am
Thursday 13 January, 2022 at 10.00 am
Thursday 10 February, 2022 at 10.00 am
Thursday 17 March, 2022 at 2.00 pm

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

8 JULY 2021

Present:

Councillor: Rob Cook (In the Chair).

Councillors: Henry Ashton, Tom Feeney, Brenda Loynes, Dennis Loynes, Carl Richardson and John Riddle

Co-opted Members:

Gillian Holbrook – Independent Member
Martin Slimings – Independent Member
Tracey Squires – Independent Member
John Littlefair - Parish Council Representative
Alan O'Brien – Parish Council Representative

Also Present: Councillors Brash, Price, Moore, Lindridge and Brown
Christopher Akers-Belcher, Healthwatch
Gavin Barker, Mazars

Officers: Sally Robinson, Director of Children's & Joint Commissioning Services
Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services
Craig Blundred, Director of Public Health
Tony Hanson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
James Magog, Assistant Director, Finance
Joan Stevens, Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Angela Armstrong, Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

None

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2021

Confirmed.

4. Mazars Report – Audit Progress Report (*Assistant Director, Finance*)

The Mazar's representative outlined their responsibilities as the Council's external auditor and also highlighted key emerging issues and national reports. The Committee was referred to key messages as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Recommended

That the contents of the report be noted.

5. Letter to Those Charged with Governance – Compliance with Laws and Regulations/Fraud (*Director of Resources and Development*)

The Assistant Director submitted for the Committee's approval a letter to Mazars from the Chair of the Committee detailing how the Committee had complied with the requirements of International Standards for Auditing.

Recommended

That the contents of the letter to Mazars, outlining how the activities of the Committee had complied with the requirements of International Standards for Auditing be approved.

6. Internal Audit Plan 2020/21 Update (*Head of Audit and Governance*)

The Assistant Director of Finance reported on progress made to date completing the Internal Audit Plan for 2020/21. Members were referred to details of audits completed together with recommendations, risks identified and action plans agreed as a result. Information was also provided in relation to the current work of the team including ongoing audits.

Recommended

That the contents of the report be noted.

7. Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Local Government *(Director of Resources and Development)*

The Assistant Director of Finance presented the report on behalf of the Director of Resources and Development which informed the Committee of the CIPFA statement – “The Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Local Government”, and within the report demonstrated how the Council complied with this guidance. Members were referred to Appendix A of the report which detailed how the Council ensured that the requirements of the statement were met.

Recommended

The Committee noted that the Director of Resources and Development had reviewed the CIPFA statement – “The Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Local Government” and advised the Committee that the Council complied with these requirements as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

8. Role of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) in Public Service Organisations *(Director of Resources and Development)*

The Assistant Director of Finance on behalf of the Director of Resources and Development informed the Committee of the CIPFA statement – ‘The Role of the CFO in Public Service Organisations’, and how the Council complied with this guidance. It was highlighted that the Director of Resources and Development was also the Councils nominated Section 151 Officer. Members were referred to Appendix A of the report which detailed how the Council ensured that the requirements of the statement were met.

Recommended

The Committee noted that the Director of Resources and Development had reviewed the CIPFA statement – ‘The Role of the CFO in Public Service Organisations’ and advised Members that the Council complied with these requirements, as detailed in Appendix A to the report.

9. Internal Audit Outcome Report 2020/21 (*Head of Audit and Governance*)

The report set out the outcomes of audit work for the period April 2020 to March 2021. There were 1085 audit days allocated to planned and responsive activities during 2020/21. Staffing resources were as anticipated and, whilst three audit staff had been seconded to support the local track and trace system one day a week, the internal audit section was still able to review all high risk functions and a balanced programme of work covering all Council departments.

The Assistant Director of Finance stated that based on the work undertaken during the year 2020/21, the opinion had been reached that reliance could be placed on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls operating across the Council in 2020/21. This opinion, however, excluded those school audits that the internal audit section was unable to carry out due to the practicalities of carrying out these audits during the Covid-19 lockdown in a way that was safe for internal audit staff and of those at the schools involved. Those schools affected would be covered as part of the internal audit work in 2021/22.

Recommended

That the contents of the report be noted.

10. Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 (*Director of Resources and Development*)

The Assistant Director of Finance presented the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21, a copy of which was appended to the report, as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (England) 2015 for the Committee's approval.

Recommended

That the submitted Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 be approved.

11. Introduction to Scrutiny (*Statutory Scrutiny Manager*)

The report set out an overview of the role and functions of the Audit and Governance Committee in fulfilling its statutory scrutiny responsibilities.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

12. **Dedicated Overview and Scrutiny Budget 2020/21 – Outturn** (*Statutory Scrutiny Manager*)

The Statutory Scrutiny Manager referred to the background in relation to the purpose of the overview and scrutiny budget. Given the unprecedented circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic the work of the Committee was reprioritised and, as a result, no expenditure was incurred from this budget in 2020/21. In response to clarification sought, the Committee was advised that unspent funding does not roll over and accrue on a year on year basis. The figure available for use as the dedicated scrutiny budget remains each year at £5,000.

Recommended

That the dedicated scrutiny budget position for the 2020/21 financial year be noted.

13. **Annual Appointment to Committees/Forums** (*Statutory Scrutiny Manager*)

Nominations were sought in relation to a series of appointments to committees / forums related to the Audit and Governance Committee's work and relationship with other local authorities in the Tees Valley and north east region, details of which were set out in the report.

Recommended

- (i) Three nominations were agreed for the Tees Valley Joint Health Scrutiny Committee; Councillors Cook, Richardson and D Loynes.
- (ii) Nominations were agreed for the Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Health Scrutiny Committee; Councillors Cook, Richardson and B Loynes.
- (iii) No nominations were submitted for the position of Chair or Vice-Chair of Durham, Darlington and Teesside, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby STP Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.
- (iv) The appointment of the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee (Cllr Cook) to the North East Regional Health Scrutiny Committee was noted.
- (v) The Chair of Audit and Governance Committee (Councillor Cook) was appointed to the North East Regional Joint Member/Officer Scrutiny Network.
- (vi) Councillor Feeney was appointed to the position of non-voting official observer to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- (vii) Councillor Richardson was appointed to the position of non-voting observer to the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.
- (viii) No nominations were submitted for the position of Independent Councillor to serve on the Tees Valley Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (ix) Councillor Feeney was appointed to the Tees Valley Combined Authority Audit and Governance Committee.
- (x) Tracy Squires, Independent Person was appointed to the Tees Valley Combined Authority Independent Remuneration Panel.

14. Personnel Sub Committee (*Chief Solicitor and Monitoring Officer*)

In order to comply with the requirements of the current constitution, the Committee was requested to appoint 3 Elected Members to the Personnel Sub Committee and to determine which of those Elected Members would act as Chair.

Recommended

Councillors B Loynes, Cook and Richardson were appointed to the Personnel Sub-Committee.

The Chair announced a brief comfort break to allow presenting officers to leave the meeting and additional presenters to join the meeting.

15. Covid 19 Update (Presentation) (*Director of Public Health*)

The Director of Public Health provided an update presentation to the Committee on the ongoing coronavirus position in Hartlepool which included the following issues:-

- Hartlepool and UK Covid 19 cases rate per 100,000 population
- Weekly Covid cases as a comparator between rates in England and Hartlepool
- Hartlepool Covid 19 related death rates per 100,000
- Percentage of 1st Dose Covid Vaccinated Population by Age
- Percentage of 2nd Dose Covid Vaccinated Population by Age
- Geographical locations of Covid cases in Hartlepool

The Director commented on the continuing increase in case rates and the impact as a result. Whilst it was noted that the increasing case rates had not resulted in a significant increase in hospitalisations or deaths, such increases, including the impact of long Covid, remained a challenge for the health service. Work was currently ongoing with the CCG to address vaccine hesitancy and increase uptake in the younger age groups, details of which were provided.

Members discussed the problems associated with the increase in case rates and long Covid and requested statistical information in relation to the impact of long Covid which the Director of Public Health agreed to provide once available. The Director of Public Health responded to queries raised arising from the presentation. In response to concerns raised that the delta variant appeared to be more transmissible given the increase in numbers in schools, the Director of Public Health advised that evidence suggested that widespread transmission was not taking place in schools and appeared to be as a result of children and young people acquiring the virus in the community. Members welcomed the update and were keen to receive regular updates at future meetings.

Recommended

That the contents of the presentation and comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate and that regular updates be provided at future meetings.

16. Selection of Potential Topics for Inclusion in the 2021/22 Statutory Scrutiny Work Programme (*Statutory Scrutiny Manager*)

The Statutory Scrutiny Manager outlined the process for the determination of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year and sought consideration of potential topics for inclusion into the Statutory Scrutiny Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

The report outlined the topics that had been suggested by Members for both Health and Crime and Disorder scrutiny, together with the rolling health scrutiny programme and the potential for emerging/mandatory health scrutiny matters and Budget and Policy Framework items.

Members who had submitted potential work programme items had been invited to attend the meeting to present the reasons/benefits of including their suggestion as a Work Programme item. Potential topics for inclusion in the Work Programme included:-

- Acquisitive Crime/Street Lighting
- Borough wide large scale Landlord Licensing Scheme
- Encouraging Physical Activity
- Child Poverty

The Chair highlighted that the item suggested by Health Watch had been withdrawn.

Councillor Price spoke in support of Street Lighting outlining the reasons for this suggestion. In response to the submission, the Director of Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services advised that any particular areas

of concern should be referred to the Neighbourhood Services team to investigate. The Chair indicated that an update in this regard would be included in a future performance report to this Committee, the PCC would provide information as part of a wider policing update and it was also suggested that this be raised with the Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee. In concluding the debate, in terms of a way forward, it was agreed that the comments and issues raised in relation to street lighting be referred to the Neighbourhood Services Committee.

Councillor Brash went on to present the benefits/reasons for suggesting the need for a borough wide Landlord Licensing Scheme as a scrutiny work programme item. The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services provided background information in relation to a previous licensing scheme and shared with the Committee the challenges, ongoing work and various approaches to address the problems associated with private sector housing issues. The need to consider the costs associated with a town-wide scheme was also highlighted.

In the discussion that followed Members shared experiences of the issues around private sector housing and, whilst noting the potential costs associated with a town-wide scheme there were differing views in terms of support for this item.

At this point in the meeting, Parish Councillor Littlefair and Councillor Feeney declared personal interests as private sector landlords.

The Statutory Scrutiny Manager sought Members' views in terms of their level of involvement in the development of the strategy in relation to the public health approach to violent crime. A briefing to Members in this regard was agreed.

The Chair reported that the item submitted in relation to the Council's Highways Policy/traffic management would not be considered.

Cllr Price, who was in attendance at the meeting, presented his reasons for suggesting "Encouraging Physical Activity" as a Work Programme item. The Director of Adult and Community Based Services outlined some of the challenges around physical activity and highlighted the work that was ongoing to address these issues. The Director responded to queries raised which included clarification around subsidy arrangements and organised activities available in the town. It was noted that the Department of Education had allocated funding to local authorities to deliver free activities for 4 weeks during the summer for disadvantaged children. In response to a suggestion that school fields and parks be accessible for out of school sporting activities, it was agreed that officers explore this suggestion following the meeting.

Councillor Moore, who was in attendance, presented his reasons for suggesting "Child Poverty" as a Work Programme item. The Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services commented on statistics

which indicated that the north east had the second highest rates of child poverty in the country and outlined the potential reasons for such levels. In the discussion that followed Members raised concerns regarding the levels of child poverty and spoke in support of this topic.

The Chair advised that Members should be mindful of the ongoing Council referral from the previous year regarding the accessibility of services for those with disabilities and lifelong conditions when considering the number of work programme items and it was suggested that only one Work Programme item would be possible.

It was agreed that votes for each Work Programme item would be taken by way of show of hands.

A vote was taken on each of the suggested Work Programme items. Following the vote, the Chair announced that Child Poverty would be the principle topic for investigation for the ensuing year with completion by the end of January if possible. It was agreed that the Committee's approach to the investigation should utilise Working/Task and Finish Groups.

Recommended

- (i) That the Overview and Scrutiny 2021/22 Work Programme be as follows:
 - Child Poverty (Primary investigation for the year with a January deadline of presentation of the final report to the Finance and Policy Committee); and
 - Accessibility to Services for those with Disabilities and Lifelong Conditions (Council Referral to be completed before the end of the municipal year).

- (ii) That the following topics not selected for inclusion in the 2021/22 work programme be responded to as detailed below:
 - A one-off update be requested from the Police and Crime Commissioner in relation to his plans / proposals for policing in Hartlepool (including the Public Health approach to violent crime).
 - Issues raised around street lighting and its impact on crime be referred to the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee.
 - Increased access to school fields and parks as a means of increasing physical activity be explored with the Directors of Public Health and Children's Services.
 - Following withdrawal of the Neighbourhood Watch / CCTV topic suggestion at the request of Councillor Riddle, an outline of the issue to be circulated to members of the Committee under separate cover.

- (iii) That subject to the scoping of investigations, additional meetings be scheduled as necessary and Working/Task and Finish Groups be utilised to assist in the collection of evidence and effectively manage the duration of formal Audit and Governance Committee meetings.
- (iv) That the items on the rolling programme be maintained and mandatory topics be noted.

17. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) – Quarterly Update *(Chief Solicitor)*

It was reported that Hartlepool Borough Council had powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) to conduct authorised covert surveillance and was required to provide Members with a quarterly update as to the use of those powers. Members were informed that in the quarter to the date of this meeting, there had been no RIPA Authorisations sought.

Recommended

That the report be noted.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The Chair reported that the meeting scheduled for 7 October 2021 would be rescheduled to Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 10.00 am and additional meetings would also be diaried.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.

CHAIR

AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

29 July 2021



Report of: Director of Resources and Development

Subject: THE 2020/2021 FINANCIAL REPORT
(INCLUDING THE 2020/21 STATEMENT OF
ACCOUNTS)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of the arrangements for approving the Council's Financial Report for 2020/21 (which includes the Statement of Accounts) and to provide a copy of the 2020/21 pre audit Financial Report.

1.2 This will be achieved by considering the following: -

- i) Background;
- ii) Basis for preparing the Statement of Accounts;
- iii) The 2020/21 Pre-Audit Financial Report; and,
- iv) Recommendations.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, updated for (Coronavirus) (Amendment) regulations 2020 all Local Authorities were are required to produce the draft annual Statement of Accounts by 31st July 2020. These regulations have temporarily relaxed the previous deadlines for producing the draft accounts from the 31st May and completion of final audited accounts from July to September.

2.2 The Financial Report presents the Council's financial position for 2020/21 in a specified format.

2.3 In previous years Members were required to approve the draft Statement of Accounts prior to audit by the External Auditors. This requirement was removed in 2011/12. However, Members are still required to approve the audited Financial Report. A report will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29th September to discharge this responsibility and meet the revised

deadlines for Local Authorities to publish audited accounts by 30th September.

- 2.4 This report is being presented to your meeting today to enable Members to familiarise themselves with the Statement of Accounts and to provide time for Members to ask questions.

3. BASIS FOR PREPARING THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

- 3.1 As reported during 2020/21 the Covid pandemic had an unprecedented financial impact on councils and this is driven by five key factors, many of which have continued into 2021/22 – albeit with a reducing impact:

- Increased expenditure
- Reduced service income
- Increased cost of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS)
- Reduced Business Rates income
- Reduced Council Tax income from lower housing growth.

- 3.2 At the outset of the pandemic the Local Government Association highlighted the financial impact of the above issues and the requirement for specific Government funding for councils.

- 3.3 The Government made four funding announcements in relation to supporting councils, which as summarised below provided £4.7 billion of national funding in 2020/21 and £9.325m for Hartlepool.

Tranche	Date of funding announcement	Value of national funding	Hartlepool Allocation
1	16.03.20	£1.6 billion	£3.404 million
2	18.04.20	£1.6 billion	£2.559 million
3	02.07.20	£0.5 billion	£1.013 million
4	12.10.20	£1.0 billion	£2.349 million
Total		£4.7 billion	£9.325 million

- 3.4 The timing of funding announcements, which reflected the uncertainty of the financial impact on councils, and different formula used for the four tranches made local financial planning extremely challenging during 2020/21. For much of the year it was anticipated there would be a significant funding shortfall and the position was not clarified until the fourth funding announcement in October.

- 3.5 The Government also provided grant funding to support income reductions as a result of service areas being closed, or operating with reduced capacity, for example leisure facilities and car parking income. Under this scheme councils had to manage the first 5% of any losses against budgeted income – compensation has then been provided for 95% of the remaining loss. These arrangements were

not finalised until August 2020. In effect councils fund 29% of income losses and the Government 71%.

- 3.6 These arrangements do not cover commercial income – councils have to manage these income reductions from their own resources. This is a major issue for some councils which hold assets to achieve a financial return. This is not a significant issue for Hartlepool and the only income not eligible for support is the lost income from the Shopping Centre.
- 3.7 Councils were required to submit detailed returns at the end of September, December and March 2021 to access this support. These claims have all been paid and the Council has received £4.031m.
- 3.8 The Government extended these arrangements to 30th June 2021 and details of how the 2021/22 scheme will operate are expected in late July – it is not expected there will be any significant changes from the 2020/21 scheme. This extension is welcome as the extended lock down and phased reopening of the economy / relaxation of restrictions means income levels will take longer to recover than previously anticipated. It is still too early to be sure the Medium Term Financial Strategy planning assumption that income streams will recover to their pre-Covid levels by the end of 2021/22 remains realistic. The position will continue to be monitored closely. This risk has reduced owing to the Tees Valley Combined Authority funding free town centre car parking for 3 hours for the period February 2021 to January 2023.
- 3.9 Finally the Government provided grant funding to support Business Rates and Council Tax income reductions arising in 2020/21. These reductions come through the Collection Fund a year after they occur – so a 2020/21 deficit impacts on the General Fund in 2021/22 in normal circumstances. To address the unprecedented impact of Covid the 2020/21 deficits will be phased over three years (2021/22 to 2023/24). The grant funding for these issues does not cover the full deficits and councils will have to fund some of these income losses themselves.
- 3.10 As detailed in the next section this position was recognised when determining the strategy for using the main Covid Grant as it was anticipated the specific Government support for these reductions would not cover the full loss.
- 3.11 **Use of main Covid Grant of £9.325m**
- 3.12 As reported to Finance and Policy Committee on 30th November 2020 it was anticipated that the majority of this funding was committed to address the impacts identified in paragraph 3.1. At one stage only £0.195m (approximately 2%) was identified as an uncommitted

‘contingency’ to meet increased Covid costs/income losses over the winter. The following table shows how the contingency amount was needed, alongside a small reduction in Covid costs and a reduction in the forecast Collection Fund deficit to offset higher income reductions than forecast.

	£'m
Forecast reported to Finance and Policy Committee 30.11.20	
- Covid costs, income losses and Collection Fund impact	12.245
- less Government grant to partly fund income losses (balance funded from main Covid grant of £9.325m)	(3.115)
- Sub Total forecast net impact reported 30.11.20	9.130
Changes from forecast position	
- Increase in income losses from irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income	0.352
- Reduction on Covid costs	(0.017)
- Reduction in Collection fund deficit	(0.140)
Total	9.325

- 3.13 Before the fourth funding tranche was announced a strategy to address the forecast Covid funding shortfall had been developed to avoid this position impacting on the 2020/21 and 2021/22 budgets. This strategy recommended capitalising the shortfall to enable the cost to be spread over a number of years. The resulting loan repayment costs will be funded from the senior management structure recurring saving and the net uncommitted saving in borrowing costs achieved in relation to the approved capital programme. In total the recurring revenue saving is £100,000.
- 3.14 As the previously forecast Covid shortfall is a revenue cost this proposal would have been implemented through a funding swap where prudential borrowing is used to meet approved capital expenditure commitments, which it was planned to fund from the Capital Funding Reserve. This strategy releases the Capital Funding Reserve which is revenue funding and could therefore have been reallocated to address the previously forecast Covid funding shortfall.
- 3.15 The announcement of the fourth tranche of Government funding has enabled this financial flexibility to be retained and has enabled a Business Rates Risk of £3m to be established. This amount is earmarked to manage the impact of the closure of the Power Station currently scheduled for 2024/25. However, some of this reserve may need to be used earlier if other Business Rates reductions arise as a result of the economic impact of Covid.

3.16 General Fund - Summary Outturn position

3.17 As highlighted in the table below all areas overspent owing to the impact of the pandemic on income and expenditure. If the Government had not provided additional grant funding there would have been a financial shortfall of £4.228m. This excludes the impact of 2020/21 Collection Fund deficit which is phased over three years (2021/22 to 2023/24). This shortfall would have had to be funded from the Council's own resources and this would have had a significant adverse impact on the financial sustainability of the Council.

Description of Expenditure	2020/2021 Approved Budget £000	2020/2021 Actual Expenditure / Income £000	2020/2021 Variance Adverse / (Favourable) £000
Departmental Expenditure			
Adult & Community Based	33,901	34,867	966
Children's & Joint Commissioning	23,370	24,012	642
Neighbourhoods and Regulatory	18,170	20,677	2,507
Resources and Development	4,798	4,911	113
Dedicated Schools Grant Related Expenditure	48,697	48,697	0
Total Departmental Position	128,936	133,164	4,228
Non Departmental Expenditure	(2,507)	(6,735)	(4,228)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	0	(104)	(104)
Contribution to HRA Reserve	0	104	104
Final Contribution to Budget Support Fund	126,429	126,429	0

The variance reflects the Covid grant received from the Government.

4. THE 2020/21 PRE-AUDIT FINANCIAL REPORT

4.1 The pre-audit Financial Report is attached at Appendix A. If there are any audit amendments these will be reported to the committee in September. In summary this document provides the following information: -

- i) Narrative Report
- ii) Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

- iii) Statement of Accounts
- iv) Annual Governance Statement
- v) Draft Independent Auditor's Report
- vi) Glossary

- 4.2 The narrative report provides an explanation of the Council's overall financial performance for 2020/21, details the year-end financial position for 2020/21 and outlines the impact of the current economic climate on the Authority's ongoing financial position. The report also provides a guide to the most significant matters reported in the Statement of Accounts including an explanation of the purpose of each of the core statements.
- 4.3 One of the key statements is the Balance Sheet which comprises two main balancing parts, Net Assets and Total Reserves, which represents the Council's financial position as at the 31st March 2021.
- 4.4 The Net Assets section of the Balance Sheet shows the Council's assets including Property, Plant and Equipment, Investments and Debtors and liabilities including Short and Long-term Borrowing and Creditors.
- 4.5 The Total Reserves section of the Balance Sheet is made up of Usable and Unusable Reserves:
- **Usable reserves** are those which the authority can utilise to support future service provision. Some of these reserves do not belong to the Council i.e. schools reserves, or relate to ring fenced funds received by the Council for a specific purpose defined by the funding organisation. Further details are provided in paragraph 4.7.
 - **Unusable Reserves** cannot be used to support services and include notional accounting gains and losses. These accounting gains and losses are referred to as unrealised.
- 4.6 Details of reserves are provided in Note 6 page 44 of the accounts and are line with decisions made as part of the 2021/22 MTFS the level of reserves has increased at 31.03.21. This position reflects reserves allocated to support the 2021/22 budget of £4.312m – which avoided services cuts and addressed the Council Tax freeze. The position also underpins the development of the 2022/23 to 2024/25 MTFS and the need to achieve significant budget savings over this period. Changes in reserves in 2020/21 are summarised below and details provided in paragraphs 4.7 to 4.9.

	Balance 31.03.20 £'m	Transfer between Reserves in 2020/21 (note 1) £'m	Contributions in 2020/21 £'m	Balance 31.03.21 £'m
Unearmarked General Fund Reserves	4.417	0	0	4.417
Budget Support and Investment Reserves	5.137	2.591	7.322	15.050
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	11.449	(2.591)	4.513	13.371
Total	21.003	0	11.835	32.838

Note 1 – As part of the approved 2021/22 MTFS report it was determined that the Strategic One Off Costs Reserves held to meet future redundancy and pension costs would be transferred into Budget Support and Investment Reserves as these costs will be managed as part of the MTFS process in 2022/23 and future years.

- 4.7 **Un-earmarked General Fund Reserve** – there has been no change in this reserve and this amount continues to be the recommended amount to meet unforeseen commitments not provided for within other reserves. Any use of this reserve will need to be repaid to ensure the Council can continue to manage unforeseen commitments.
- 4.8 **Budget Support Fund** – this has increased in line with MTFS decisions and is allocated for the following purposes:

	£'m
Budget Support Fund 2022/23 to 2024/25 This will help phase budget cuts and meet redundancy / pension costs owing the next three years. Detailed proposals for using this amount will be approved by Finance and Policy Committee as part of the budget process and then referred to Council.	7.691
Budget Support Fund 2021/22 Use approved at part of 2021/22 budget process.	4.312
Covid Recovery Reserve To meet additional 2021/22 costs in relation to Covid testing, contract tracing and compliance measures.	1.653
Looked After Children Reserves The base budget for 2021/22 and future years reflects	1.061

the increase in caseloads. There remains a risk, particularly during the Covid recovery period, that caseloads may spike and this reserve provides financial resilience to meet these costs. This would also avoid have to make in-year budget savings.	
Budget Support Fund – Invest to Save	0.333
This reserve is funding a multi-disciplinary children’s social team.	
Total	15.050

- 4.9 **Earmarked Reserves** – these reserves cover a range of specific initiatives and are earmarked to fund specific one off initiatives / commitments. In summary these reserves have increased by a net £1.922m. This net increase includes the establishment of the Business Rates Risk Reserve, as detailed in paragraph 3.15, and the use of reserves on a phased basis as planned.
- 4.10 In line with previous years a future MTFS report to this Committee will review the reserves detailed in the previous paragraphs as it is good practise to complete an annual review.
- 4.11 **Covid Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve at 31.03.21 of £10.588m (nil at 31.3.20).**

This amount reflects Government funding provided to compensate councils for the financial impact of 100% Business Rates Relief to a wide range of businesses during 2020/21. This means the Business Rates will not be paid by these businesses and the income shortfall will result in a Collection Fund deficit. The Government paid this grant to councils in 2020/21. This means all Councils are holding a significant reserve at 31.03.21 – for a liability that occurs on 01.04.21.

In my opinion this is technical accounting issue and the approach confuses the financial impact of Covid on councils and the year-end reporting. The real world financial position is councils have received these resources at 31.03.21 (2020/21 financial year), but they are fully ring fenced for a liability that already exists and simply falls due on 1st April 2021 (2021/22 financial year). Councils have no flexibility in relation to the use of this grant.

It would have been much clearer if the Accounting Regulations had been amended to show this as Revenue Grants Received in Advance at 31.03.21, rather than included within reserves.

5. CONSIDERATIONS / IMPLICATIONS

Financial Considerations and Risk Implications	Covered in previous paragraphs.
Legal Considerations	None
Child and Family Poverty Considerations	None
Equality and Diversity Considerations	None
Staff Considerations	None
Asset Management Considerations	None

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The 2020/21 Financial Report has been prepared in accordance with the relevant accounting standards and this report enables Members to review the draft Financial Report prior to the final document being referred to Audit and Governance Committee on 29th September 2021 for approval.
- 6.2 The Covid pandemic had a significant financial impact on councils in terms of additional costs and reduced income. In 2020/21 these issues were funded from one off Government grant. Some of these issues are continuing into the current year (2021/22) and whilst the Government has provided additional one off funding it is not yet clear if this will be sufficient. The position will continue to be monitored closely and detailed updates will be presented to Finance and Policy Committee during the year. It is also not yet clear if any of the Covid financial impacts will continue beyond 2021/22, such as increased Local Council Tax Support eligible households and income levels returning to pre-Covid levels. It is also unclear whether any Government funding will be provided if this is the case.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding the uncertainty regarding the ongoing financial impact of the Covid pandemic the Council faces significant budget deficits over the next three year. Most of this deficit falls in 2022/23 and reflects the use of reserves to set the 2021/22 budget, which avoided cutting services and increasing Council Tax in the current year, although deferred a significant deficit from 2021/22 to 2022/23 to provide a longer lead time to develop a strategy to address the deficits. An update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2024/25 will be reported to a future Finance and Policy Committee and then referred to full Council. This report will set out a proposed strategy for managing the forecast deficit, which will be underpinned by a strategy for using reserves held at 31st March 2021.

6.4 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy has issued a checklist of questions Members may wish to ask to assist in the understanding of an Authority’s financial statements. This has been included at Appendix B and Members are advised that the Council’s Financial Report complies with these requirements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that Members:-

- i) Note the report;
- ii) Note that the Draft Financial Report detailed in Appendix A will be subject to independent audit by Mazars and details of any material amendments will be reported to Audit and Governance Committee in September.
- iii) Note that there is the opportunity to raise questions and/or seek clarification of information included in the pre-audit Financial Report in the period up to 29th September 2021, when the audited Financial Report will be presented to Audit and Governance Committee for final approval.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

Finance and Policy Committee – 30th November 2020 - Financial Position Update 2020/21 to 2022/23 Report

Finance and Policy Committee – 25th January 2020 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22 and 2022/23

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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Sign Off:-
 Managing Director
 Director of Resources and Development
 Chief Solicitor

DRAFT

**Financial Report 2020/21
Hartlepool Borough Council**



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SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

INTRODUCTION

The narrative report provides an overall explanation of the Council's financial position, including major influences affecting the accounts. This will enable readers to understand and interpret the financial statements.

The narrative report sets out:

- Our Strategy and Objectives
- Our Performance 2020/21
- Our Governance and Decision Making
- Our Organisational Model
- Risk Management Arrangements
- Financial Performance 2020/21
- Financial Outlook – General Fund 2021/22 to 2024/25
- Borrowing Facilities and Investment Strategy
- Statement of Accounts

OUR STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, work was underway to prepare a new 3-year Council Plan 2020-2023 for the Borough informed by widespread consultation with the public, elected members, employees and partners. Although this new Council Plan was agreed by the Finance and Policy Committee it did not receive final approval as the March 2020 meeting of Council could not take place and the decision was deferred as the Council focused on its COVID-19 response.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been like no other emergency that the Council has faced and its effects are and will continue to be far reaching and long lasting. During the summer of 2020 we were able to start considering how we might begin to recover from the pandemic and its impact on our community and economy. The COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Plan, adopted in August 2020 and set out below, was based on extensive consultation undertaken over the summer of 2020 and on what was already identified through the preparation of the Council Plan.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD



Organisational Change and Resilience

- Restart council services within COVID-19 secure premises and operating procedures
- Improve infrastructure and support for those working from home
- Develop an agile, resilient and healthy workforce
- Progress an office accommodation strategy to create more efficient, carbon-neutral, accessible and flexible workspace



Health and Social care

- Build a resilient and community-based health and social care system
- Review and strengthen arrangements for managing the safe discharge of patients into the community
- Develop new community-based approaches to tackling social isolation and access to support for the elderly and vulnerable adults
- Help people protect themselves from the virus by living healthy lives
- Increase community based access to treatment services and remote consultations
- Improve community access to mental health services, advice and support



Business, economy, jobs and skills

- Protect and support Hartlepool Businesses to re-start and adapt to operating digitally within COVID19 secure guidelines
- Establish a jobs and skills taskforce to develop new skill pathways into growth sectors, maximise apprenticeships and provide joined up support to those experiencing complex barriers to entering employment
- Re-animate the Borough's culture, heritage and tourism sector
- Establish a task force to maximise opportunities to use public sector purchasing power to build the local economy
- Attract inward investment to grow new jobs
- Attract investment into creating a connected and vibrant town centre



Community wellbeing and financial inclusion

- Establish a partnership and community-based approach to addressing the root causes and impact of food, fuel and digital poverty and to facilitate routes to work.
- Re-purpose our approach to providing financial advice and access to hardship support to meet changing and growing demand
- Mark the way our communities and public services responded during the COVID-19 crisis by gathering the stories of how Hartlepool came together
- Develop a co-ordinated approach to the provision of supported and independent accommodation for those at risk of rough sleeping and homelessness that provide integrated mental health, substance misuse and employment support
- Increase the availability of quality affordable social housing that meets diverse needs by building more council houses and working in partnership with Hartlepool based social housing providers



Education and Vulnerable Children

- Support the re-opening of schools through the provision of health and safety advice and the development of a recovery curriculum, catch up programme and 'blended learning'
- Implement a new model between the local authority, schools and health to support children in their early years
- Strengthen transition between schools at all stages to support children and young people emotionally and academically
- Refocus, re-organise and improve arrangements for children's social care delivery to protect children from harm and safely reduce numbers of children in care by addressing the drivers of demand
- Improve the multi-agency arrangements and education provision for meeting the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people
- Co-ordinate a new out-of-school and holiday programme for children and young people



Environment and Infrastructure

- Introduce a team of street ambassadors to promote and advise people on maintaining physical distancing in key areas
- Develop a climate change strategy and action plan
- Create safer streets, cycle ways and footpaths
- Improve connectivity by investing in our transport and local road network
- Invest in the physical environment and public realm in our neighbourhoods to strengthen the retail offer and improve opportunities for leisure and play
- Build the capacity of the integrated community safety team to tackle anti-social behaviour and enable people to feel safe on our streets, public spaces and neighbourhoods
- Strengthen our approach to enforcement action on litter, dog fouling and illegal car parking.



Finance

Develop and deliver a recovery budget for the Council and ensure the capital programme is delivered on time and on budget



Communications

Work with partners to deliver a shared communication strategy which provides effective and timely public information through a diverse range of channels and reaches those with specific communication needs



HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

In the autumn of 2020 it was recognised that the challenges that we face as a Borough had changed from what we were facing earlier in the year when the proposed Council Plan 2020-23 was prepared. It was therefore agreed that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) would review the proposed Council Plan 2020-23 and update it to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the Borough.

A new Council Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 has now been developed and was approved by Council in February 2021. This new Council Plan, set out below, establishes a clear vision for Hartlepool and identifies what the delivery of that vision will mean. This reflects what was identified through consultation with residents, elected members and our public, voluntary, community and private sector partners whilst also recognising the emerging and continually evolving challenges the Council faces from the pandemic. This new Council Plan has and will continue to shape our services and our financial strategies. The Council Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and the 5 year Capital Plan have been developed as three parts of a single plan to ensure the links between the three are strengthened.

Our vision

Hartlepool will be a place...

... where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.

... where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

... of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.

... that is sustainable, clean, safe and green.

... that has an inclusive and growing economy.

... with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.

Where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives

What that will mean...

- The appropriate conditions are in place to enable people to make healthier lifestyle choices including reducing obesity levels;
- Individuals are able to better manage long-term conditions and prevent ill health;
- There is increased participation in physical activity through access to fit for purpose leisure, sport and recreational facilities including parks and open spaces;
- There is improved mental, emotional and social wellbeing;
- There are reduced levels of smoking, substance and alcohol misuse in the community;
- Everyone is able to access connectivity, technology and develop skills to enhance their life and provide access to service and opportunities;
- Families and individuals have food security;
- Children in our care and leaving care are cared for, cared about and their life chances are improved;
- Those dying and their families can access high quality, good services ensuring that they can experience 'a good death';
- Everyone will be able to access mental health support where and when they need it, and will be able to navigate through the system easily;
- Individuals will be equipped to manage their condition or move towards individualised recovery on their own terms, surrounded by their families, carers and social networks, and supported in their local community;
- Everyone will contribute to and be participants in the communities that sustain them;
- Adults with care needs are supported to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible;
- There will be access to innovative and community led models of social care focusing on a strength based approach and enabling quality of life;
- The long term impact of COVID-19 on population health is being addressed.

Where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm

What that will mean...

- Fewer children experience harm through abuse, neglect and other adverse childhood experiences;
- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities have improved outcomes;
- Barriers to learning are removed for the most vulnerable children and young people;
- The educational landscape is inclusive to all;
- Individuals will be safeguarded in a way that supports them in making choices and having control in how they choose to live their lives;
- An outcomes approach in safeguarding is promoted that works for everyone;
- Public awareness will be raised so that professionals, other staff and communities as a whole can play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect;
- There will be integrated support for vulnerable households and those at risk of homelessness;
- There are more housing options available for vulnerable adults;
- Commissioned services are rated good or better by Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission.

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all

What that will mean...

- All children benefit from good development and learning in their early years and achievement at key stages 1 to 5 is at or above national average;
- All schools and education providers are judged good or outstanding;
- More young people enter Higher Education and advanced apprenticeship pathways;
- There is reduced poverty, deprivation and inequality across the Borough;
- We have empowered and cohesive communities taking ownership of their own future;
- Education and other opportunities are available to address unemployment;
- People are involved in their local community rather than being socially isolated;
- Communities are well served with appropriate facilities;
- Children, young people and adults aspire to be whatever they want in life;
- There is a cross sector and coordinated programme of volunteering;
- We have a strong and diverse voluntary and community sector;
- Everyone can access creative and cultural opportunities to enhance their lives.

That is sustainable, clean, safe and green

What that will mean...

- Resources are managed sustainably by reducing our consumption of energy and water;
- Initiatives are in place to tackle climate change;
- We are working with partners and residents to reduce the Borough's carbon emissions and move towards a low carbon economy;
- Sustainable development and transport principles are embedded in our Local Plan policies;
- We have high quality and affordable homes that meet the diverse needs of our residents;
- There is access to good quality, well maintained parks, streets and public spaces;
- We have cleaner neighbourhoods;
- There is reduced environmental crime;
- The potential of vacant buildings and land is maximised to meet the needs of the community and improve their appearance;
- Levels of Anti-Social Behaviour are reduced;
- There are reduced levels of violence including domestic abuse;
- We have a sustainable approach to waste management;
- Land and air quality is improved.

That has an inclusive and growing economy

What that will mean...

- There are more and better paid jobs;
- We have a skilled, healthy, motivated and agile workforce;
- Strong partnerships continue to be fostered with the business sector;
- We have growing local businesses;
- There is increased public and private sector investment in the local economy;
- Connectivity across the Borough, region and nationally is improved;
- We have high quality visitor attractions and increased visitor numbers;
- High quality events and festivals for local and visiting population are delivered;
- There is increased interest in attracting developers to the Borough.

With a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community

What that will mean...

- We have strong and empowered leadership committed to delivering our vision;
- There is a reduced workspace requirement, with a flexible responsive workforce;
- Potential income sources are maximised;
- Our carbon footprint has reduced;
- Online access to services has increased;
- A customer focused service is delivered;
- We have a healthy, motivated, skilled and diverse workforce;
- The Borough has a positive reputation and improved media coverage.

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

OUR PERFORMANCE 2020/21

Organisational change and resilience

- Within one week of the first national lockdown, approximately 1/3 of the workforce were enabled to work from home and were provided with the necessary IT equipment and applications to undertake their jobs. Advice around health and safety and wellbeing was also provided. MS Teams has been rolled out to those individuals who require access to engage with external partners;
- Services across the Council were prioritised so that core, critical services could continue to function and other services were reopened as and when possible within Government guidelines. Redeployment of employees from across the Council enabled core, critical services to operate and also enabled the creation of the Council's Support Hub;
- A significant programme of communications activity has been undertaken throughout the year using a range of communication tools and techniques such as audience Q&A sessions, resident's leaflets and Managing Director/Leader of the Council video briefings. Hartlepool has been identified as an area of Good Practice by central Government and has been invited to share practice and learning;
- As lockdown restrictions were gradually released, and businesses started to reopen, services continued to look at ways in which the Council could support businesses through the provision of advice, guidance leaflets, temporary signage, and the introduction of measures to promote safer green and urban spaces for example by increasing the widths of footpaths, introducing temporary cycle ways and promoting social distancing requirements;
- Outreach services have been available to all staff throughout COVID-19 via digital online fitness classes, support to those who were shielding through the Support Hub if they were unable to access support elsewhere and opportunities for redeployment where staff would have otherwise been unable to fulfil their role. This was critical for the health of the workforce and the feedback from staff has been extremely positive. Many staff have developed skills, stayed connected and supported vulnerable residents, and report feeling valued by the community and the organisation;
- Preventative & Community Based Services worked with North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust on an application to become an Active Hospital pilot site. The application was successful and North Tees & Hartlepool Hospital was one of only three locations nationally to have been awarded this status. The programme focused on developing the wellbeing and engagement in physical activity of the workforce and HBC introduced ways to promote activity and associated health benefits within the workforce as well as further encouraging the population of Hartlepool to become more active at whatever level they chose;
- Guidance around positive wellbeing and support offered by the Educational Psychology Service and Mental Wellbeing 1st Supporters was circulated to staff and placed on a dedicated section of the intranet under the 'Well Workforce' tile. Specific guidance for staff working in their normal work location and also working from home was developed and shared with staff.

Health and Social Care

- In addition to maintaining business critical services we also worked quickly to set up new services and arrangements to ensure we could support the most vulnerable in the Borough and those at the greatest risk from the COVID-19 crisis. We acted swiftly to commission additional provision to ensure rough sleepers and the homeless could be accommodated and off the streets, we developed integrated discharge arrangements operating from 8am – 8pm seven days a week and provided support and advice to social care providers;
- In the space of a few days we created the Hartlepool Support Hub and helpline for those who were 'shielding' or self-isolating and in need of food, medicine, other supplies and emotional support. Based at Community Hub Central and with a warehousing point at Mill House Leisure Centre, the Support Hub was staffed by people from across the Council whose usual day jobs are very different from the vital work they were doing. Staff working in the Support Hub included librarians, instructors from Carlton Adventure and leisure centres, reception staff from Mill House Leisure Centre, legal assistants and Youth Services staff to name but a few. Staff very quickly adapted to their new roles and were happy to do whatever was needed to help people through the crisis;
- We were the only Council regionally to leaflet every household at the start of the crisis to raise awareness about the role of the Support Hub. This proved invaluable in making sure as many people as possible knew who to contact for help:
 - 11,131 calls to the Support Hub
 - 26,130 calls made
 - 4,735 people on the Shielding List
 - 2,269 food parcels delivered
 - 2,325 prescriptions delivered
 - 2,948 hot meals delivered
 - 138 books distributed
 - 313 PPE deliveries

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Health and Social Care Continued...

- The Council, through the Support Hub, played an important role in harnessing good will across the Borough and worked with a range of different voluntary and community organisations and local businesses to ensure people could access the support they needed, including the provision of food, hot meals and neighbourly support. By the end of the first month the Council had over 150 volunteers who were signed up with DBS and identity checks and worked with Hartlepower to launch the Hartleneighbour scheme to support people who were socially isolating and those experiencing loneliness. We are immensely grateful to the community and voluntary sector and some of our businesses who have stepped in to help deal with the social impact of the crisis including Hartlepool Carers, Poolie Time Exchange, Hartlepool Foodbank, St Aidan's, Hartlepool Mecca Bingo, Social Prescribers, Hartlepool United Football Club, Hartlepool College of Further Education, Harbour and Hartlepool's Dementia Friends;
- Adult social care services have been maintained throughout the pandemic. The Integrated Discharge Team and Intermediate Care Services managed increased demand as they responded to new national guidance requiring discharges to take place within two hours. Teams worked weekends and extended hours in order to support safe and timely discharges and the success of this approach was greatly helped by existing integrated arrangements and a partnership approach with health colleagues;
- Day services at the Centre for Independent Living continued to operate, with staff supporting a smaller number of people with learning disabilities and complex needs, and people who were not able to access their usual services were supported through regular telephone or Skype contact by the social care teams. A number of people were also supported with delivery of hot meals from the Support Hub and additional care and support in their own homes. Work was undertaken to raise awareness of COVID-19 related scams which would impact particularly on the elderly and those living alone and safeguarding services have been maintained throughout;
- Throughout the early days of the pandemic the Council was in daily contact with care providers and a range of support was in place, including supplies of PPE, advice and guidance and additional funding for care homes for older people. Through this route the Council had daily updates on suspected and confirmed cases, testing of residents and staff, staffing levels and any other challenges that providers faced and was able to respond quickly to requests for additional support. The Council also worked collaboratively with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), North Tees & Hartlepool Foundation Trust (NTH FT) and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust (TEWV FT) to support care homes to access testing, additional clinical input and enhanced training on infection prevention and control that was specific to the pandemic;
- The Community Integrated Intermediate Care (CIIC) service was strengthened bringing together Rapid Response Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Community Physiotherapy, bed-based rehabilitation services, reablement, home care support and social work to provide holistic care to people being discharged from hospital.

Business, Economy, Jobs and Skills

- Local government has been used during the pandemic as a conduit to pass on funding to eligible businesses by way of Business Support Grants. With regard the initial schemes; Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLG) and the discretionary Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF), the Council acted quickly to pay these grants to Hartlepool businesses and the Council's performance consistently exceeded the national average. This was particularly the case at 20th April when the Council ranked 13th out of 314 Councils and had paid out 80% of eligible grants, compared to an average of 50%. In total the Council paid out £17.495m Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Support Grants to 1,559 Hartlepool Businesses and £0.854m discretionary Support Grants to 91 Hartlepool Businesses. Various grant schemes were subsequently administered from October onwards with a further £16.940m of grants awarded to over 3,000 Hartlepool businesses by 30 June 2021;
- A virtual careers service was launched alongside the Support Hub to ensure connectivity of services and ease of access for vulnerable populations and extensions were secured for the Routes to Work and Youth Employment Initiatives;
- The Adult Education curriculum was reviewed to consider the changing needs of people coming out of COVID-19;
- A Hartlepool Youth Hub was developed in partnership with a number of employment and advice services. An application was submitted to Job Centre Plus to fund a full time careers advisor to work in partnership with the JCP Work Coach to maximise opportunities to support young people into work

Community Wellbeing and Financial Inclusion

- The Council implemented the Government's Hardship Scheme to reduce the Council Tax of those in receipt of Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) by £167.22, above the government's £150 minimum requirement. This meant that those households in receipt of LCTS who lived in Band A properties had no Council Tax to pay during the year;

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Community Wellbeing and Financial Inclusion Continued...

- A network of key partners across public and voluntary sector organisations has been developed to ensure a collaborative approach to some of the most significant challenges in Hartlepool including poverty and collaborative work is underway with VCS partners to identify town wide priorities and potential use of the Community Pot to tackle hardship linked to COVID-19;
- Finance and Policy Committee allocated a £200,000 Community Pot to support community-led initiatives aimed at tackling the social and economic impact of COVID-19. The successful schemes were:
 - Financial Advice and Support (including benefit appeals)
 - Hartlepool Financial Inclusion Partnership
 - Get Connected – digital inclusion project
 - Community Led Inclusion Partnership
 - Supported Housing & Counselling for Homeless and Vulnerable
 - Accessible IT equipment and training
- The Bread and Butter Thing was commissioned to provide access to food, welfare products and other essentials through a subsidised membership scheme. This supported some of the working 'poor' to ensure they could access low cost food and essentials;
- Work is underway with Hartlepower to promote and roll out community broadband as a means to support the most vulnerable individuals to access improved connectivity. This will then be further developed working with Project 65 to ensure people have access to technology and the skills to be able to utilise technology. Priority access has been given to the People's Network within Community Hubs for those who are benefit claimants and job seekers. This will continue and expansion of this model will continue to be considered as part of recovery plans;
- Financial advice and guidance (delivered through a contract with West View Advice and Resource Centre) continues to provide a critical service to those in need of financial support and those experiencing hardship. The service operates via phone and the model of delivery is regularly reviewed to ensure it can best meet demand from those who need support;
- The additionality of the contract to support Welfare Services to manage 'frequent attendees' is proving successful and is supporting people to better manage their finances on a longer term basis;
- Successful bid to MHCLG for funding to develop and deliver a Tenancy First / Housing Support model to tackle cycles of homelessness for the most vulnerable individuals.

Education and Vulnerable Children

- Throughout the crisis all schools and academies worked collaboratively with the Council to keep all schools open for key workers and vulnerable children and, prior to the roll out of the national voucher system, to ensure that those entitled to free school meals could receive a meal a day. Schools in Hartlepool remained open during the Easter holidays to maintain continuity. In addition teachers have worked tirelessly to provide education online and to maintain contact with pupils and their parents;
- School's re-opened for all pupils in September 2020. A high level of support has been provided to schools by the Council in relation to Health and Safety, Human Resources, Public Relations and School Improvement. Regular meetings took place with a collaborative approach across the local area to share work and developments, particularly around remote learning and catch up curriculum. The Council and all schools worked well as a partnership leading to consistent approaches to supporting staff and pupils in all schools across Hartlepool;
- The priority in children's social care was the safeguarding and protection of children and continuing to respond to the high levels of demand, need and complexity seen in the children referred for support. Following a pause during lockdown, the Community Support Team was reviewed and further developed to trial new ways of multi-disciplinary working to tackle the root causes of demand;
- The Council worked with other Councils in Tees and TEWV FT to develop a Whole Pathway Commissioning model for meeting emotional and mental health needs of children and young people;
- A resource pack was provided to schools outlining tools and interventions to support pupils that could be used to promote better emotional and mental health;
- A Mental Health trailblazer programme was delivered through schools and a provider commissioned to deliver additional support to those schools not involved in trial.

Environment and Infrastructure

- Community Street Ambassadors were introduced in July 2020 and feedback from members of the public has been very positive;
- The Council was successful in securing funding through British Cycling's 'Places to Ride' programme to develop infrastructure and assets to further encourage cycling in Hartlepool;
- Work is progressing to establish a cycle corridor alongside the A689, with a section along Belle Vue Way, linking up with the cycle way along Brenda Road, recently completed;

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Environment and Infrastructure Continued...

- Measures funded through the emergency Active Travel Fund included:
 - Further road safety measures outside of schools and shops;
 - Seaton Front – Removal of on-street parking bays to provide wider footpaths, and enable social distancing for people to pass each other and queues;
 - Schools – Widening of footways as required to facilitate waiting areas for parents and also the safe use of School Crossing Patrol sites;
 - Installation and maintenance of traffic management and signage;
 - York Road (Park Rd – Victoria Rd) –restricted to 'Bus & Cycle Only' between the hours of 10am and 4pm. To facilitate an active travel corridor during the busiest shopping hours, create a more attractive environment for cyclists/ pedestrians, and allow for easier social distancing;
- There have been a number of major road improvements throughout the town with the reconstruction / resurfacing of various sections of the A689 and A179. In addition a number of old concrete roads, such as Truro Drive have been reconstructed to improve the longevity of the road and reduce road noise to those in adjacent properties;
- A programme of resurfacing of footways has been undertaken throughout the Borough, with a particular focus on the villages;
- Works have been completed along Stockton Street, which included improvements to vehicle access and egress of the multi storey car park and the provision of a dedicated right turn lane into the multi storey car park for southbound traffic;
- A number of road improvements schemes were brought forward to this year with the awarding of an additional £1m of funding from Central Government;
- Planning permission was granted for the redevelopment / restoration of the Headland Bandstand area. Works on this area commenced in Spring 2021 to avoid disturbing wildlife which nest over winter in this area;
- A coordinated approach across the Council and other partners is being developed which will target identified areas of concern in relation to environmental crimes, based on scale of problems. New working practices will be introduced within the existing Civil Enforcement Team, allowing for more planned activities to take place in relation to environmental enforcement;
- Further investment is being made in technology to assist in identifying environmental crime and identify offenders, including the use of trackers, smart water and mobile CCTV.

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Council Plan Performance 2020/21

Growing our economy, jobs and skills	Regenerating our town	Developing and promoting Hartlepool as a great place to live	Developing new services for people and communities	Building better beginnings and better futures for our children and young people	Provide effective leadership based upon innovation and efficiency
<p>67.1% overall employment rate (working age) + </p> <p>41.6 new business registration rate per 10,000 population aged 16 and above+ </p> <p>£80.76m rateable value of businesses </p> <p>10.6% youth unemployment (16-24 years)+ </p> <p>35.8% Council spend that goes to local suppliers ~ </p>	<p>3.72m visitor numbers ~ </p>	<p>16 affordable homes delivered (gross) </p> <p>+11.34% Council Tax base growth since 2014/15 </p> <p>34.15% household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting < </p> <p>130.8 overall crime rate per 1,000 head of population ^ </p>	<p>95.6% commissioned adult social care providers that are rated good or outstanding by the Care Quality Commission </p> <p>83.5% of older people achieving independence through rehabilitation and intermediate care </p>	<p>94.3% schools rates good or outstanding by Ofsted </p> <p>-0.34 average progress 8 score per pupil ~ </p> <p>4.1% of 16-17 year olds Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) </p> <p>34.1% children in poverty (after housing costs) ></p> <p>159.6 rate of looked after children per 10,000 population ~ </p> <p>90.3% of 2 year olds immunised for Measles, Mumps and Rubella </p>	<p>93.2% Council Tax collection rate </p> <p>96.4% Business Rates collections </p> <p>47.41% voter turnout at local elections </p> <p>78% staff who feel satisfied about working for the Council #</p>
<p>No key = data is latest available i.e. 2020/21 or Q4 2020/21.</p> <p>+ Latest data available = Q3 2020/21 < Latest data available = Q2 2020/21 ^ Latest data is 12 months ending Dec 2020 # Latest data available = 2018 ~ Latest data available = 2019/20 > Latest Data available = 2017/18</p> <p>At the point of publication this data is provisional.</p>					

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

OUR GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

We are responsible for conducting our business in accordance with the law and ensuring public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. We are committed to the highest standards of conduct and have robust controls over the use of resources, based on open decision making, accountability and transparency.

The Council takes decisions every day that affect the town and its residents. Our Constitution details how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The most significant decisions relating to our plans and strategies, such as setting the budget and Council Tax level, are taken by full Council, where all 36 of Hartlepool's Councillors make the decision. Other decisions are delegated to one of the Council's five Policy Committees; Finance and Policy Committee, Adult and Community Based Services, Children's Services, Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration Services.

We also have specific Committees for Planning and Licensing to make decisions required by law. Operational management decisions, as well as decisions in respect of functions which require professional officer training and skills, are delegated to Officers in accordance with our approved scheme of delegation.

Our Internal Audit team provides challenge and assurances over the effectiveness of our risk management, internal control and governance arrangements. They support, advise and challenge management to assist the development of systems, policies and procedures to ensure the best use of resources. Our External Auditors take assurance from the work of our Internal Audit function. Internal Audit carries out its role in compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Our Annual Governance Statement reviews the extent to which the Council has complied with its code of corporate governance and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with the statement of accounts.

Our Audit and Governance Committee, provides independent challenge of the Council's corporate governance arrangements, risk management arrangements and anti-corruption arrangements. They also ensure that any actions and risks identified by Internal and External Audit are addressed.

OUR ORGANISATIONAL MODEL

The Managing Director has overall responsibility for the delivery of the plans, strategies and policies approved by the Council and its Committee, which are delivered by our four departments:

Adult and Community Based Services Department

The Department is responsible for social care services for adults, including supporting meeting the social care needs of older people and working age adults who need support due to their mental health, physical or learning disability or substance misuse. The Department also provides leisure centres and sports facilities, outdoor activities and outdoor education, Community Hubs that incorporate a library service and the home library service.

Children's and Joint Commissioning Services Department

The Department is responsible for social care services for children and families, including improving outcomes for children and young people in relation to their health and wellbeing, safety, education and employment. The Department ensures the Council acts as an effective corporate parent for children in care. The Department provides strong and strategic leaderships across schools and education support services focused on driving up educational standards for all children. The department is also responsible for public health for all age groups and addressing health inequalities.

Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services Department

The Department is responsible for a broad range of services including managing and maintaining highways, refuse collection and disposal, street cleansing, economic development, school meals, community safety and public protection services. The Department provides technical support services (engineers, estates professional, architects etc.) which support other departments and work from outside the Council. The Department also delivers the Local Plan and supports the Planning Committee.

Resources and Development Department

The Department is responsible for a diverse range of services, including Council tax setting and collection, Business Rates, Benefits, HR, Corporate IT, Corporate Finance, Corporate Strategy and economic development, regeneration and manages the Housing Revenue Account.

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Our corporate approach to risk management aims to ensure that we have robust processes in place to support the delivery of our strategic priorities, as established within our Council Plan, and our service aims. The Council agreed our current Risk Management Framework on 24th June 2019. The Framework has simplified the Council's approach, provided further clarity to officers about how risk should be considered within the Council and demonstrates the added value of appropriate risk management. A Strategic Risk Register has been identified at a corporate level within the performance management framework and changes are reported to Elected Members regularly through the monitoring of the Council Plan.

Using a proactive approach we identify the risks to the delivery of our strategic priorities and service aims. Our Strategic Risk Register articulates each individual risk, quantifies its likelihood and potential impact and names the senior officer who owns the risk. We regularly review our risks to provide assurance that our management of risk is effective.

Our Risk Register is reviewed quarterly and currently include risks relating, for example, to finance, ICT, safeguarding and health and safety. Risks are scored in the context of their existing controls and the purpose of the risk management approach is to ensure early intervention and regular scrutiny in order to ensure that risks are controlled, allowing the Council to manage impacts and deliver opportunities and effective services and service change by making informed decisions.

Our risk management activity can broadly be described at three levels;

- CMT is responsible for ensuring the effective management of risks in the Strategic Risk Register.
- Departments maintain their own risk registers covering the delivery of their services and major projects.
- Services within Departments maintain their own operational risk registers.

It is our aim to ensure consistent and effective risk management is embedded throughout the organisation with officers from across the Council receiving appropriate training in risk management and support from Departmental Risk Management Lead Officers. Collectively, risk management at all levels of our organisation allows us to manage the operational and strategic risks which affect our ability to deliver services and our strategic priorities over the short, medium and long term.

Our risk profile is constantly evolving. Over recent years there has been a climate of increased and sustained pressure in terms of austerity, demographic changes and increased expectations on public services resulting in an imperative to deliver more with less.

Consequently, our strategic focus has been on driving growth and transformation and reforming public services. We have had to innovate in order to seize opportunities to develop new ways of working, new delivery models and efficiencies; all of these have been essential in transforming the Council and enabling us to respond positively in a climate of austerity. Systematic risk assessment and risk management is core to both the identification and delivery of opportunities.

The Council's Risk Management Framework is reviewed annually, and considered as required by Audit and Governance Committee and Finance and Policy Committee and endorsed and owned by CMT.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE 2020/21

The Council spends money on a wide range of services to help support the people of Hartlepool to achieve and enjoy a better quality of life. This spending can be General Fund revenue or Housing Revenue Account spending which relates to day to day running costs such as staffing, purchasing goods / services from third parties and utilities; or Capital spending on assets which are of benefit to residents over a longer period, such as buildings and operational vehicles.

The following sections provide more detail in relation to these issues:

General Fund 2020/21 – Approved Budget

The Council had previously prepared a four year financial strategy covering 2016/17 to 2019/20, the same period as the previous four year grant settlement provided by the Government. As the Government only provided a one year grant settlement for 2020/21 and delayed major national reforms of the system for funding councils it is extremely difficult to forecast future resources levels. Against this background the Council prepared a detailed balanced budget for 2020/21 and indicative forecasts for future years – which were then updated when the 2021/22 budget was prepared, as detailed later in this section.

The Council continued to face a challenging financial position for 2020/21 owing to the deficit deferred from 2019/20 by using reserves, continuing inflationary pressures, increased pay pressures arising from the unfunded national pay award and increased costs in relation to Looked after Children. The receipt of Social Care Grant, covering both

SECTION 1 : Narrative Report

Children's and Adult Social Care services of £2.3m helped the budget position. However, the Council still faced a budget deficit of £5.0m.

The 2020/21 budget deficit was addressed by the following measures:

£2.1m - Budget savings;
£0.7m - Forecast increase in Council Tax income from housing growth;
£1.7m - 3.9% Council Tax increase, including 2% Adult Social Care precept;
£0.5m - Use of Reserves.

The use of one off reserves in 2020/21 reflected the previous multi-year strategy for reducing reliance on these resources, which in 2019/20 was £3.7m.

The Council Tax increase was in line with the Government's funding system for councils which continued to shift the funding of local services on to Council Tax by setting a core Council Tax Referendum limit of 2% and a 2% Social Care precept.

To mitigate the impact on low income households the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS) was maintained at 12% for the fifth successive year. In response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic the Government provided one off grant to provide additional support to LCTS households in 2020/21.

General Fund 2020/21 – Actual Outturn

The economic downturn arising from the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant negative financial impact on all councils, including Hartlepool. At the outset of the pandemic it was unclear how long these factors would last, how deep they would impact on forecast income / expenditure budgets and what level of financial support the Government would provide to councils to help mitigate these unprecedented financial impacts. Over a number of months the Government's financial support package was developed as the scale and intensity of the economic impact on councils and their communities became apparent. It is still too early to assess the medium to longer term economic scarring on councils and their communities – this will therefore continue to be an issue into 2021/22 and the development of our Medium Term Financial Plan.

Service income levels reduced as a result of service areas being closed, or operating with reduced capacity, for example leisure facilities and car parking income, the Government provided a compensation scheme whereby councils have to manage the first 5% of any losses against budgeted income – compensation is then provided for 75% of the remaining loss. In effect councils fund 29% of income losses and the Government 71%. These arrangements do not cover commercial income – councils have to manage these income reductions from their own resources.

The pandemic has reduced income the Council receives from Business Rates and Council Tax. In normal circumstances these reductions would need to be addressed when the 2021/22 budget is set. The Government has implemented temporary regulations to spread these reductions over three financial years (2021/22 to 2023/24) and are providing grant funding to partly mitigate the impact on councils. The Council will use part of the COVID-19 Government Grant fund to meet the reductions in this income not covered by the specific Government grant.

The Council also faced increased costs across a broad range of services arising from the pandemic, including increased social care costs for both Adults and Children, provision of protective equipment for staff and delivery of new support services to people who had to isolate.

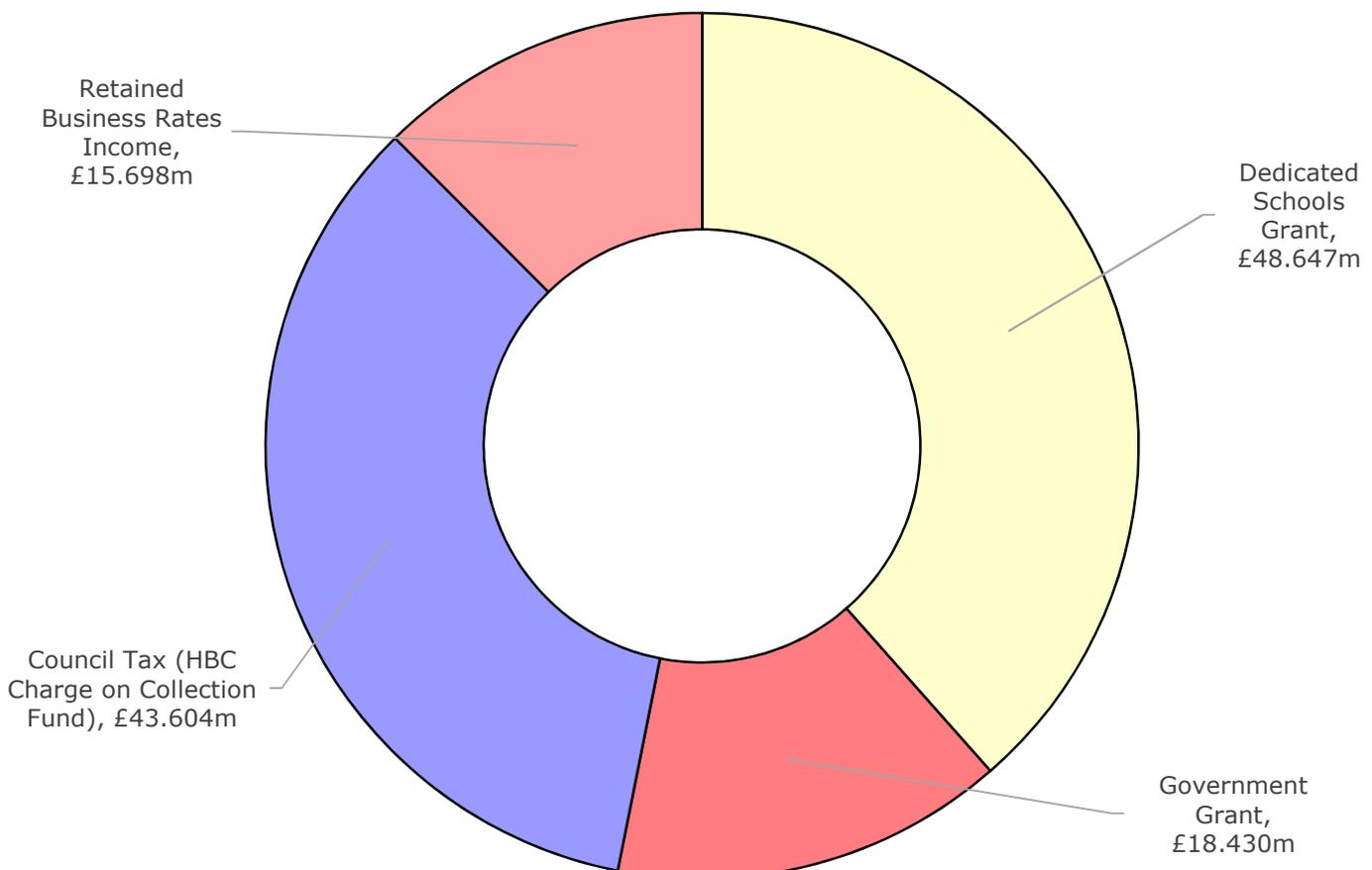
As the impact on individual councils varied the Government provided four tranches of non-ringfenced grant funding. Different formulae were used to allocate the four tranches to reflect the issues which emerged over the year and Hartlepool was allocated £9.325m. This funding has been used to meet the income shortfalls, including Council Tax / Business Rates income reductions and increased cost referred to above. As the economic impact of the pandemic will continue into 2021/22 - and for some issues beyond – the Council has earmarked £1.653m of this funding to mitigate the impact in these years.

As summarised in the table overleaf, all areas overspent owing to the impact of the pandemic on income and expenditure. If the Government had not provided additional grant funding there would have been a financial shortfall of £4.228m. This shortfall would have had to be funded from the Council's own resources and this would have had a significant impact on the financial sustainability of the Council.

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Description of Expenditure	2020/2021 Approved Budget £000	2020/2021 Actual Expenditure / Income £000	2020/2021 Variance Adverse / (Favourable) £000
Departmental Expenditure			
Adult & Community Based	33,901	34,867	966
Children's & Joint Commissioning	23,370	24,012	642
Neighbourhoods and Regulatory	18,170	20,677	2,507
Resources and Development	4,798	4,911	113
Dedicated Schools Grant Related Expenditure	48,647	48,647	0
Total Departmental Position	128,886	133,114	4,228
Non Departmental Expenditure			
Non Departmental Expenditure	(2,507)	(6,735)	(4,228)
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	-	(104)	(104)
Contribution to HRA Reserve	-	104	104
Final Contribution to Budget Support Fund	126,379	126,379	-

The Council's budget of £126.379m, including the Dedicated Schools Grant of £48.647m, was funded from the following sources:



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Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

This is a separate account and contains the costs of owning and maintaining properties which are let to tenants. These costs are funded from rent paid by tenants.

The HRA shows the in-year economic cost of providing housing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from rents and Government grants. Authorities charge rents to cover expenditure in accordance with the legislative framework; this may be different from the accounting cost. The increase or decrease in the year, on the basis of which rents are raised is shown in the Movement on the HRA Statement.

The final outturn for the 2020/21 HRA shows a surplus of £0.104m compared to the projected deficit of £0.017m. This income increase can mainly be attributed to additional income being generated from solar panels of £0.021m, a settled insurance claim of £0.053m and overall £0.042m of one-off savings in expenditure. The surplus has increased the HRA reserve to £0.495m. As at 31 March 2021 the HRA has 307 properties of which 6 were purchased during 2020/21, and these empty property purchases are undergoing refurbishment works and additional rental income in relation to these properties will be generated during 2021/22.

Pooled Budgets - Better Care Fund

The Better Care Fund (BCF) has been established by the Government to support the introduction of a fully integrated health and social care system. Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 gives powers to Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) to establish and maintain pooled budgets to support the outcomes of the BCF. The Council has entered into a pooled budget arrangement with NHS Hartlepool and Stockton Clinical Commissioning Group. Further details are provided in Note 56.

Capital Expenditure

Capital expenditure relates to spend on the purchase of, or improvement of assets that have a long-term value to the Council and our residents, such as highways and buildings.

In 2020/21 the Council had a total Capital Programme of £43.901m and incurred expenditure totalling £11.232m. An analysis of the 2020/21 capital expenditure is shown below, together with an analysis of how it was financed.

	<u>£000</u>	<u>%</u>
Expenditure		
Highway Maintenance & Construction	3,120	28%
School Improvements	2,743	24%
Other Schemes	2,649	24%
DSO Vehicle Purchase	1,143	10%
Disabled Facility Grant	827	7%
Housing Investment Programme	750	7%
Total Expenditure	11,232	100%
Capital Financing		
Capital Grant	7,907	71%
Borrowing	2,793	25%
Capital Funding Reserves	377	3%
Capital Receipts	155	1%
Total Capital Financing	11,232	100%

As at 31 March 2021, the Council had rephased capital expenditure totalling £32.669m into 2021/22. This will be funded from the following rephased resources.

Capital Financing	<u>£000</u>
Borrowing	19,118
Government Grants	9,941
Capital Funding Reserves	3,384
Capital Receipts	226
	32,669

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Capital Receipts

The Council received gross receipts of £0.155m in 2020/21 from the sale of assets.

FINANCIAL OUTLOOK – GENERAL FUND 2021/22 TO 2024/25

As detailed earlier the Council's strategy up to 2020/21 had been based on the phased use of reserves to provide a longer lead time to address budget deficits. In line with this strategy use of reserves had been phased down and the 2020/21 budget was set using only £0.5m of reserves – which significantly reduced the deficit deferred to 2021/22.

At a national level the Government's 2021/22 funding arrangements for councils continued to be based on increasing core Council Tax by 2% and the continuation of the Adult Social Care precept – set at 3% - which could either be applied in 2021/22 or 2022/23. National figures published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) showed that 87% of the 2021/22 funding increase for councils was dependent on increasing Council Tax and implementing the additional Social Care precept.

The Council continued to face increased pressures on the budget position for 2021/22 owing to the continuing impact of the pandemic. This includes lower housing growth and continuing income shortfalls. Additionally, there has been a further increase in Looked after Children pressures and continuing inflationary pressures. As a result the Council faced a total deficit of £5.197m for 2021/22, which reflects a recurring deficit of £4.047m and forecast temporary income shortfalls of £1.197m

The Council determined not to increase core Council Tax or a further Adult Social Precept for 2021/22. Therefore, the 2021/22 deficit of £5.197m was funded from a combination of:

£4.212m Use of Budget Support Fund

£0.985m One off Government grant

It was recognised that not increasing Council Tax, or implementing budget cuts, for 2021/22 deferred a budget deficit of £4.047m to 2022/23. When account is taken of inflation and pay pressure the February 2021 Medium Term Financial Strategy reported a forecast 2022/23 deficit of £5.639m – including the deficit deferred from 2021/22.

The financial position for 2022/23 onwards will be impacted by the outcome of the 2021 Spending Review, national funding arrangements for Adult Social Care and whether delayed major reforms of the Local Government Finance system (i.e. Fair Funding Review and increase in Business Rates Retention from 50% to 75%) are implemented in 2022/23.

The Council will develop a strategy for 2022/23 to 2024/25 during the current year. This strategy will be underpinned by reviewing reserves to enable savings to be phased over a three year period.

BORROWING FACILITIES AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Council's arrangements for borrowing accord with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, which was drawn up to comply with the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

In accordance with this strategy the Council has taken a proactive approach to managing cash investments and debt. For a number of years the Council has internalised borrowing by netting down borrowing against investments. However interest rates have fallen to a historically low level, which the Council has taken advantage of to secure financing in relation to business cases. The Council has also used these historically low rates to reduce interest rate risk in relation to some existing capital expenditure previously temporarily funded by internalising borrowing.

The interest earned on Council investments remained low during 2020/21; this has been mitigated by low interest costs on the Council's borrowings.

PENSIONS

The Council has accounted for retirement benefits according to International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) IAS 19. In the accounts as at 31 March 2021 there was a deficit on the Pensions Reserve of £204.088m (£174.055m in 2019/20). This was offset by a Pensions Liability of the same value. The net Pensions Liability has increased mainly owing to the yearly service costs being greater than the employer contributions received.

The Council is a member of the Teesside Pension Fund and the statutory arrangements for this scheme mean that the IFRS IAS19 deficit does not need to be made good by increased pension's contributions from the Council or employees. A separate Pension Fund valuation is carried out every three years to determine the Council's contribution rate.

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Further information is included in Notes 52 and 53 to the Statement of Accounts.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the economic cost in the year of providing services in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise 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.

Balance Sheet

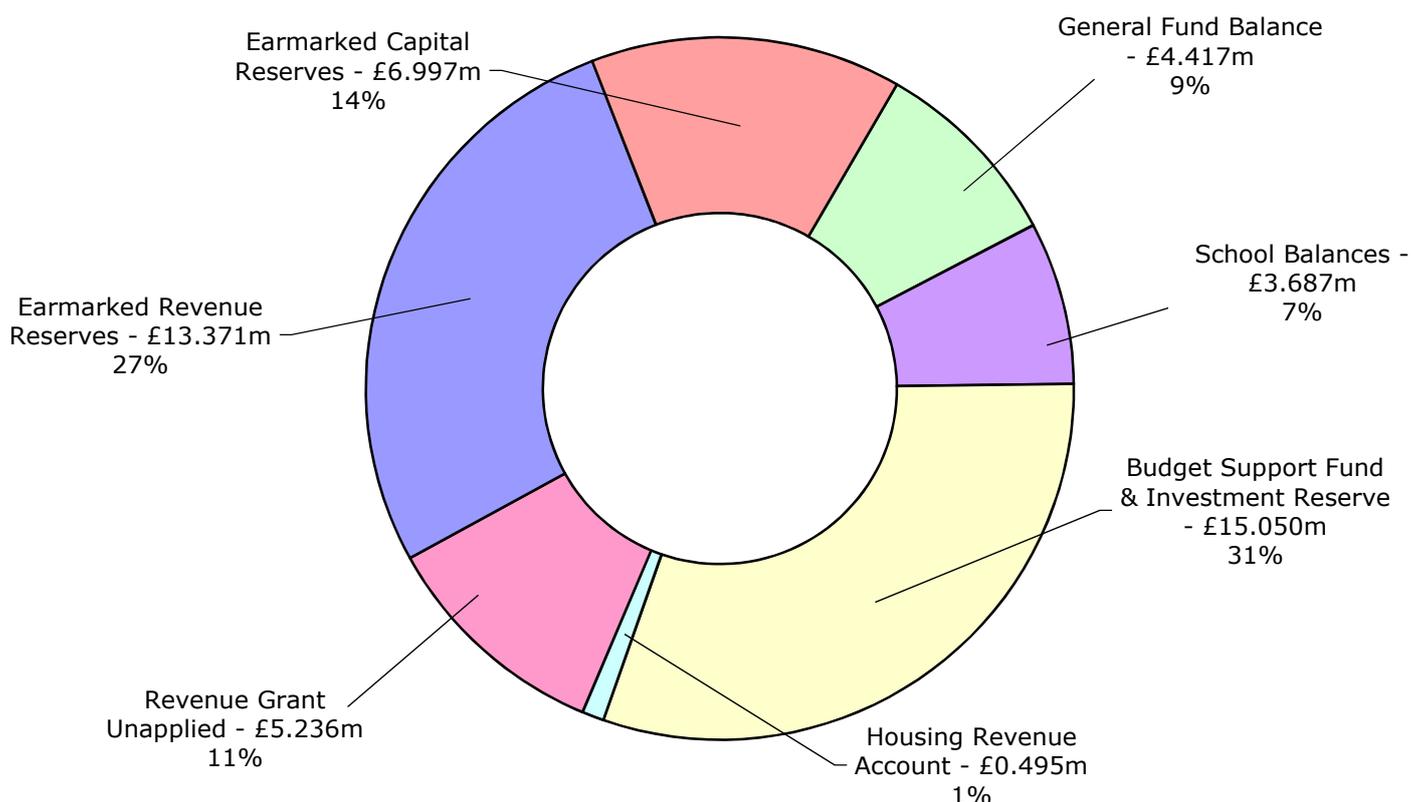
The Balance Sheet shows the value of the assets and liabilities at 31 March 2021. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are classified in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserve includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations.'

The major movements on the Balance Sheet are as follows:

- Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Properties, Assets Held for Sale and Heritage Assets – the Council's total fixed assets have decreased by £5.005m which comprises expenditure on fixed assets, downward revaluations of existing assets, less depreciation and disposals.
- Short Term Debtors - totalled £38.505m as at 31 March 2021 (£22.006m at 31 March 2020). The increase primarily relates to year end entries required in relation to the Collection Fund.
- Short Term Creditors – as at 31 March 2021 was £28.605m (£20.209m at 31 March 2020). The increase primarily relates to year end entries required in relation to the Collection Fund.
- Capital Grant Receipts in advance – as at 31 March 2021 was £9.933m (£7.262m at 31 March 2020). The increase relates to a variety of capital grants received in advance, including for the Local Transport Plan.
- Revenue Grant Receipts in advance – as at 31 March 2021 was £3.983m (£8.408m at 31 March 2020). The decrease primarily relates to the COVID-19 Grants Local Authority Support Grants which have now been used throughout the current year.
- Other long term liabilities – as at 31 March 2021 was £204.394m (£174.152m at 31 March 2020). The majority of this increase related to the Council's defined benefit pension scheme.
- At the 31 March 2021 the Authority had reserves of £49.253m (£35.672m at 31 March 2020). Full details of the Council's reserves are provided in Notes 30 to 37 and include the following key reserves:

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Analysis of Reserves 31/03/21 - Total £49.253m



Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. 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.

Collection Fund

The Collection Fund is a statutory fund, separate from the General Fund of the Council, which accounts independently for transactions relating to Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates. The Fund is operated and reported on under the same accounting policies as Hartlepool Borough Council.

The total Council Tax for the year was £2,090.38 (£2,013.18 in 2019/20) for Band D properties, excluding parish precepts where these applied. This comprised £1,751.01 for the Council's own services, £260.54 for the Police and Crime Commissioner and £78.83 for Cleveland Fire Authority. Each Authority determined its own tax and made a precept on the Collection Fund.

The Council Tax for the Council's services was determined on the basis of an equated number of 34,392 Band D properties. When setting the charge a 1.5% allowance for non-collection was made.

Further details on the income and expenditure of the Fund are shown in the Collection Fund notes.

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	£000	%
Expenditure		
Hartlepool Council Precept	43,604	49%
Police and Crime Commissioner Precept	6,483	7%
Cleveland Fire Authority Precept	1,961	2%
Central Government's Share Non Domestic Rates	16,116	18%
Hartlepool Council Non Domestic Rates Precept	15,805	18%
Cleveland Fire Authority Non Domestic Rates Precept	323	0%
Other	4,754	6%
	89,046	100%
Income		
Council Tax	51,089	71%
NNDR from Rate Payers	21,119	30%
Transitional Protection Payment	(649)	(1%)
	71,559	100%
Net Deficit / (Surplus) in Year	17,487	

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accounting policies adopted by the Council comply, except where specific reference is made, with the relevant recommended accounting practice.

The Council's policies are explained fully in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS

Members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed, question the auditor and make objections at audit. The availability of the accounts for inspection was advertised on the Council's website and in relation to the 2020/21 financial year the inspection period is 19 July 2021 to 27 August 2021.



Chris Little CPFA
Director of Finance and Policy
Date: 16 July, 2021

SECTION 1 : Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

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

I confirm that the accounts set out in this document were approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at the meeting held on 29 September 2021.

Chair of Audit and Governance Committee

Date: 29 September 2021

The Director of Resources and Development's Responsibilities

The Director of Resources and Development is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ('the CODE').

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Director of Resources and Development has:

- selected suitable accounting policies, and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The Director of Resources and Development has also:

- kept proper accounting records which were up-to-date; and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Certification of the Accounts by the Director of Resources and Development

In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, I certify that Section 1 to 3 of the Financial Report 2020/21, which includes the Statement of Accounts, gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Hartlepool Borough Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.



Chris Little CPFA

Director of Resources and Development

Date: 28 July 2021

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Unearmarked General Fund Balance	School, Budget Support and Investment Reserves	Earmarked Revenue & Capital Reserves	Housing Revenue Account	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 31 March 2019 carried forward	4,417	11,256	24,783	347	616	28	20	41,467	81,198	122,665
<u>Movement in reserves during 2019/20</u>										
Surplus or (deficit) on provision of services	(26,332)	-	-	(308)	-	-	-	(26,640)	-	(26,640)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(21,985)	(21,985)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(26,332)	-	-	(308)	-	-	-	(26,640)	(21,985)	(48,625)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (note 5)	20,716	-	(614)	493	65	185	-	20,845	(20,845)	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(5,616)	-	(614)	185	65	185	-	(5,795)	(42,830)	(48,625)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	5,616	(5,849)	431	(141)	156	(213)	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	-	(5,849)	(183)	44	221	(28)	-	(5,795)	(42,830)	(48,625)
Balance at 31 March 2020 carried forward	4,417	5,407	24,600	391	837	-	20	35,672	38,368	74,040
<u>Movement in reserves during 2020/21</u>										
Surplus or (deficit) on provision of services	(8,428)	-	-	(196)	-	-	-	(8,624)	-	(8,624)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(15,254)	(15,254)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(8,428)	-	-	(196)	-	-	-	(8,624)	(15,254)	(23,878)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (note 5)	32,172	-	-	468	167	-	(12)	32,795	(32,795)	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	23,744	-	-	272	167	-	(12)	24,171	(48,049)	(23,878)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(23,744)	13,330	10,413	(168)	168	-	-	(1)	1	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	-	13,330	10,413	104	335	-	(12)	24,170	(48,048)	(23,878)
Balance at 31 March 2021 carried forward	4,417	18,737	35,013	495	1,172	-	8	59,842	(9,680)	50,162

For detail on Usable and Unusable Reserves see Notes 30 to 38.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

31 March 2020 £000s		31 March 2021 £000s	Note
290,426	Property, Plant and Equipment	286,684	14
17,674	Heritage Assets	17,735	17
9,951	Investment Property	8,859	16
581	Intangible Assets	429	18
197	Long Term Investments	197	19
3,601	Long Term Debtors	3,363	20
322,430	Long Term Assets	317,267	
5,010	Short Term Investments	5,002	45
423	Inventories	390	21
22,006	Short Term Debtors	38,505	22
16,781	Cash and Cash Equivalents	16,961	24
515	Assets Held for Sale	283	25
44,735	Current Assets	61,141	
-	Bank Overdraft	(1,721)	24
(2,799)	Provisions	(2,222)	27
(3,464)	Short Term Borrowing	(3,502)	45
(20,209)	Short Term Creditors	(28,605)	26
(7,262)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	(9,933)	29
(8,408)	Revenue Grant Receipts in Advance	(3,983)	29
(42,142)	Current Liabilities	(49,966)	
(1,194)	Provisions	(1,194)	27
(75,637)	Long Term Borrowing	(72,692)	45
(174,152)	Other Long Term Liabilities	(204,394)	28
(250,983)	Long Term Liabilities	(278,280)	
74,040	Net Assets:	50,162	
4,417	Unearmarked General Fund Balances	4,417	30
5,137	Budget Support Fund & Investment Reserves	15,050	31
3,823	Revenue Grants Unapplied	5,236	32
11,449	Earmarked Revenue Reserves	13,371	33
10,185	Earmarked Capital Reserves	6,997	34
270	Schools Balances	3,687	36
391	Housing Revenue Account	495	37
-	COVID-19 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	10,588	35
38,368	Unusable Reserves	(9,679)	38
74,040	Total Reserves:	50,162	

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Statement Of Cash Flows For The Year Ended 31 March 2021

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. 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.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
(26,640)	Net Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(8,624)	
38,900	Adjustments to Net Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services for Non-cash Movements	19,040	48
16,291	Adjustments for items included in the Net Surplus / (Deficit) on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities	(8,042)	49
28,551	Net Cash (Outflow) /Inflow from Operating Activities	2,374	
(7,206)	Investing Activities	(1,065)	50
(9,630)	Financing Activities	(2,850)	51
11,715	Net Increase / (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(1,541)	
5,066	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	16,781	
16,781	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the end of the reporting period	15,240	24

Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

1. General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and to comply with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Statements reflect the requirements of general accounting principals and concepts of:

Relevance - the financial statements provide information about the Council's performance and position that is useful to the users of the accounts to assess the stewardship of public funds and for making economic decisions.

Reliability - the financial information faithfully represents the substance of the transactions, the activities underlying them and other events that have taken place, are free from deliberate or systematic bias and material error and have been prudently prepared.

Comparability - the information has been prepared consistently and with adequate disclosures so that it can be compared with prior years and other Local Authorities.

Understandability - the statements have been prepared to ensure they are as easy to understand as possible.

Materiality - the statements disclose items of a certain size and nature such that they provide a fair presentation of the financial position and transactions of the Council.

Faithful Representation - the financial statements faithfully represent economic activity in words and numbers. They have been prepared on the basis that they are complete, neutral and free from error.

Accruals - other than the cash flow statement, the financial statements report transactions that have been recorded in the accounting period for which the goods and services were received or supplied rather than in which the cash was received or paid.

Going Concern - the financial statements have been prepared on the assumption that the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

Legality - where the accounting principles and specific legislation requirements are in conflict, the financial statements have been prepared to reflect legislative requirements.

The accounting policies are the principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are reflected in the financial statements of the Council. Consistent accounting policies have been applied both within the year and between years. Where accounting policies are changed, this has been disclosed separately.

Where estimating techniques are required to enable the accounting practices adopted to be applied, then the techniques which have been used are, in the Council's view, appropriate and consistently applied. Where the effect of a change to an estimation technique is material, a description of the change and, if practicable the effect on the results for the current period is separately disclosed.

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.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

2. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

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

- Fees, charges and rents due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the Council provides the relevant goods or services.
- Employee's costs are charged to the accounts of the period in which the employees worked which includes 12 monthly payments.
- Supplies and services are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed. Where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as stocks on the Balance Sheet.
- Works are charged as expenditure when they are completed, before which they are carried as Works in Progress on the Balance Sheet.
- Where income and expenditure has been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled the debtor balance is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.
- Where payments are made or received in advance of a service being provided or received, a payment or receipt in advance is recognised as a debtor or creditor in the Balance Sheet.
- Income and expenditure are credited and debited to the relevant revenue account, unless it relates to capital receipts or capital expenditure.
- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- General revenue debtors and creditors of less than £5,000 have only been accrued at the discretion of individual departments. All amounts in excess of £5,000 have been accrued.

3. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours.

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.

4. Exceptional Items

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Council's financial performance.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

5. Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies, Estimates and Errors

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

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

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

6. Charges to Revenue for Non-current Assets

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

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service; and,
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which the losses can be written off.

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance (Minimum Revenue Provision), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

7. Employee Benefits

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, and non-monetary benefits for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Termination Costs

Termination costs are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy. They are charged on an accruals basis to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those costs or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

Where termination costs involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination costs and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Post Employment 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 (DfE).
- The NHS Pensions Scheme, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority.
- The Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by XPS Pensions Group in partnership with Middlesbrough Council.

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

The arrangements for the Teachers' and NHS schemes mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The schemes are therefore accounted for as if they were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet. The Children's and Joint Commissioning Department line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is charged with the employer's contributions payable to Teachers' Pensions in the year; the Public Health line is charged with the employer's contributions payable to NHS Pensions in the year.

The Local Government Pension Scheme

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

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

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

- Quoted securities – current bid price,
- Unquoted securities – professional estimate,
- Unitised securities – current bid price,
- Property – market value.

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

Service cost, comprising:-

- **Current service cost** – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.
- **Past service cost** – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and apportioned based on direct departmental pension costs.
- **Net interest on the defined benefit liability (asset) i.e. net interest expense for the Council** – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period, taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Remeasurements, comprising:

- **The return on plan assets** – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- **Actuarial gains and losses** – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions - charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Contributions paid to the Teesside Pension Fund – cash paid as employer’s contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to 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.

8. Events After the Balance Sheet Date

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

- 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; and,
- 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 unless it related to conditions or events that were in existence at the balance sheet date.

9. Government Grants and Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

10. Interests in Companies and Other Entities

Under Local Government Reorganisation the Council was allocated 2.47% of the shares in Teesside International Airport, which has reduced to 1% upon the sale of the airport to Goosepool 2019 Ltd (jointly owned by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (75%) and Stobart Holding Limited (25%)), and 16.5% of the former County Council's shareholding in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited.

The Council holds minority shares in Teesside International Airport Ltd and in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited. These share holdings originated through policy initiatives with other Local Authorities and are not held for trading or income generation. Therefore the Council have elected to designate the equity as Fair Value through other Comprehensive Income.

11. Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using a weighted average costing formula.

Items with a residual value have been disposed of at maximum benefit to the Council. The Director of Resources and Development is advised of obsolete stock prior to disposal for items in excess of £500 in value. Items having no residual value have been disposed of by being either:

- Advertised internally,
- Donated to charitable organisations,
- Scrapped (within legislative parameters),
- Specialist removal.

Obsolete or damaged stock has been written off, otherwise an allowance has been made for obsolescence.

Work in Progress on uncompleted jobs is valued at cost, including an allocation of overheads.

12. Investment Property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value (i.e. market value), based on the amount at which the asset could be exchanged between knowledgeable parties at arm's-length. Properties are not depreciated but are reviewed annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

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

13. 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.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

The Council as Lessee

Finance Leases

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Council are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease 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,
- A finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Council at the end of the lease period).

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting 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 (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Council as Lessor

Finance Leases

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received); and,
- Finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

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

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

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Operating Leases

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

14. Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

Billing authorities act as agents, collecting council tax and non-domestic rates (NDR) on behalf of the major preceptors (including government for NDR) and, as principals, collecting council tax and NDR for themselves. Billing authorities are required by statute to maintain a separate fund (i.e. the Collection Fund) for the collection and distribution of amounts due in respect of council tax and NDR. Under the legislative framework for the Collection Fund, billing authorities, major preceptors and central government share proportionately the risks and rewards that the amount of council tax and NDR collected could be less or more than predicted.

15. Accounting for Council Tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the Council's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the Council's 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 Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

16. Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, Plant and Equipment are valued on a five-year rolling programme, although material changes to asset values will be adjusted in the interim period as they occur. The current asset values are based upon certificates issued by the Council's Property Management Division. The valuations are prepared in accordance with the Statements and UK Practice Statements contained in the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Standards. From 1st April 2007, increases in asset valuations are credited to the Revaluation Reserve.

The asset valuations have been prepared using the following assumptions:

- The Council has good marketable title, free from any onerous or restrictive covenants.
- There are no hazardous substances or latent defects in the properties and there is no contamination present.
- Details of tenure, planning consents and other relevant information are assumed to be correct.
- That properties and their value are unaffected by any matters that would be revealed by a local search, replies to usual enquiries or by any statutory notice.
- It is assumed that the present use is lawful and that there are no adverse conditions attached. It is further assumed that there are no adverse planning proposals in existence that may affect the property in the future.
- No allowance has been made for any taxation, acquisition, realisation or disposal costs or other expenses.
- No soil surveys have been carried out or services tested.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Not all properties were specifically inspected for the purposes of asset valuations. This was neither practicable, nor considered by the Valuer to be necessary, for the purpose of the valuation. However, regular inspections are made by officers of the Property Section of all the Council's property assets. As allowable under the Code depreciated historical cost is used as a proxy for some non-property assets that have short useful lives and/or low values.

Where a non current asset is included in the Balance Sheet at current value, the increase over the previous carrying amount at which that asset was included in the Balance Sheet immediately prior to the latest revaluation is credited to a revaluation account, except to the extent that it reverses a revaluation loss on the same asset previously recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, when the revaluation gain is recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an item of Property, Plant or Equipment is acquired under a finance lease, at the inception of the lease the amount to be recorded both as an asset and as a liability would be the present value of the minimum lease payments derived by discounting them at the interest rate implicit in the lease.

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

Recognition

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

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- The purchase price; and,
- Any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

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

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

- Community assets and assets under construction – historical cost
- Infrastructure – depreciated historical cost
- Dwellings – current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH)
- Surplus and Investment assets - fair value, determined using the basis of market value (FV-MV)
- All other assets – current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at current value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

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

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

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

Impairment

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

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

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

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for 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 (i.e. freehold land and Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction). Depreciation has been charged using the straight line method on the closing balances over the assets estimated useful life.

The useful lives of assets are estimated on a realistic basis and are reviewed regularly and, where necessary, revised. Where the useful life of an item of Property, Plant or Equipment is revised, the carrying amount of the item is depreciated over the revised remaining useful life. Depreciation is not charged in the year of acquisition but is charged in the year of disposal.

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, or has a significantly different useful life, the components are recognised separately and depreciated based on the components useful economic life.

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

Disposals and Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and current value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to current value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in current value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

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If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale but remain in property, plant and equipment. When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether Property, Plant and Equipment or Assets Held for Sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to housing disposals (75% for dwellings, 50% for land and other assets, net of statutory deductions and allowances) is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of 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 to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

17. Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets are held in support of the primary objective of increasing the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the Council's history and local area. The items in the Museum Exhibit and Art Collection and the Civic Collection are held on the Balance Sheet at insurance value, and will be reviewed every five years. The assets within these collections are deemed to have indeterminate lives and a high residual value; hence the Council does not consider it appropriate to charge depreciation.

The collection is relatively static and acquisitions and donations are rare. Where they do occur acquisitions will be recognised at cost until the collection is revalued by the external valuer. Donations will only be recognised where the value is deemed to exceed £10,000, and will be valued by the external valuer.

The Council has an Acquisitions and Disposals Policy in place which sets out the acquisition, preservation, management and disposal of Heritage Assets. This is available to view on the Council's website.

The Council does not consider that reliable cost of valuation information can be obtained for many of the items held under the Sculptures, Monuments and War Memorial category. This is because of the diverse nature of the assets held and lack of comparable market values.

18. Intangible Assets

Expenditure on assets that do not have physical substance and are identifiable and controlled by the Council (e.g. Software Licences) is capitalised when it will bring benefits to the Council for more than one financial year. The cost is charged to the relevant expenditure category over the economic life to reflect the pattern of consumption of benefits.

19. Provisions and Contingent Liabilities

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate department line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

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

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

Contingent Liabilities

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

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

20. Financial Guarantees

The Council entered into a number of financial guarantees that are not required to be accounted for as financial instruments and are disclosed in the Financial Guarantees note.

21. Reserves

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

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

22. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

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

23. VAT

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

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

24. Financial Instruments

Financial liabilities

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

For Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) loans, the fair value of each loan has been determined by information supplied by the PWLB. For market loans, the redemption rules of the PWLB have been used to approximate the fair value of loans held. The comparator market rates prevailing have been taken from indicative investment rates at each Balance Sheet date.

Financial Assets

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

- Amortised cost,
- Fair value through profit or loss (FVPL), and
- Fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

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

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Council currently holds no assets at FVPL.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

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

The Council has equity instruments designated at fair value through other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI). This was previously classified as an Available For Sale asset at 31 March 2018.

The Council has made an irrevocable election to designate two of its equity instruments as FVOCI on the basis that they are held for non-contractual benefits, they are not held for strategic purposes. The assets were transferred to the new asset category on 1 April 2018. The asset is initially measured and carried at fair value.

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

When the asset is de-recognised, the cumulative gain or loss previously recognised in the financial instruments revaluation reserve is credited / debited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services.

The same accounting treatment was adopted in the prior year when the assets were classified as Available for Sale, except that accumulated gains and losses on the available for sale asset were previously held in the Available-for-Sale Financial Instruments Reserve at 31 March 2018. The balance on this reserve was transferred to the new Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserves as at 1 April 2018.

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

25. Fair Value Measurements

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 1: Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

Accounting standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted CIPFA continue to consider the implications of adopting IFRS16 - Leases. This standard was originally expected to be adopted in the Statements of Accounts for 2020/2021 but this has been deferred as a result of measures to address the demands placed on local authorities supporting the nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It will not be adopted until 2022/23. Other standards that have been issued but not yet adopted by the CIPFA Code of Practice include:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform – Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16

Any impact on the Statement of Accounts will be assessed at the time of adoption by the CIPFA Code of Practice, but based on our initial assessment we do not expect any of the changes to be material.

Note 2: Critical Judgements in applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government beyond 2020/21. However, the Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.
- The Council has an external contract for the provision of its ICT service. This contract has been classed as an embedded lease and under IAS 37 was brought onto the Balance Sheet in 2009/10 as a finance lease.
- The Council has undertaken a review of all schools in Hartlepool and their accounting treatment. There are 38 schools in Hartlepool;
 - Two are Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools owned and accounted for by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle or the Church of England Diocese of Durham.
 - One Voluntary Controlled (VC) School which is owned and accounted for by the Church of England Diocese of Durham.
 - One Foundation School which is owned by the School Governing Body.
 - Twelve Community Schools owned by the Council.
 - Twenty-two Academy Schools which the Council have transferred to the Academies under 125 year leases.

Below is an analysis of the accounting treatment for the Schools within the Authority, indicating whether the asset is held on or off the Balance Sheet:

School Type	Land & Buildings	School Playing Field	Equipment
Voluntary Aided	Off	On	Off
Voluntary Controlled	Off	On	On
Foundation	Off	Off	Off
Community	On	On	On
Academy	Off	Off	Off

The income and expenditure of all schools, excluding Academies who produce their own statutory accounts, is included in the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 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 taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2020 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Property, Plant and Equipment	Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Council will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.	If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls. It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge for buildings would increase by £0.085m for every year that useful lives had to be reduced.
Pensions Liability	Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	The effect on the net pensions liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For example, a 0.1% increase in the discount rate assumption would result in a decrease in liability of £14.615m, however, the assumptions interact in complex ways. During 2020/21, the Council's actuaries advised that the net pension liability for funded LGPS benefits had decreased by £124.120m as a result of updating financial assumptions, neither increased or decreased as a result of changes in demographic assumptions and increased by £6.580m attributable to liability experience. Actual pension rates are determined on an actuarial basis every 3 years. The latest valuation has determined the employer's contribution for 3 years from 31st March 2019. A 0.1% increase in this rate would increase the Council's revenue budget requirement for pension costs by £61,000.
Income Shortfalls	Owing to the current economic downturn the Council continues to face income shortfalls in relation to car park income, shopping centre income and land charges.	The Council has determined that the income shortfalls will continue in future years and has therefore created an Income Risk Reserve of £0.309m.
Arrears	At 31 March 2021, the Council had a balance of £21.112m on general, Council Tax Payers, NNDR Payers and Trade debtors. A review of these balances suggested that an impairment of doubtful debts of £8.189m was appropriate. However in the current climate it is not certain that such an allowance would be sufficient.	If bad debt provision was made for an additional 1% of outstanding debt this would result in an additional charge of £0.211m.

This list does not include assets and liabilities that are carried at fair value based on recently observed market prices.

Note 3: Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

PPE Revaluations

The Councils Valuer included this statement to support the revaluation of certain leisure and retail Investment Properties valued on the basis of Fair Value Market Value as they were deemed most susceptible to the extraordinary market circumstances being witnessed.

"The outbreak of COVID-19, declared by the World Health Organisation as a "Global Pandemic" on the 11th March 2020, has and continues to impact many aspects of daily life and the global economy – with some real estate markets having experienced lower levels of transactional activity and liquidity. Travel, movement and operational restrictions have been implemented by many countries. In some cases, "lockdowns" have been applied to varying degrees and to reflect further "waves" of COVID-19; although these may imply a new stage of the crisis, they are not unprecedented in the same way as the initial impact.

The pandemic and the measures taken to tackle COVID-19 continue to affect economies and real estate markets globally. Nevertheless, as at the valuation date property markets are mostly functioning again, with transaction volumes and other relevant evidence at levels where an adequate quantum of market evidence exists upon which to base opinions of value. Accordingly, and for the avoidance of doubt, our valuations are not reported as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty' as defined by VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation – Global Standards, except as identified below in relation to certain investment assets.

In respect of the (particular investment asset named), as at the valuation date we continue to be faced with an unprecedented set of circumstances caused by COVID-19 and an absence of relevant/sufficient market evidence on which to base our judgements. Our valuation of this property is therefore reported as being subject to 'material valuation uncertainty' as set out in VPS 3 and VPGA 10 of the RICS Valuation – Global Standards. Consequently, in respect of these valuations less certainty – and a higher degree of caution – should be attached to our valuation than would normally be the case.

For the avoidance of doubt this explanatory note, including the 'material valuation uncertainty' declaration, does not mean that the valuation(s) cannot be relied upon. Rather, this explanatory note has been included to ensure transparency and to provide further insight as to the market context under which the valuation opinion was prepared. In recognition of the potential for market conditions to move rapidly in response to changes in the control or future spread of COVID-19 we highlight the importance of the valuation date."

Note 4: Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Director of Resources and Development on 16 July 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 5: Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis 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 practices to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

2020/21	Usable Reserves							
	Unearmarked General Fund Balance £000s	School, Budget Support and Investment Reserves £000s	Earmarked Revenue & Capital Reserves £000s	Housing Revenue Account £000s	Major Repairs Reserve £000s	Capital Receipts Reserve £000s	Capital Grants Unapplied £000s	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000s
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:								
<i>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>								
Charges for Depreciation and Impairment of Non-current Assets	11,417	-	-	197	-	-	-	(11,614)
Charges for Revaluation losses on Property Plant and Equipment	243	-	-	424	-	-	-	(667)
Movements in the Market Value of Investment Properties	1,160	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,160)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(7,895)	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,895
Direct Revenue Funding	(360)	-	-	-	-	-	-	360
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	2,441	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,441)
Amounts of Non-current Assets written off on Disposal or Sale as part of the Gain/(Loss) on Disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	879	-	-	-	-	-	-	(879)
<i>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>								
Provision for the Financing of Capital Investment (MRP)	(2,729)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,729
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:								
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	-	-	(12)	12
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:								
Transfer of Cash Sale Proceeds Credited as part of the Gain/(Loss) on Disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(155)	-	-	-	-	155	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	(155)	-	155
Use of Capital Receipts to repay prudential borrowing	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjustments primarily involving the major Repairs Reserve:								
Transfer to Major Repairs Reserve	-	-	-	(185)	185	-	-	-
Use of Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	-	-	(18)	-	-	18

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 5: Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

2020/21	Unearmarked General Fund Balance £000s	School, Budget Support and Investment Reserves £000s	Earmarked Revenue & Capital Reserves £000s	Housing Revenue Account £000s	Major Repairs Reserve £000s	Capital Receipts Reserve £000s	Capital Grants Unapplied £000s	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000s
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:								
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	21,800	-	-	48	-	-	-	(21,848)
Employer's Pension Contributions and Direct Payments to Pensioners payable in year	(7,425)	-	-	(16)	-	-	-	7,441
Adjustments Primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:								
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is different from council tax and income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	9,334	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9,334)
Adjustments primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account:								
Amount by which Officer Remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from Remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	3,460	-	-	-	-	-	-	(3,460)
Total Adjustments	32,172	-	-	468	167	-	(12)	(32,795)

Usable Reserves

2019/20	Unearmarked General Fund Balance £000s	School, Budget Support and Investment Reserves £000s	Earmarked Revenue & Capital Reserves £000s	Housing Revenue Account £000s	Major Repairs Reserve £000s	Capital Receipts Reserve £000s	Capital Grants Unapplied £000s	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000s
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:								
<i>Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>								
Charges for Depreciation and Impairment of Non-current Assets	9,892	-	-	195	-	-	-	(10,087)
Charges for Revaluation losses on Property Plant and Equipment	-	-	-	709	-	-	-	(709)
Movements in the Market Value of Investment Properties	9,297	-	-	-	-	-	-	(9,297)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(13,724)	-	-	(279)	-	-	-	14,003
Direct Revenue Funding	(27)	-	(614)	-	-	-	-	641
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	2,196	-	-	-	-	-	-	(2,196)
Amounts of Non-current Assets written off on Disposal or Sale as part of the Gain/(Loss) on Disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	6,279	-	-	-	-	-	-	(6,279)
<i>Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</i>								
Provision for the Financing of Capital Investment (MRP)	(2,525)	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,525

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Note 5: Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

2019/20	Unearmarked General Fund Balance £000s	School, Budget Support and Investment Reserves £000s	Earmarked Revenue & Capital Reserves £000s	Housing Revenue Account £000s	Major Repairs Reserve £000s	Capital Receipts Reserve £000s	Capital Grants Unapplied £000s	Movement in Unusable Reserves £000s
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:								-
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:								-
Transfer of Cash Sale Proceeds Credited as part of the Gain/(Loss) on Disposal to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(1,563)	-	-	-	-	1,563	-	-
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(212)					(195)		407
Use of Capital Receipts to repay prudential borrowing						(1,183)		1,183
Adjustments primarily involving the major Repairs Reserve:								
Transfer to Major Repairs Reserve	-	-	-	(167)	167	-	-	-
Use of Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	-	-	-		(102)	-	-	102
Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve:								
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	21,807	-	-	57	-	-	-	(21,864)
Employer's Pension Contributions and Direct Payments to Pensioners payable in year	(9,106)	-	-	(22)	-	-	-	9,128
Adjustments Primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:								
Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement is different from council tax and income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(1,608)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,608
Adjustments primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Adjustment Account:								
Amount by which Officer Remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from Remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	(10)
Total Adjustments	20,716	-	(614)	493	65	185	-	(20,845)

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Note 6: Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2020/21. Further details are provided in Notes 30 to 37.

	RESTATED Balance at 31 March 2019	RESTATED Transfer Between Reserves	RESTATED Transfers Out 2019/20	RESTATED Transfers In 2019/20	RESTATED Balance at 31 March 2020	Transfer Between Reserves	Transfers Out 2020/21	Transfers In 2020/21	Balance at 31 March 2021
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Unearmarked General Fund Balance									
General Fund Balance	4,417	-	-	-	4,417	-	-	-	4,417
	4,417	-	-	-	4,417	-	-	-	4,417
Budget Support & Investment Reserves									
Budget Support Fund 22/23 to 24/25	8,844	-	(4,331)	-	4,513	(1,685)	-	4,863	7,691
Budget Support Fund 21/22	-	-	-	-	-	4,312	-	-	4,312
COVID-19 Recovery Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	500	-	1,153	1,653
Looked After Children Reserve	-	-	-	528	528	-	-	533	1,061
Invest to Save	-	-	-	-	-	333	-	-	333
Business Rates Levy	430	-	(430)	96	96	(96)	-	-	-
MTFS Investment Reserve	845	-	(845)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	10,119	-	(5,606)	624	5,137	3,364	-	6,549	15,050
Revenue Grants Unapplied									
Revenue Grants Unapplied	3,909	-	(540)	454	3,823	-	(225)	1,298	4,896
COVID-19 Grants Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	340	340
	3,909	-	(540)	454	3,823	-	(225)	1,638	5,236
Earmarked Revenue Reserves									
Business Rates Risk Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	2,478	-	522	3,000
Insurance Fund	2,226	-	(14)	-	2,212	-	-	74	2,286
Treasury Management Risk Reserve	1,106	-	-	383	1,489	-	-	246	1,735
Strategic Change Reserve	1,283	-	(219)	97	1,161	-	(49)	304	1,416
Adult Social Care Reserve	1,333	-	(122)	-	1,211	-	(171)	-	1,040
Public Health Grant Reserve	676	-	(343)	-	333	-	(16)	197	514
Better Care Fund (Pooled Budget)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	444	444
EIS Reserve	450	-	(31)	-	419	-	(103)	-	316
Brexit Funding	105	-	-	210	315	-	-	-	315
Community Pot Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	73	-	239	312
Income Risk Reserve	400	-	(91)	-	309	-	-	-	309
Concessionary Fares	20	-	-	-	20	-	-	282	302
Support for Local Council Tax Support Scheme	300	-	-	-	300	-	-	-	300
Events Reserve	263	-	(94)	134	303	(25)	(26)	13	265
Better Care Fund Reserve	220	-	-	-	220	-	-	-	220
Trading Account Reserve	113	-	(35)	-	78	-	-	140	218
School Attainment Reserve	143	-	(18)	-	125	-	(18)	50	175
Supporting Family Poverty	75	-	(87)	151	139	(47)	(31)	16	77
National Museum of the Royal Navy Reserve	142	-	(104)	-	38	-	-	-	38
Museums Acquisition	29	-	-	(1)	28	-	-	1	29
Environmental Apprenticeships Scheme	17	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	17
Works in Default Empty Homes	15	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	15
Funding for Modern Apprentices	28	-	(15)	-	13	-	-	-	13
Tees Education & Skills Reserve - Held in Trust	105	-	(101)	3	7	-	-	4	11
CECA Trading Equalisation Reserves	5	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
Strategic One Off Costs	3,323	-	(631)	-	2,692	(2,692)	-	-	-
Members Ward Budget Reserve	35	-	(35)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12,412	-	(1,940)	977	11,449	(213)	(396)	2,532	13,372
Earmarked Capital Reserves									
Capital Funding Reserve	8,462	-	(3,720)	4,586	9,328	(3,151)	(2,383)	2,023	5,817
HRA Major Repairs Reserve	616	-	(102)	323	837	-	(18)	353	1,172
Capital Grants Unapplied	20	-	-	-	20	-	(12)	-	8
Capital Receipts Unapplied	28	-	(1,590)	1,562	-	-	(155)	155	-
	9,126	-	(5,412)	6,471	10,185	(3,151)	(2,568)	2,531	6,997
COVID-19 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve									
COVID-19 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,588	10,588
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,588	10,588
School Balances									
Balances held by delegation schools under a scheme of delegation	63	-	(4,395)	4,086	(246)	-	(2,049)	4,349	2,054
Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves	828	-	(674)	115	269	-	(53)	1,040	1,256
Ring Fenced Grants Reserves - Held in Trust for Schools	246	-	(247)	248	247	-	(248)	378	377
	1,137	-	(5,316)	4,449	270	-	(2,350)	5,767	3,687
Housing Revenue Account Balance									
HRA Balance	347	-	-	44	391	-	-	104	495
	347	-	-	44	391	-	-	104	495

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Note 7: Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, Council Tax and Business Rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's directorates/services/departments. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

RESTATED

Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA	2019/20		Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund and HRA	2020/21		Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	Adjustments Between the General Fund and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement			Adjustments Between the General Fund and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s	£000s	
33,281	3,693	36,974	Adult & Community Based Services	34,867	3,339	38,206	
22,925	4,805	27,730	Children's & Joint Commissioning Services	24,012	1,993	26,005	
(4,888)	8,389	3,501	Corporate	(6,735)	(9,463)	(16,198)	
18,787	6,747	25,534	Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	20,677	10,357	31,034	
4,207	1,881	6,088	Resources and Development	4,911	2,253	7,164	
(44)	(18)	(62)	HRA	(104)	(32)	(136)	
48,172	(48,172)	-	Schools	48,789	(48,789)	-	
122,440	(22,675)	99,765	Net Cost of Services	126,417	(40,342)	86,075	
(122,484)	49,359	(73,125)	Other Income and Expenditure	(126,521)	49,070	(77,451)	
(44)	26,684	26,640	(Surplus) or Deficit	(104)	8,728	8,624	
4,764			Opening General Fund & HRA Balance	4,808			
-			Less/Plus Surplus or (Deficit) on General Fund Balance in Year				
-			Transfer Between Earmarked & General Fund Reserves				
44			Less/Plus Surplus or (Deficit) on HRA Balance in Year	104			
-			Transfer Between Earmarked & HRA Reserves				
4,808			Closing General Fund & HRA Balance at 31 March	4,912			

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 7A: Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

Adjustments from the General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts:

Adjustments from General Fund to Arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	2020/21					Total Adjustments
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1)	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note 2)	Other Statutory Differences (Note 3)	Other Non-Statutory Difference (Note 4)		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adult and Community Based Services	305	2,178	761	95		3,339
Children and Joint Commissioning	2,494	4,585	638	(5,724)		1,993
Corporate	939	-	-	(10,402)		(9,463)
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	5,695	2,356	1,743	563		10,357
Resources and Development	11	1,343	319	580		2,253
HRA	436	25	-	(493)		(32)
Schools				(48,789)		(48,789)
Transfer To/from Earmarked Reserves						-
Net Cost of Services	9,880	10,487	3,461	(64,170)		(40,342)
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(4,083)	3,920	9,334	39,899		49,070
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	5,797	14,407	12,795	(24,271)		8,728

Adjustments from General Fund to Arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	RESTATED 2019/20					Total Adjustments
	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (Note 1)	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments (Note 2)	Other Statutory Differences (Note 3)	Other Non-Statutory Difference (Note 4)		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adult and Community Based Services	420	1,992	1	1,280		3,693
Children and Joint Commissioning	2,160	4,240	15	(1,610)		4,805
Corporate	113	15	-	8,261		8,389
Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	5,574	2,247	7	(1,081)		6,747
Resources and Development	8	1,271	(13)	615		1,881
HRA	457	27	-	(502)		(18)
Schools	-	-	-	(48,172)		(48,172)
Transfer To/from Earmarked Reserves	-	-	-	-		-
Net Cost of Services	8,732	9,792	10	(41,209)		(22,675)
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	1,578	2,944	(1,608)	46,445		49,359
Difference between General Fund Surplus or Deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	10,310	12,736	(1,598)	5,236		26,684

Note 1 This is the net change for the removal of depreciation and impairment and other capital costs from services and the addition of other operating costs and capital grants received.

Note 2 This is the net change for the removal of employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current and past service costs.

Note 3 This is the net change in relation to statutory adjustments for accumulated absences and in relation to the Collection Fund.

Note 4 This is the net change in relation to non-statutory adjustments for amounts included in the management accounts but not in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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Note 7B: Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

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

2019/20 £000	Expenditure/Income	2020/21 £000
	Expenditure	
103,868	Employee Benefits Expenses	105,495
146,611	Other Services Expenses	155,652
16,273	Support Service Recharges	17,803
20,093	Depreciation, Impairment, Revaluation Losses	13,441
2,933	Interest Payments	2,863
151	Precepts and Levies	156
6,279	Gain/Loss on the disposal of assets	879
296,208	Total Expenditure	296,289
	Income	
(46,820)	Fees Charges and Other Service Income	(45,093)
(12,967)	Interest and Investment Income	(10,568)
(57,786)	Income from Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates	(49,968)
(151,995)	Government Grants and Contributions	(182,036)
(269,568)	Total Income	(287,665)
26,640	Surplus or deficit on the provision of services	8,624

Note 7C: Segmental Income

Income received on a segmental basis is analysed below.

RESTATED 2019/20			2020/21	
Fees & Charges	Interest & Investment Income		Fees & Charges	Interest & Investment Income
£000	£000		£000	£000
(21,816)	-	Adult and Community Based Services	(24,804)	-
(55,929)	-	Children and Joint Commissioning	(55,322)	-
(4,635)	(636)	Corporate	(6,966)	(196)
(30,953)	(279)	Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services	(26,498)	-
(4,621)	(18)	Resources and Development	(4,181)	(302)
(1,286)	(23)	HRA	(1,382)	(29)
(119,240)	(956)		(119,153)	(527)

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Note 8: Other Operating Expenditure and Transfer of School Assets

This note provides a breakdown of the various components included within the Other Operating Expenditure and Transfer of School Assets lines of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
151	Parish council precepts and levies	156
(235)	Receipts from Sale of Former Council Houses	(124)
4,532	Loss resulting from Transfer of School Assets	214
(219)	(Gain) or loss on the disposal of non-current assets	510
<u>4,229</u>		<u>756</u>

Note 9: Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

This note provides a breakdown of the various components included within the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
2,919	Interest payable and similar charges on borrowing	2,853	45
13	Finance lease Interest payable	10	45
2,945	Pensions Interest Cost & Expected Return on Pensions Assets	3,920	53
(363)	Interest Receivable and Similar Income	(146)	45
(588)	Net (Gain) / Loss on Investment Properties	(469)	16
9,297	Changes in fair values of investment properties	1,160	16
<u>14,223</u>		<u>7,328</u>	

Note 10: Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

This note provides a breakdown of the various components included within the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
40,921	Council Tax Income	41,622	
16,865	NNDR Distribution	8,346	
21,746	Non-ring Fenced Government Grants	29,591	
12,045	Capital Grants and Contributions	5,976	
<u>91,577</u>		<u>85,535</u>	29

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 11 - Councillor's Allowances & Expenses

The Council has decided to provide this additional note to provide a detailed breakdown of the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid to individual Councillors for 2020/21.

Most Councils do not report this level of detail in their Statement of Accounts and simply show the total amount paid to all Councillors as a single figure.

The detailed arrangements for paying the Basic Allowance, SRAs and other expenses are defined by specific rules in the Council's constitution. The key components of these rules are described below:

Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances

The value of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) paid by the Council are based on recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

On 22nd June 2017 Council considered a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) detailing recommendations in relation to the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowances payable from 1st April 2017.

The IRP had reviewed the allowances paid by the twelve North East Councils, including Hartlepool, and recommended increasing Hartlepool's Basic Allowance to £7,792. The IRP also recommended annual indexing of the allowances in line with the national Local Government pay award up to April 2020. For 2020/21 this resulted in a Basic Allowance of £8,330. As summarised below Hartlepool has the second lowest Basic Allowance in the Tees Valley and the third lowest in the North East:

Summary of Basic Allowances paid by North East Councils 2020/21

Authority	Basic Allowance £
Northumberland	14,774
Durham	13,300
Gateshead	11,297
North Tyneside	10,643
Redcar and Cleveland	9,813
Stockton	9,300
Newcastle	9,200
Darlington	8,519
Sunderland	8,369
Hartlepool	8,330
South Tyneside	7,667
Middlesbrough	7,608

The IRP also recommended that Special Responsibility Allowances should continue to be set as multiples of the Basic Allowance and recommended percentages for each of the positions carrying a Special Responsibility Allowance. An individual Member can only receive one Special Responsibility Allowance. Finally the IRP recommended that separate payments for telephone expenses and travel/subsistence within the borough should be removed. Travel costs outside the borough continue to be paid. The recommendations of the IRP were approved by Council. A number of Members determined that they did not wish to receive the increased Basic Allowance and opted to claim a lower amount.

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Note 11: Councillor's Allowances & Expenses

Table 1 - Councillor's Allowances & Expenses

Councillor	Basic Allowance	Special Responsibility Allowance	General Travel	General Subsistence	Total
	£	£	£	£	2020/21 £
Akers-Belcher C	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Akers-Belcher S J	8,330	1,388	-	-	9,718
Black J (01.04.20-02.08.20)	2,098	291	-	-	2,389
Brewer J	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Brown P	8,330	2,056	-	-	10,386
Buchan B	8,330	4,998	-	-	13,328
Cartwright L	8,330	60	-	-	8,390
Cassidy T	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Fleming T	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Hall G G	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Hamilton L	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Harrison B	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Howson H	7,948	-	-	-	7,948
Hunter D	5,953	-	-	-	5,953
James M A	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Johnson A (01.04.20-28.05.20)	992	-	-	-	992
King K	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Lauderdale J	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Lindridge J	7,792	-	-	-	7,792
Little S	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Loynes B	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Marshall A	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Moore S	8,330	24,990	-	-	33,320
Prince A	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Richardson A	5,953	-	-	-	5,953
Richardson C	6,428	-	-	-	6,428
Smith L	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Stokell C	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Tennant J	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Thomas S	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Ward B	8,330	-	-	-	8,330
Young M	8,330	8,330	-	-	16,660
Totals for 2020/21	245,414	92,093	-	-	337,507
Total 2019/20	242,747	89,129	281	-	332,157

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 11: Councillor's Allowances & Expenses

Table 2 - Costs associated with Council Approved Conferences

The Council has an approved list of conferences which specific Councillors are authorised to attend as representatives of the Council.

The conferences and travel/accommodation arrangements are booked by officers of the Council on behalf of the Councillor(s) attending the conference. The costs are paid directly by the Council and are not based on claims submitted by individual Councillors. The costs paid by the Council for conference fees, travel and accommodation are then recorded against the individual Councillor who attended the event.

Conference Subsistence relates to expenses claimed by Councillors for 'out of pocket expenses' whilst staying away from Hartlepool where meals are not provided for in the overall conference fees. The allowances claimable are based on approved national subsistence rates.

The total amount paid by the Council on costs associated with Council Conferences was £0 (2019/20: £9,020). An analysis of the payments is detailed below.

Councillor	Conference Travel £	Conference Fees £	Conference Accommodation £	Total 2020/21 £
Totals for 2020/21	0	0	0	0
Totals for 2019/20	907	5,640	2,473	9,020

Table 3 - The Council's appointed representatives on Cleveland Fire Authority

The following Councillors were the Council's appointed representatives on Cleveland Fire Authority and received a separate allowance for this additional responsibility which was funded from the Fire Authority budget, as detailed below. Further details of these allowances can be obtained from the Fire Authority.

Councillor	Cleveland Fire Authority	
	Basic Allowances £	Period of Office
Fleming T	2,238	01.04.20-31.03.21
James M	2,238	01.04.20-31.03.21
Thomas S	2,238	01.04.20-31.03.21
	4,476	

Table 4 - The Council's appointed representatives on River Tees Port Authority

Councillor B Harrison was re-elected Vice-Chair of River Tees Port Health Authority for 2020/21. A Special Responsibility Allowance of £1,300 is payable for that period.

Councillor	River Tees Port Authority	
	Special Responsibility Allowance £	Period of Office
Harrison B	1,300	01.04.20-31.03.21

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Note 12 - Officers' Remuneration

In accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 the Council is required to disclose details of remuneration for Senior Employees and those earning more than £50,000. Senior Employees are defined as the Managing Director, statutory Chief Officers and all other senior managers reporting directly to the Managing Director. Details of the remuneration for these officers are provided below.

Senior Officers with a salary of £150,000 or more per year

The Council employed one senior officer, the Managing Director, with a salary above £150,000 during 2020/21.

The Managing Director is the senior officer who leads and takes responsibility for the work of the 2,385 (2,580 in 2019/20) full-time equivalent employees, including schools, and runs the Local Authority on a day to day basis. The role of Managing Director is a full time appointment.

Permanent post holders are selected on merit, against objective criteria and are appointed by the whole Council.

As Head of Paid Service, the Managing Director works closely with elected Councillors to deliver the following:

Leadership: working with elected Councillors to ensure strong and visible leadership and direction, encouraging and enabling managers to motivate and inspire their teams.

Strategic Direction: ensuring all staff understand and adhere to the strategic aims of the organisation and follow the direction set by the elected Councillors.

Policy Advice: acting as the principal policy adviser to elected Members of the Council to lead the development of workable strategies which will deliver the political objectives set by Members.

Partnerships: leading and developing strong partnerships across the local community to achieve improved outcomes and better public services for local people.

Operational Management: overseeing financial and performance management, risk management, people management and change management within the Council.

Senior Officers reporting directly to the Managing Director

During 2020/21, the Council employed 8 Senior Officers, including the Chief Executive who left the authority on 6 September 2020 following a senior management restructure which deleted the post. The restructure retained 5 directors (including the Director of Public Health) and post titles in 2020/21 reflect the change in responsibilities of individual Directors. The restructure deletes the post of Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and creates the Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services. The Director of Finance and Policy was redesignated Director of Resources and Development. The reduction in salary of the Managing Director compared to the Chief Executive post and other structural changes at the Assistant Director level achieved a recurring saving of £46k per annum.

From 7 September 2020, the Managing Director is the Council's Head of Paid Service. Although the Director of Public Health does not report directly to the Managing Director, the post is defined as a statutory chief officer under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and is therefore included. Remuneration details for the posts are shown below:

Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services - responsible for a gross annual revenue budget of £103m (including Dedicated Schools Grant) and managing 468 full-time equivalent employees (excluding schools) who provide a diverse range of services, including public health, education and early years related services, services for vulnerable children and families including looking after children at risk, child protection services, young offenders, children's fostering and adoption services.

Director of Adults and Community Based Services - responsible for a gross annual revenue budget of £72m and managing 413 full-time equivalent employees who provide a diverse range of services, including adult protection services, caring for older people, people with mental health issues, people with physical or learning disabilities, libraries, sport and recreation and cultural services.

Director of Neighbourhoods & Regulatory Services - responsible for a gross annual revenue budget of £51m and managing 556 full-time equivalent employees who provide a diverse range of services, including planning and building control, community safety, refuse collection, street cleansing, highways maintenance and car parks.

Director of Resources and Development - responsible for a gross annual revenue budget of £40m and managing 200 full-time equivalent employees who provide a diverse range of services including Council tax setting and collection, Business Rates, Benefits, HR, Corporate IT, Corporate Finance, Corporate Strategy and economic development and regeneration.

The Chief Solicitor reports to the Managing Director and is responsible for a gross annual revenue budget of £2m and management of 28 full-time equivalent employees.

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Note 12 - Officers' Remuneration

2020/21 - TABLE A

Post Holder Information (Post Title and Name)	Salary (including fees and allowances)	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension Contributions	Total Remuneration including Pension Contributions 2020/21	Note
	£	£	£	£	
Managing Director Denise McGuckin (from 6 September 2020)	86,534	-	10,727	97,261	1
Chief Executive (1 April to 6 September 2020)	70,519	-	8,744	79,263	2
Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services	119,591	-	14,829	134,420	3
Director of Adults and Community Based Services	114,684	-	14,221	128,905	3
Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods (1 April to 6 September 2020)	51,987	-	6,446	58,433	3
Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services (from 7 September 2020)	61,795	-	7,663	69,458	3
Director of Resources and Development	116,139	-	14,401	130,540	3
Director of Public Health (April 2020 to June 2020)	28,677	-	2,959	31,636	4
Director of Public Health (from June 2020)	69,879	-	8,665	78,544	4
Chief Solicitor	90,166	-	11,181	101,347	5
	809,971	-	99,836	909,807	

2019/20 - TABLE B

Post Holder Information (Post Title and Name)	Salary (including fees and allowances)	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension Contributions	Total Remuneration including Pension Contributions 2019/20
	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive - Gill Alexander	160,191	45,799	71,448	277,438
Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services	114,268	-	17,711	131,979
Director of Adult and Community Based Services	109,535	-	16,971	126,506
Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods	116,810	-	18,096	134,906
Director of Resources and Development	110,907	-	17,191	128,098
Director of Public Health	96,528	-	14,962	111,490
Chief Solicitor	84,827	-	13,148	97,975
	793,066	45,799	169,527	1,008,392

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 12 - Officers' Remuneration

Notes to Table A & B

(1) The Managing Director was appointed on 7 September 2020. The single point salary scale for the Managing Director for 2020/21 is £152,669.

(2) The salary scale for the Chief Executive for 2020/21 was £152,669 to £163,575 (£148,583 to £159,197 in 2019/20). The Chief Executive retired on 6 September 2020.

(3) The salary scale for the Director posts for 2020/21 is £109,050 to £119,954 (£106,131 to £116,744 in 2019/20). Post holders are appointed at the bottom of the payscale and receive annual increments until they reach the top of the payscale.

(4) A new Director of Public Health was appointed on 22 June 2020, following resignation of the previous Director. The salary scale for the Director of Public Health for 2020/21 is £84,154 to £90,166 (£81,902 to £87,753 in 2019/20 with a 10% market supplement giving an annualised total of £96,528).

(5) The salary scale for the Chief Solicitor for 2020/21 is £84,154 to £90,166 (£81,902 to £87,753 in 2019/20).

Employees with a salary of £50,000 or more

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the number of employees including school employees employed by the Council whose remuneration was £50,000 or greater is detailed in the table below in bands of £5,000. This table excludes details of senior officers set out in the previous tables. The bandings have been used since 2002/03 and are not indexed and therefore do not make any adjustment for inflationary increases each year. If the starting banding had been indexed for cost of living increases for Council employees then it would be £71,937. As a result, the number of employees requiring disclosure has increased, although there has been no increase in the number of managerial posts.

Remuneration is measured as gross pay (before deduction of employee pension contributions), plus compensation for loss of office and any other payments receivable on the termination of employment in line with the Code guidance.

TABLE C - NON-SCHOOLS EMPLOYEES

2019/20 No. of Non-School Employees			Remuneration Band (£)	2020/21 No. of Non-School Employees		
<i>Non School</i>	<i>Left in Year</i>	<i>Total</i>		<i>Non School</i>	<i>Left in Year</i>	<i>Total</i>
24	1	25	50,000 to 54,999	26	-	26
7	2	9	55,000 to 59,999	8	-	8
5	-	5	60,000 to 64,999	4	-	4
1	-	1	65,000 to 69,999	2	-	2
-	-	-	70,000 to 74,999	-	-	-
2	1	3	75,000 to 79,999	2	-	2
3	-	3	80,000 to 84,999	2	-	2
2	-	2	85,000 to 89,999	2	-	2
-	-	-	90,000 to 94,999	2	-	2
44	4	48		48	-	48

TABLE D - SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

2019/20 No. of School Employees			Remuneration Band (£)	2020/21 No. of School Employees		
<i>School</i>	<i>Left in Year</i>	<i>Total</i>		<i>School</i>	<i>Left in Year</i>	<i>Total</i>
10	-	10	50,000 to 54,999	8	-	8
4	1	5	55,000 to 59,999	5	1	6
-	-	-	60,000 to 64,999	3	-	3
1	-	1	65,000 to 69,999	-	-	-
9	-	9	70,000 to 74,999	7	-	7
1	-	1	75,000 to 79,999	3	-	3
-	-	-	80,000 to 84,999	1	-	1
25	1	26		27	1	28

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Note 13: Termination Costs

In 2020/21 a total of 29 employees (32 in 2019/20) either took voluntary redundancy or were made compulsorily redundant. The 2020/21 costs of this involved payments of £0.164m (£0.358m in 2019/20) to employees in the form of redundancy payments and £nil (£0.285m in 2019/20) to the pension fund in respect of retirement benefits. The Council also incurred other costs of £nil (£0.001m in 2019/20). These payments incorporate schools and further details are provided in Note 53.

The Council calculates redundancy pay based on the actual salary paid to individual employees, with a maximum redundancy payment not exceeding 30 weeks pay with no enhancements. Retirement costs are based on national arrangements applying to all Local Government Pension schemes.

For non-schools employees the Council adopts robust arrangements for approving both compulsory and voluntary redundancies / early retirements and only approves applications where there is a permanent budget saving and the one-off redundancy / early retirement costs have a pay back period of 3.05 years or less. In 2020/21 the average pay back period was 4 months (10 months in 2019/20). In 2020/21 this has enabled the authority to achieve permanent salary savings of £0.084m (£0.669m in 2019/20).

The following tables provide details by band and the number and total cost of the compulsory and voluntary redundancies for non-school and school employees.

TABLE E - NON-SCHOOLS EMPLOYEES

2019/20					2020/21				
No of compulsory redundancies	No of voluntary redundancies	Total no of redundancies by band	Total cost of redundancies by band £	Remuneration Band (£)	No of compulsory redundancies	No of voluntary redundancies	Total no of redundancies by band	Total cost of redundancies by band £	
12	2	14	81,179	0 to 20,000	15	-	15	75,880	
2	4	6	197,393	20,001 to 40,000	-	-	-	-	
-	-	-	-	40,001 to 60,000	-	-	-	-	
1	2	3	213,337	60,001 to 80,000	-	-	-	-	
1	-	1	89,027	80,001 to 100,000	-	-	-	-	
16	8	24	580,936		15	-	15	75,880	

TABLE F - SCHOOLS EMPLOYEES

2019/20					2020/21				
No of compulsory redundancies	No of voluntary redundancies	Total no of redundancies by band	Total cost of redundancies by band £	Remuneration Band (£)	No of compulsory redundancies	No of voluntary redundancies	Total no of redundancies by band	Total cost of redundancies by band £	
5	3	8	61,327	0 to 20,000	10	3	13	64,612	
-	-	-	-	20,001 to 40,000	-	1	1	23,039	
5	3	8	61,327		10	4	14	87,651	

Decisions in relation to school employees are made by individual School Governing Bodies and not by the Council. Foundation and Voluntary Aided school employees are excluded from Table F as the Governing Body, not the Council, are the Employer.

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Note 14: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment

This note shows the movements in the value of non current assets (Property, Plant and Equipment) during 2020/21.

Movements in 2020/21

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cost or Valuation								
As at 1 April 2020	8,222	166,442	38,373	151,541	5,578	9,519	5,730	385,405
Additions	214	847	2,286	3,030	-	82	2,271	8,730
Accumulated Depreciation Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(100)	(6)	-	-	-	(11)	-	(117)
Accumulated Impairment Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(16)	(1,450)	-	-	-	(90)	-	(1,556)
Revaluation Increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	85	156	-	-	-	131	-	372
Revaluation Increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(424)	6	-	-	-	(249)	-	(667)
Derecognition-Disposals	-	(315)	(228)	-	-	(35)	(1)	(579)
Reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	(283)	-	(283)
Reclassified (to)/from Investment Property	-	-	-	-	-	(69)	-	(69)
Other movements in Cost or Valuation	1,103	61	21	1,267	1	88	(2,540)	1
At 31 March 2021	9,084	165,741	40,452	155,838	5,579	9,083	5,460	391,237
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
As at 1 April 20120	(231)	(1,277)	(28,023)	(65,443)	-	(5)	-	(94,979)
Depreciation Charge	(152)	(2,137)	(1,831)	(4,725)	-	(16)	-	(8,861)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(34)	(1,181)	-	-	-	(14)	-	(1,229)
Accumulated Depreciation Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	100	6	-	-	-	11	-	117
Accumulated Impairment Written Out to Gross Carrying Amount	3	181	-	-	-	-	-	184
Derecognition - Disposals	-	7	207	-	-	-	-	214
Reclassified (to) / from Investment Property	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Other movements in Depreciation and Impairment	-	3	-	-	-	(3)	-	-
At 31 March 2021	(314)	(4,398)	(29,647)	(70,168)	-	(26)	-	(104,553)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2021	8,770	161,343	10,805	85,670	5,579	9,057	5,460	286,684
Nature of Asset Holding								
Owned	8,770	161,343	10,424	85,670	5,579	9,057	5,460	286,303
Finance Lease			381					381
Total	8,770	161,343	10,805	85,670	5,579	9,057	5,460	286,684

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 14: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment

Movements in 2019/20

	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infrastructure Assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Cost or Valuation								
As at 1 April 2019	7,352	154,108	36,155	144,948	5,630	11,012	9,578	368,783
Additions	1,396	6,068	2,853	5,333	-	976	4,545	21,171
Accumulated Depreciation Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(91)	(3,175)	-	-	-	(50)	-	(3,316)
Accumulated Impairment Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	(33)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(33)
Revaluation Increases/(decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	101	11,689	-	-	-	317	-	12,107
Revaluation Increases/(decreases) recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	(709)	472	-	-	-	(472)	-	(709)
Derecognition-Disposals	-	(4,590)	(762)	-	(52)	(1,259)	(403)	(7,066)
Reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-	(515)	-	(515)
Reclassified (to)/from Investment Property	-	235	-	-	-	(5,190)	-	(4,955)
Other movements in Cost or Valuation	206	1,635	127	1,260	-	4,700	(7,990)	(62)
At 31 March 2020	8,222	166,442	38,373	151,541	5,578	9,519	5,730	385,405
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment								
As at 1 April 2019	(160)	(1,466)	(26,548)	(60,978)	-	(16)	-	(89,168)
Depreciation Charge	(131)	(2,034)	(2,160)	(4,465)	-	(17)	-	(8,807)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(36)	(1,076)	-	-	-	(17)	-	(1,129)
Accumulated Depreciation Written Off to Gross Carrying Amount	91	3,175	-	-	-	50	-	3,316
Accumulated Impairment Written Out to Gross Carrying Amount	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Derecognition - Disposals	-	103	685	-	-	-	-	788
Reclassified (to) / from Investment Property	-	-	-	-	-	14	-	14
Other movements in Depreciation and Impairment	-	21	-	-	-	(19)	-	2
At 31 March 2020	(231)	(1,277)	(28,023)	(65,443)	-	(5)	-	(94,979)
Net Book Value								
At 31 March 2020	7,991	165,165	10,350	86,098	5,578	9,514	5,730	290,426
Nature of Asset Holding								
Owned	7,991	165,165	9,875	86,098	5,578	9,514	5,730	289,951
Finance Lease	-	-	475	-	-	-	-	475
Total	7,991	165,165	10,350	86,098	5,578	9,514	5,730	290,426

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 14: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment

Depreciation

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

- Council Dwellings - 50 years.
- Other Land and Buildings - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer, between 25 and 40 years.
- Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the asset, up to 15 years.
- Infrastructure - between 15 and 100 years.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute

The cost of Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account. An amount of £2.441m (£2.196m in 2019/20) has been charged to Services and is shown as a reconciling item within Note 5 (Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations). This was financed by corporate resources of £nil (£0.298m in 2019/20), capital grants of £1.918m (£1.656m in 2019/20), capital receipts of £0.007m (£0.212m in 2019/20) and prudential borrowing of £0.516m (£0.030m in 2019/20).

Capital Commitments

As at 31 March, 2021, the Council had rephased capital expenditure totalling £32.669m into 2021/22, of which £9.941m will be funded from grant, £19.118m will be funded by prudential borrowing, £0.226m will be funded from capital receipts and the remaining £3.384m will be funded from the Council's own resources. The comparable rephased capital expenditure at 31 March, 2020 was £27.814m. The Council has entered into a number of contracts for which capital monies are committed. The major commitments are:

Scheme	Total Project Budget £000s	Expenditure over Years to 31 March 21 £000s	Commitment £000s
Elwick By-Pass Growing Places	18,837	1,164	17,673
Hill View, Greatham Housing Scheme	2,168	35	2,133
Lynn Street Housing Scheme	1,924	100	1,824
Headland Amphitheatre	1,000	45	955
Empty Property Purchasing Scheme - Phase 3	2,765	2,187	578

Surplus Assets - Fair Value Disclosures

Details of the authority's surplus assets and information about the fair value hierarchy at 31 March 2021 are as follows:

Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1) £000s	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2) £000s	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3) £000s	Fair Value as at 31 March 2021 £000s
Surplus Assets	-	5,805	3,252	9,057
Total	-	5,805	3,252	9,057

Four properties transferred from Level 3 and Level 2 during the year. This occurred because a lesser degree of valuer judgement was employed in this valuation. Previous valuations had a significant allowance for COVID-19 uncertainty not used this year. There were no other transfers between levels during the year.

Significant Observable Inputs – Level 2

The surplus assets within this input level are mainly measured using sales and valuations of comparable properties to establish market values. Market Conditions are such that there are similar properties that are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy. Assets with development potential are measured to reflect potential development value.

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Significant Unobservable Inputs – Level 3

The surplus assets within this input level are measured as in Level 2. However, they are categorised as Level 3 in the fair value hierarchy as the measurement technique uses significant unobservable inputs to determine the fair value measurements and there is no reasonably available information that indicates that market participants would use different assumptions.

Change in Valuation Method

There has been no change in the valuation method from 2019/20. In 2012/21 the estimation of the fair value of the Council's Surplus Assets is based on Fair Value Market Value.

Note 15: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment - Revaluations

The Council carries out a rolling programme that ensures that all property, plant and equipment is revalued at least every five years. All valuations were carried out internally and valuations are based on certificates issued by the Council's Strategic Asset Manager, Mr T Wynn, a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors. Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Valuations of vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment are based on depreciated historic cost.

The significant assumptions applied in estimating the current values unless otherwise noted in the valuation reports are:

- Properties are in good condition and repair.
- Properties are freehold and with vacant possession.
- Properties will continue to be used by the Council into the foreseeable future.
- Properties do not contravene planning and other statutory matters.

The following statement shows the progress of the Council's rolling programme for the revaluation of non current assets and property, plant and equipment, excluding Community Assets (£5.579m), Heritage Assets (£17.735m), Infrastructure Assets (£85.670m), Intangible Assets (£0.429m), Assets held for sale (£0.283m) and Property, Plant and Equipment under construction (£5.460m). The basis for the valuation is set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

	Operational Assets				
	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Surplus Assets	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Valued at Historical Cost	-	-	10,805	-	10,805
Valued at current value as at:					
<u>Current Year</u>					
2020/2021	8,747	259	-	2,214	11,220
2019/2020	-	123,610	-	1,246	124,856
2018/2019	-	16,168	-	-	16,168
2017/2018	23	18,488	-	1,834	20,345
2016/2017	-	2,818	-	3,763	6,581
Total	8,770	161,343	10,805	9,057	189,975

Alternative Valuation Model

Council Dwellings are measured at current value - social housing, Other Land and Buildings are measured at current value and Surplus Assets are measured at fair value. If the Council had chosen to measure the value of these assets under the cost model, their carrying amount as at 31 March 2021 would have been:

	£000s
Other Land & Buildings	81
Council Dwellings	7,276
Surplus Assets	1,056

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 15: Non Current Assets - Property, Plant & Equipment - Revaluations

Revaluation Reserve Balance

The following is an analysis of the Revaluation Reserve by asset type.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
1,427	Council Dwellings	1,471
61,503	Other Land & Buildings	60,262
7	Community Assets	7
4,460	Surplus Assets	4,348
1,018	Investment Properties	1,018
7,451	Heritage Assets	7,451
302	Assets Held for Sale	197
<u>76,168</u>		<u>74,754</u>

Note 16: Non Current Assets - Investment Property

The following items of income and expense have been accounted for in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(759)	Rental income from investment property	(593)
171	Direct operating expenses arising from investment property	124
<u>(588)</u>	Net (gain)/loss	<u>(469)</u>

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. The Council has no contractual obligations to purchase, construct or develop investment property or carry out repairs, maintenance or enhancement.

The Council leases a number of properties where it also acts as a lessor. These properties are classed as investment properties. The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
14,178	Balance at the start of the year	9,951
-	Additions: Acquisitions	-
67	Additions: Subsequent expenditure	-
(9,297)	Net Gains/(Losses) from fair value adjustments	(1,160)
4,941	Transfers: (To)/from Property, Plant & Equipment	68
62	Other changes	-
<u>9,951</u>	Balance at the end of the year	<u>8,859</u>

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 16: Non Current Assets - Investment Property

Investment Property - Fair Value Disclosures

Details of the Council's investment properties and information about the fair value hierarchy at 31 March 2021 are as follows:

<i>Recurring fair value measurements using:</i>	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair Value as at 31 March 2021
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Office Units	-	264	1,356	1,620
Commercial Units	-	4,391	2,848	7,239
Total	-	4,655	4,204	8,859

Five properties transferred from Level 3 to Level 2 during the year. This occurred because a lesser degree of valuer judgement was employed in this valuation. Previous valuations had a significant allowance for COVID-19 uncertainty not used this year. There were no other transfers between levels during the year.

Valuation Techniques used to determine level 2 and 3 Fair Values for Investment Properties.

Significant Observable Inputs - Level 2

The office and commercial units located in the local authority area are measured using the income approach, by means of the discounted cash flow method, where the expected cash flows from the properties are discounted (using a market-derived discount rate) to establish the present value of the net income stream. The approach has been developed using the Council's own data requiring it to factor in assumptions such as the duration and timing of cash inflows and outflows, rent growth, occupancy level, bad debt levels and maintenance costs. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised at Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy. In the remaining cases the properties are measured directly to capital values by reference to their potential development value.

Significant Unobservable Inputs - Level 3

The valuation for office and commercial units within this input level are measured as above. However, they are categorised as Level 3 in the fair value hierarchy as the measurement technique uses significant unobservable inputs to determine the fair value measurements and there is no reasonably available information that indicates that market participants would use different assumptions.

Highest and Best Use of Investment Properties

In all cases, the Council's investment properties have been valued on the basis of market value. In many cases the current value of the property is the 'highest and best', most valuable use of the site. However, in some cases such as development sites, the current use is not the 'highest and best' use but the valuations reflect the potential to realise the value through sale or development.

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Note 17: Non Current Assets - Heritage Assets

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

2020/21 Cost or Valuation	Museum Exhibits & Art Collection	Civic Collection	Sculptures, Monuments & War Memorials	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	At 1 April 2020	15,981	354	1,339
Additions	5	-	56	61
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2021	15,986	354	1,395	17,735

2019/20 Cost or Valuation	Museum Exhibits & Art Collection	Civic Collection	Sculptures, Monuments & War Memorials	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	At 1 April 2019	15,981	354	1,339
Additions	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2020	15,981	354	1,339	17,674

Museum Exhibits & The Art Collection

The Council's Museum Service possesses a fine collection of historical objects, information and artworks. These are displayed within the Museum of Hartlepool, the Hartlepool Art Gallery and selected buildings such as the Civic Centre and Borough Buildings, either as part of the permanent historical displays or as changing exhibitions. When not on display they are held in secure storage.

The collections are used as a valuable reference collection for researching the history and cultural identity of the town.

Hartlepool has an impressive and important collection of over 1,000 pieces of fine art. The collection is mainly Victorian and Edwardian in period, largely as a result of the founding collection by Sir William Gray. With few exceptions, most subsequent collecting has been the work of artists living or working at least part of their lives in the Hartlepool area.

The Council also holds collections relating to Hartlepool's maritime heritage and social history. These include ship models, photographs, company records, ephemera and equipment. This also contains around 35,000 plans for the building of approximately 300 ships including the Wingfield Castle. Almost all of the plans relate to ships built by Gray's shipyard from 1927 to the yards closure in 1961. When the shipyard closed, the plans were still of importance and often bought by other ship builders. In the mid 1980s many of the plans were returned to Hartlepool and now feature in the collection.

Civic Collection

The Civic Collection includes the Civic Regalia, ceremonial silverware, and a number of decorative artefacts. The Books of Remembrance have been included within the Civic Collection and are held at Historic Cost. The collection was revalued in 2018/19.

Valuation of the Collections

Although there is no requirement to have Heritage assets externally valued, during 2018/19 external valuers Anderson & Garland Ltd carried out an insurance based valuation of the assets. Museum exhibits and Works of Art were valued at £15.981m and £0.354m for the Civic Collection, compared to previous valuations of £13.128m and £0.354m respectively.

Sculptures, Monuments & War Memorials

The Council has recorded eleven Public Works of Art, nine Sculptures and six War Memorials which are considered to principally contribute towards this category of asset.

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Note 17: Non Current Assets - Heritage Assets

Policy and Management

The Council has an Acquisitions & Disposals Policy in place which sets out the acquisition, preservation, management and disposal of Heritage Assets. This is available on request.

Note 18: Non Current Assets - Intangible Assets

The Authority accounts for its software as intangible assets and includes the purchase of software licences. All software is given a finite useful life of 5 years. This is based on the assessment of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Authority and is in line with the Authority's accounting policy.

The carrying amount of intangible assets is amortised on a straight line basis. No amortisation is recognised in the year of purchase. Amortisation of £0.152m (£0.125m in 2019/20) was charged to Corporate in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The movement on intangible asset balances during the year is as follows:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
625	Balance at the start of the year	706
-	Gross carrying amounts	(125)
625	Accumulated amortisation	581
-	Net carrying amount at end of year	-
81	Additions:	-
-	Purchases:	-
(125)	Amortisation for the period	(152)
<u>581</u>	Net carrying amount at end of year	<u>429</u>
	Comprising	
706	Gross carrying amounts	706
(125)	Accumulated amortisation	(277)
<u>581</u>	Net carrying amount at end of year	<u>429</u>

Note 19: Long Term Investments

This note details the carrying values of the Council's investments.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
-	Teesside International Airport	-
197	Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited	197
<u>197</u>		<u>197</u>

The Council owns 1% of the shares in Teesside International Airport. The shares have been valued at £nil for 2020/21 (£nil 2019/20).

The Council has 196,845 £1 preference shares in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited.

These assets are held on the balance sheet at Fair Value through Comprehensive Income. Further details in relation to the valuation of these assets is disclosed in Note 45 and 46 Financial Instruments.

Further details of the Council's long term investments are included in Note 39 Related Party Transactions.

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Note 20: Long Term Debtors

This note sets out the value of Long Term Debtors held by the Council at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
6	Housing Advances	6
77	Trincomalee Trust Loan and Advances	77
31	Car Loans to Employees	132
586	NDC Trust Loan	579
1,283	Northern School of Art	1,224
1,070	Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited	802
548	Other	543
3,601		3,363

The Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited waste debtor reflects a payment in advance that was made in order to secure static gate fees for Energy for Waste plant. The term is for seven years inclusive of 2018/19 to 2024/25 and is amortised over this period.

Note 21: Inventories

This note sets out the value of inventories held by the Council at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
270	Balance at 1 April	423
2,505	Purchases	1,434
(2,340)	Recognised as an expense in year	(1,388)
(29)	Written off balances	(91)
17	Written back balances	12
423	Balance at 31 March	390

Note 22: Short Term Debtors

This note sets out amounts owed to the Council as at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
4,344	Central Government Bodies	14,136	1
1,698	Other Local Authorities	4,329	
452	NHS Bodies	809	
	Bodies external to general government:		
3,155	General and Other Debtors	3,581	
2,718	Payments in Advance	6,306	
6,321	Council Tax Payers	6,879	
1,452	NNDR Payers	841	
1,866	Trade Debtors	1,624	
22,006		38,505	

Note 1 - £7.9m of the increase relates to year end entries in relation the Collection Fund.

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Note 23: Debtors for Local Taxation

The past due but not impaired amount for local taxation (council tax and non-domestic rates) can be analysed by age as follows:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
3,240	Less than 1 year	3,611
7,725	More than 1 year	9,377
<u>10,965</u>		<u>12,988</u>

The above analysis does not include bad debt provision of £5.268m (£3.192m in 2019/20).

Note 24: Cash and Cash Equivalents

This note sets out details of the Council's cash in hand and instant access investment accounts in addition to the overdraft included in the Liabilities section of the balance sheet.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
Assets		
8,981	Bank and Imprests	1,507
7,800	Liquidity Investment Accounts	15,454
<u>16,781</u>		<u>16,961</u>
Liabilities		
-	Bank Overdraft	(1,721)
<u>16,781</u>		<u>15,240</u>

Note 25: Assets Held for Sale (Less than one year)

This note shows the movement of items of property, plant or equipment, or groups of assets and liabilities whose carrying amount is to be recovered principally through a sale rather than its continued use by the Council.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
-	Balance at 1 April	515
Assets newly classified as Held for Sale:		
515	Property, Plant and Equipment	283
-	Asset sold	(515)
<u>515</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>283</u>

Note 26: Short Term Creditors

This note sets out amounts owed by the Council as at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
4,193	Central Government Bodies	10,456	1
3,403	Other Local Authorities	2,752	
204	NHS Bodies	285	
Bodies external to General Government:			
5,357	General and Other Creditors	5,289	
2,488	Trade Creditors	1,551	
1,498	Employee Absences	4,959	2
1,577	Income in Advance	1,920	
707	Council Tax Payers	876	
782	NNDR Payers	517	
<u>20,209</u>		<u>28,605</u>	

Note 1 - The increase in Central Government Bodies creditors mainly relates to year end entries for the Collection Fund.

Note 2 - Owing to the pandemic, Council staff used significantly less annual leave during 2020/21. This is reflected in the increased value of accrued leave shown against Employee Absences.

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Note 27: Provisions

Total provisions at 31 March 2021, were £3.416m, (£3.993m in 2019/20), as detailed below.

Current Liabilities		2020/21			Total
		Other (Note 1)	Rating Appeals (Note 2)	MMI Insurance (Note 3)	
2019/20		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
3,194	Balance at 1 April	1,973	826	-	2,799
1,582	Additional provisions made in year	300	1,188	-	1,488
(690)	Amounts used in year	(669)	(481)	-	(1,150)
-	Transfer in Year	-	-	-	-
(1,287)	Unused amounts reversed in year	(915)	-	-	(915)
2,799	Balance at 31 March	689	1,533	-	2,222

Long Term Liabilities		2020/21		Total
		Contaminated Land (Note 4)	MMI Insurance (Note 3)	
2019/20		£000s	£000s	£000s
1,291	Balance at 1 April	634	560	1,194
-	Transfers in Year	-	-	-
(97)	Unused amounts reversed in year	-	-	-
1,194	Balance at 31 March	634	560	1,194

Note 1 - Other - this provision has been created to cover planning appeals, other potential legal cost liabilities and school deficits on conversion to academy status. The provision is based on a prudent estimate of the likely costs. However, the timing of these payments is uncertain.

Note 2 - Rating Appeals - following the implementation of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, this provision is earmarked to fund backdated appeals as a result of Rateable Value changes. These costs were previously met by Central Government.

Note 3 - In September 1992 Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI), the Council's former insurers, ceased accepting new business. MMI and its policyholders, including local authorities, have established a Scheme of Arrangement for the orderly run down of the company. MMI do not have enough assets to meet the claims and liabilities currently outstanding. The Scheme of Arrangement provides that, if there is a likelihood of a shortfall, MMI can reclaim from the major policyholders part of the claims paid from 1st October 1992. The Scheme of Arrangement under section 899 of the Companies Act 2006 was triggered in November 2012. From April 2016, the Creditors Committee set a levy rate of 25% (previously 15%) based on a percentage share of the liabilities outstanding. Therefore the Council has recognised a £0.560m provision in the accounts for these liabilities.

Note 4 - Contaminated Land - in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990, a provision for the Council's obligations arising from decontamination costs of areas of contaminated land where there is a significant possibility of causing significant harm to human health.

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Note 28: Other Long Term Liabilities

The Finance lease liability relates to the outstanding principal on the Council's finance leases. Further details are included in Note 43 Finance Leases. The finance lease liability has decreased as a result of repayments of the lease principal, exceeding additions in year. The net pensions liability has increased. See Note 53 for further information.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
97	Finance lease liability	306	43
174,055	Net Pensions liability	204,088	38
<u>174,152</u>		<u>204,394</u>	

Note 29: Grant Income & Taxation

Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2020/21.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
40,921	Council Tax Income	41,622
10,357	NNDR - Top-Up	10,525
16,865	NNDR Redistribution	8,346
7,778	Revenue Support Grant	7,905
-	Section 31 Relief	5,615
2,313	Business Rates Relief	2,366
-	75% Tax Income Guarantee Compensation	2,113
1,299	New Homes Bonus Grant	1,067
2,778	Capital - Other Capital Grants & Contributions	1,974
3,891	Capital - Tees Valley Combined Authority / Local Transport Plan	1,800
-	Capital - Tees Valley Combined Authority	1,099
92	Capital - Devolved Formula Capital Grant	671
740	Capital - Homes England	262
761	Capital - Other DfE Grants	57
-	Capital - Department for Transport	53
-	Capital - Building Schools for the Future	40
-	Capital - Environment Agency	20
3,782	Capital - Centre for Excellence in Creative Arts Grant	-
<u>91,577</u>	Total	<u>85,535</u>

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Note 29: Grant Income & Taxation

Credited to Services

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
48,172	Dedicated Schools Grant	48,647
28,083	Housing Benefit Subsidy	26,284
61	COVID-19 Local Authority Support Grant	9,264
8,533	Public Health Grant	9,025
7,229	Better Care Fund	8,030
3,123	Other Department for Education Grants	5,242
4,700	Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	5,201
-	COVID-19 - Income Compensation Scheme for lost sales, fees and charges	4,043
4,107	Pupil Premium	3,948
856	Social Care Support Grant	3,099
1,931	Youth Employment Initiative (Department for Work & Pensions)	2,991
-	Business Rates Refunds	2,882
-	Adult Social Care Infection Control Grant	2,206
-	Contain Outbreak Management Fund	2,199
4,481	Other Grants	2,170
-	Other COVID-19 - Related Grants	1,970
-	COVID-19 - Local Council Tax Support Grant	1,864
1,238	Home Office	1,811
951	Education Funding Agency/ Skills Funding Agency	1,263
711	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government	952
575	Department for Work & Pensions	836
1,249	Disabled Facility Grant	823
582	Independent Living Fund	582
366	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government - Troubled Families	534
625	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Administration	446
130	Department of Health Grants	157
501	Winter Pressures Funding for Adult Social Care	-
118,204	Total	146,469

Current Liabilities

The Council has received a number of grants, contributions and donations that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies or property to be returned if the conditions are not met. The balances at the year-end are as follows :-

Grant Receipts in Advance (Capital Grants)

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
2,727	Other Capital Grants & Contributions	3,607
2,789	Other Department for Education Grants	2,701
852	Tees Valley Combined Authority / Local Transport Plan	1,848
596	Tees Valley Combined Authority	617
-	Homes England	527
87	Disabled Facilities Grant	485
118	Environment Agency	148
53	Department for Transport	-
40	Building Schools for the Future	-
7,262	Total	9,933

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Grant Receipts in Advance (Revenue Grants)

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
3,396	Other Grants	1,821
-	COVID-19 - Contain Outbreak Management Fund	1,263
604	Other Department for Education	798
205	Tees Valley Combined Authority	85
60	Education Funding Agency/ Skills Funding Agency	16
3,343	COVID-19 Local Authority Support Grant	-
800	Youth Employment Initiative (Department for Work & Pensions)	-
<u>8,408</u>	Total	<u>3,983</u>

Note 30: Unearmarked General Fund Reserve

The General Fund Balance of £4.417m held at 31 March 2021 is held to meet unforeseen commitments not funded from Earmarked Reserves. Any use of this reserve will need to be repaid to ensure the Council can continue to manage unforeseen commitments.

The General Fund Balance of £4.417m held at 31 March 2021 is held to meet unforeseen commitments not funded from

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
<u>4,417</u>	General Fund Balance	<u>4,417</u>
<u>4,417</u>		<u>4,417</u>

Note 31: Budget Support & Investment Reserves

This note sets out the Budget Support & Investment Reserves balances at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
4,513	Budget Support Fund 2022/23 to 2024/25	7,691	1
-	Budget Support Fund 2021/22	4,312	2
-	COVID-19 Recovery Reserve	1,653	3
528	Looked After Children Reserves	1,061	4
96	Invest to Save	333	5
<u>5,137</u>		<u>15,050</u>	

- 1 This reserve will be used to support the budget over 2022/23 to 2024/25.
- 2 Fully Committed to supporting the budget in 2021/22.
- 3 This reserve is earmarked to meet additional costs in 2021/22 in relation to COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and compliance measures.
- 4 This reserve will be used to contribute towards financial pressures arising from increases in the number and costs of looked after children over and above the budgeted allocation.
- 5 Of this reserve £0.257m is committed to fund a multi disciplinary children's social care team to support safeguarding children and the balance is to support the delivery of Invest to Save initiatives.

Note 32: Revenue Grant Unapplied

Revenue Grants unapplied are grants received for specific commitments in 2021/22 or future years in accordance with grant conditions.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
3,823	Revenue Grants Unapplied	4,896
-	COVID-19 Grants Reserve	340
<u>3,823</u>		<u>5,236</u>

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Note 33: Earmarked Revenue Reserves

This note sets out the balances held in Earmarked Revenue Reserves as at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
-	Business Rates Risk Reserve	3,000	1
2,212	Insurance Fund	2,286	2
1,489	Treasury Management Risk Reserve	1,735	3
1,161	Strategic Change Reserves	1,416	4
1,211	Adult Social Care Reserve	1,040	5
333	Public Health Grant Reserve	514	6
-	Better Care Fund (Pooled Budget)	444	7
419	Education Improvement Strategy Reserve	316	8
315	Brexit Funding	315	9
-	Community Pot Reserve	312	10
309	Income Risk Reserve	309	11
20	Concessionary Fares	302	12
300	Support for Local Council Tax Support Scheme	300	13
302	Events Reserve	265	14
220	Better Care Fund Reserve	220	15
78	Trading Account Reserves	218	16
125	School Attainment Reserve	175	17
139	Supporting Family Poverty	77	18
38	National Museum of the Royal Navy Reserve	38	19
28	Museums Acquisition	29	20
17	Environmental Apprenticeships Scheme	17	21
15	Works in Default Empty Homes	15	22
13	Funding for Modern Apprentices	13	23
8	Tees Education & Skills Reserve	11	24
5	Centre of Excellence in Creative Arts Trading Reserves	5	25
2,692	Strategic One Off Costs	-	26
<u>11,449</u>		<u>13,372</u>	

- 1 This reserve is earmarked to manage the impact of the closure of the Power Station currently scheduled for 2024/25 and other Business Rates risks arising from the economic impact of COVID-19.
- 2 This reserve provides for all payments that fall within policy excesses or relate to self-insured risks. The reserve currently covers the estimated value of unpaid outstanding claims.
- 3 This reserve was created as part of the 2013/14 MTFs to manage the risk of interest rates increasing and to ensure permanent saving built into the MTFs can be achieved if interest rates increase. This was approved by Council 14th February, 2013.
- 4 Strategic Change Reserves have been established to enable departments to meet one-off costs that will arise from strategic changes to improve services, or reduce costs, without affecting the level of services in the year.
- 5 This reserve will be used to fund a range of one-off initiatives and to support the budget to fund increasing demographic and cost pressures within Adult Social Care
- 6 This reserve was created from an in-year underspend against the ring-fenced Public Health Grant. In accordance with the grant conditions a ring-fenced reserve has been created to support public health services in future years.
- 7 This is a ring-fenced Better Care Fund Reserve arising from additional CCG contributions to the Pooled Budget in 2020/21 to be used in 2021/22. See Note 56
- 8 This reserve is earmarked for the Education Improvement Strategy approved by Children's Services Committee on 13th November, 2018.
- 9 This reserve is earmarked for potential future costs relating to Brexit.
- 10 This reserve has been committed in 2021/22 to provide grants to various Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to deliver interventions that will address hardship arising from COVID-19 that is impacting on communities in Hartlepool.
- 11 This reserve was created as part of the 2013/14 MTFs approved by Council 4th February, 2013 and is earmarked to offset in year income shortfalls.
- 12 This reserve is to cover the tri-annual cost of replacing Concessionary Fare passes.
- 13 This reserve was created to partly mitigate the impact of the change to the Council Tax Benefit regime and the resulting cut in Government Grant.
- 14 The Events Reserves (previously The Lotteries Reserve), which consists of the proceeds of the Civic Lottery and donations received, is an earmarked reserve to fund the delivery of the 5 year events programme.
- 15 This reserve was created as a contingency to support the Adult Social Care budgets in future years arising from the impact of the Better Care Fund.
- 16 This reserve is earmarked to manage future financial risks on Trading Operations.

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- 17 This reserve was created towards improving School Attainment.
- 18 This reserve was created to Support Family Poverty over the period of the MTFS.
- 19 This reserve was created to fund the contributions required to support the Hartlepool Maritime Experience and developments with the National Museum of the Royal Navy (NMRN).
- 20 The Museums Acquisition reserve was set up from external donations for the acquisition of items for the Museum.
- 21 This reserve was created to fund costs over more than one financial year in relation to Apprentices.
- 22 This reserve has been created to provide a cash backed fund for the completion of housing works in default.
- 23 This amount was previously set to provide re-training of staff on the redeployment register. Council agreed on the 17th October, 2013 to use this reserve to provide Modern Apprenticeships. This amount will be used over the period of the MTFS.
- 24 This reserve was created from pooled resources from the local authorities of Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland, to enable a collaborated approach to tackle the root cause of underperformance and deliver a first class education and skills system.
- 25 This reserve has been established to mitigate risk of any Centre for Creative Arts income shortfalls in future years.
- 26 This reserve was created to cover one-off strategic financial issues including redundancy and early retirement costs over the period of the MTFS. As per the latest MTFS, this has been transferred into the Budget Support Fund 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Note 34: Earmarked Capital Reserves

This note sets out the balances held in Earmarked Capital Reserves as at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Note
9,328	Capital Funding Reserve	5,817	1
837	HRA Major Repairs Reserve	1,172	2
20	Capital Grants Unapplied	8	3
<u>10,185</u>		<u>6,997</u>	

- 1 The Capital Funding Reserve is earmarked to finance capital expenditure rephased to 2021/22.
- 2 This reserve is ring-fenced to the HRA and can only be used to fund major repairs or repayments of borrowing.
- 3 These are capital grants that will be used to finance capital expenditure in future years.

Note 35: COVID-19 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve

This Government has provided grant funding in 2020/21 to meet Collection Fund deficits arising from the impact of COVID-19. This reserve will be used over the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 to reflect the statutory arrangements from managing Collection Fund deficits.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
-	COVID-19 Council Tax and Business Rates Collection Fund Deficit Reserve	10,588
<u>-</u>		<u>10,588</u>

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Note 36: School Balances

This note sets out the Schools Reserves at 31 March 2021.

2019/20 <u>£000s</u>		<u>2020/21</u> <u>£000s</u>	Note
(246)	Balances held by schools under a scheme of delegation	2,054	1
269	Dedicated Schools Grant Reserves	1,256	2
<u>247</u>	School Ring Fenced Grants Reserves	<u>377</u>	3
<u><u>270</u></u>		<u><u>3,687</u></u>	

- 1 These reserves are held by schools under the Scheme of Delegation to support annual budget setting, funding of one-off costs and capital expenditure. Further details are available from the Children & Joint Commissioning Department.
- 2 Dedicated Schools Grant reserves position.
- 3 These reserves relate to ring-fenced grants to Schools.

Note 37: Housing Revenue Account Balance

This is a ring-fenced reserve accumulated from surpluses in previous years and is held to fund pressures of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) such as government rent cuts, Right to Buy sales and increasing repairs costs.

2019/20 <u>£000s</u>		<u>2020/21</u> <u>£000s</u>
<u>391</u>	HRA Balance	<u>495</u>
<u><u>391</u></u>		<u><u>495</u></u>

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Note 38: Unusable Reserves

The Unusable Reserves are shown below.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s	Table
76,168	Revaluation Reserve	74,754	1
136,868	Capital Adjustment Account	133,062	2
(174,055)	Pensions Reserve	(204,088)	3
366	Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve	366	4
322	Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(9,012)	5
(1,498)	Accumulated Absences Account	(4,958)	6
197	Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	197	7
38,368		(9,679)	

Table 1 - Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains 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:

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

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

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
70,789	Balance at 1 April	76,168
14,388	Upward revaluation of assets	376
(2,281)	Downward revaluation of assets not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(4)
-	Impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	-
12,107	Surplus or (Deficit) on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	372
(1,129)	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(1,237)
(311)	Write off of Revaluation Reserve following Category Transfer	-
(5,288)	Accumulated gains/(losses) on assets sold, scrapped or decommissioned	(549)
(6,728)	Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	(1,786)
76,168	Balance at 31 March	74,754

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Table 2 -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 Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council.

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1st April 2007 the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains. Note 5 provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
139,848	Balance at 1 April	136,868
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:	
(10,088)	- Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(11,614)
(709)	- Revaluation gains/(losses) on Property, Plant and Equipment	(667)
(2,196)	- Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	(2,441)
(6,279)	- Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(879)
(19,272)		(15,601)
6,728	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	1,786
(12,544)	Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	(13,815)
	Capital financing applied in the year:	
407	- Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	155
102	- Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	18
1,183	- Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to repay prudential borrowing	-
14,003	- Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	7,895
-	- Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	12
2,525	- Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	2,729
641	- Direct revenue funding credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	360
18,861		11,169
(9,297)	Movements in the market value of Investment Properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(1,160)
136,868	Balance at 31 March	133,062

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Table 3 - Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(127,227)	Balance at 1 April	(174,055)
(34,092)	Remeasurement of defined liability on pensions assets and liabilities	(15,626)
-	Net Acquisition/(disposal) of pensions assets and liabilities	-
(21,864)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(21,848)
9,128	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	7,441
<u>(174,055)</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>(204,088)</u>

Table 4 - Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve

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

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
366	Balance at 1 April	366
-	Transfers in Year	-
<u>366</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>366</u>

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Table 5 - 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 from council tax payers and business rates payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(1,286)	Balance at 1 April	322
1,608	Amount by which Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(9,334)
<u>322</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>(9,012)</u>

Table 6 - Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March 2021. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(1,488)	Balance at 1 April	(1,498)
1,488	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	1,498
<u>(1,488)</u>	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	<u>(4,959)</u>
(10)	Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(3,460)
<u>(1,498)</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>(4,958)</u>

Table 7 - Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its investments that are measured at fair value through other comprehensive income. The balance is reduced when investments with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost; or
- disposed of and the gains are realised.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
197	Balance at 1 April	197
-	Transfer from the Available for Sale Financial Instrument Account	-
<u>197</u>	Balance at 31 March	<u>197</u>

Note 39: Related Party Transactions

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

Central Government

Central government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Council has with other parties (e.g. council tax bills, housing benefits). Grants received from government departments including grant receipts outstanding at 31 March 2021, are shown in Note 29.

Members

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's Financial and Operating Policies. The total of Members' allowances paid in 2020/21 is shown in Note 11.

The Council pays grants and/or makes contractual payments to voluntary organisations/charities where an individual Councillor(s) may sit on the management board. In addition, as required by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Council has entered into a contract with Healthwatch Hartlepool for a value of £116,150 (£116,150 in 2019/20). Two of the Council's elected Members (both did not stand for re-election in the May 2021 local elections) are employed by Healthwatch Hartlepool, however, they were not involved in any decisions relating to this funding. Details of these interests are recorded in the Register of Members' Interest, open to public inspection at the Civic Centre during office hours.

These payments are either funded from the Council's own resources, or specific grants secured by the Council. In many cases funding is allocated by officers under delegated budget management responsibility. Where the final funding decision is made by Councillors, which would either be individual policy committees or Council, this decision would be made on the basis of an officer report at a formal Committee / Council meeting. These reports, meetings and minutes are open to the public.

Officers

Members of the Corporate Management Team and Departmental Management Teams are required to provide an annual declaration of interest and to keep this under review during the year. All declarations have been reviewed.

Note 39: Related Party Transactions

Other Public Bodies (subject to common control by central government)

In 2020/21 the Council provided services to Cleveland Fire Authority amounting to £0.227m (£0.234m in 2019/20). This included various support services, predominantly in relation to financial services, for which the Council received net income of £0.190m (£0.192m in 2019/2020). The Director of Resources and Development holds the position of Treasurer for the Fire Authority.

The Council continues to provide a range of support services to Thirteen Group. The income from these services amounted to £0.193m (£0.216m in 2019/20) which represented the cost of the service provided.

The Council receives income from 'Right to Buy' receipts in relation to the sale of former Council dwellings under the terms of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of its council housing stock to Thirteen Group in 2004. Sales in 2020/21 amounted to £0.124m (£0.067m in 2019/20).

The Council provides a range of Support Services to Hartlepool Academies, including Property Services, Payroll Services, Building Cleaning and School Catering. The income from the services amounted to £1.902m (£2.097m in 2019/20).

The Council delivers 'The Childrens Hub' on behalf of Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council. The Childrens Hub is an integrated single point of access across North Tees providing multi-agency triage and assessment of enquiries about children. Other integrated partners within The Childrens Hub include Cleveland Police, Harbour, Harrogate and District NHS Trust and Children and Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Stockton Council contributed £0.645m, (£0.639m in 2019/2020) towards the cost of this service.

The Hartlepool and Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) is a multi-agency partnership involving both Local Authorities, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), to co-ordinate their safeguarding services and act as a strategic leadership group. In 2020/21 Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council contributed £0.091m (£0.069m in 2019/20), the CCG £0.065m (£0.085m in 2019/20) and the PCC £0.065m (£0.031m in 2019/20).

Other

The Council holds minority shares in Teesside International Airport and Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd.

The Council's shareholding in Teesside International Airport is 1%. The Council has assessed a number of factors in detail and determined the valuation of the shares at £nil for 2020/21 (£nil in 2019/20).

Issues of note include a deficit on the Profit and Loss Account of £1.239m (previous year restated loss of £5.041m) and a net asset position of £14.748m (previous year restated net asset position of £15.987m). Further information and copies of their accounts are available from their Registered Office – Cavendish House, Teesdale Business Park, Stockton-On-Tees, Tees Valley, TS17 6QY.

In addition, the Council holds shares in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd with a value of £0.197m, equating to 3.3% of a £5.964m 0% redeemable preference shareholding in the company. Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd have produced accounts for the financial year to 31 December 2019, that includes a profit on the Profit and Loss Account of £3.647m . (£6.495m in 2018) and a net asset position of £63.233m (£59.587m in 2018). Further information on their accounts is available from the Registered Office, Suez House, Grenfell Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1ES. One Member has an interest in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd which has been properly disclosed in the Register of Member Interests. The Member did not stand for re-election in the May 2021 local elections.

The Council has not produced group accounts on the grounds of materiality.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 40: External Audit Costs

The Council has incurred the following costs in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and statutory inspections and to non-audit services provided by the Council's external auditors:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
84	Fees payable in respect of external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year	113
	- Fees payable in respect of other services	4
17	Fees payable for the certification of grant claims and returns for the year	17
<u>101</u>		<u>134</u>

Note 41: Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council's expenditure on schools is primarily funded by grant monies provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The ESFA recouped the funding for all existing and new academies in the Borough. DSG is ring-fenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the Schools Budget, as defined in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2021. The Schools Budget includes elements for a range of educational services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the Individual Schools Budget, which is divided into a budget share for each maintained school.

Details of the deployment of DSG receivable for 2020/21 are as follows: -

	Central Expenditure £000s	Individual Schools Budget £000s	Total £000s
Final DSG for 2020/21 before academy and high needs recoupment			85,935
Academy and high needs figure recouped for 2020/21			37,163
Total DSG after academy and high needs recoupment for 2020/21			48,772
Plus: Brought Forward from 2019/20			269
Less: Carry forward to 2021/22 agreed in advance			(242)
Agreed Initial Budget Distribution in 2020/21	18,204	30,596	48,799
In Year Adjustments	(54)	9	(45)
Final Budget Distribution for 2020/21	18,150	30,605	48,755
Less: Actual Central Expenditure	(17,136)		(17,136)
Less Actual Individual Schools Budget Deployed to Schools		(30,605)	(30,605)
Plus Local authority contribution for 2020/21			
Carried forward to 2021/22	1,014	-	1,256

The £1.256m carried forward to 2021/22 includes £0.242m growth funding agreed in advance, along with £1.014m central expenditure

The total DSG for 2020/21 of £85.935m excludes the final adjusted allocation for the Early Years Block that is expected in June 2021. As per regulations, this amount is shown as an in-year adjustment for 2020/21.

Individual School Budgets were increased by £0.061m in 2020/21 to reflect permanently excluded pupils and the clawback of pupil funding permitted in the regulations. The reduction is included within the value of in-year adjustments.

Schools' Forum approved a transfer of £0.329m from DSG Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2020/21. Schools' Forum also approved a transfer of £0.278m from the Central School Services Block to the Schools Block in 2020/21. Both funding transfers are shown as in-year adjustments.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 42: Operating Leases

The Council has acquired a number of administrative buildings and its fleet of vehicles by entering into operating leases, with typical lives of five years for vehicles and eight years for property. The future minimum lease payments due under non-cancellable leases in future years are:

Council as lessee

<u>2019/20</u> <u>£000s</u>	Future minimum lease payments due	<u>2020/21</u> <u>£000s</u>
195	Not later than one year	117
228	Later than one year & not later than five years	181
37	Later than five years	35
<u>460</u>		<u>333</u>

Council as lessor

<u>2019/20</u> <u>£000s</u>	Future minimum lease payments receivable	<u>2020/21</u> <u>£000s</u>
625	Not later than one year	562
1,217	Later than one year & not later than five years	1,311
1,541	Later than five years	1,351
<u>3,383</u>		<u>3,224</u>

The Council leases out property and equipment under operating leases for the following purposes:

- for the provision of community services, such as sports facilities, tourism services and community centres.
- for economic development purposes to provide suitable affordable accommodation for local businesses.
- for the provision of housing accommodation as a result of leasing 35 of its renovated former empty properties to Mears. 8 properties were only taken on a temporary lease and these were returned to the council during 2020/21.

The Council has sub-let some of the office accommodation held under these operating leases. At 31 March, 2021 the minimum payments expected to be received under non-cancellable sub-leases was £0.020m (£0.020m as at 31 March, 2020).

The expenditure charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year in relation to these leases was:

<u>2019/20</u> <u>£000s</u>		<u>2020/21</u> <u>£000s</u>
	Payments recognised as an expense	
1,656	Minimum lease payments	1,435
(165)	Sub-lease payments	(104)
<u>1,491</u>	Total	<u>1,331</u>

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 43: Finance Leases

The Council has acquired its IT and telecommunications equipment under finance leases. The assets acquired under these leases are carried as Property, Plant and Equipment in the Balance Sheet at the following net amounts:

Council as lessee

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
475	Value of Assets held under Finance Leases	
	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	381
475	Total	381

The Council is committed to making minimum payments under these leases comprising settlement of the long-term liability for the interest in the property and finance costs that will be payable in future years while the liability remains outstanding. The minimum lease payments are made up of the following amounts:-

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
	Future minimum lease payments due	
104	Current	79
97	Non-current	306
21	Finance costs payable in the future	55
222	Total minimum lease payments	440

The minimum lease payments and finance lease liabilities will be payable over the following periods:

2019/20			2020/21	
Minimum Lease Payments £000s	Finance Lease Liabilities £000s		Minimum Lease Payments £000s	Finance Lease Liabilities £000s
		Payable:		
114	104	Not later than one year	98	79
107	97	Later than one year & not later than five years	341	306
221	201	Total	439	385

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 44: Capital Expenditure and Financing

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

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
103,436	Brought Forward Opening Capital Financing Requirement	108,026
	Capital investment	
21,171	Property, Plant and Equipment	8,730
81	Intangible Assets	-
67	Investment Properties	-
-	Heritage Assets	61
2,196	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	2,441
(64)	Long Term Debtors	(66)
	Sources of Finance	
(407)	Capital receipts	(155)
(1,183)	Application of Capital Receipts to Repay Borrowing	-
(279)	Application of Capital Grant to fund HRA Appropriation	-
-	Application of Capital Grant from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(12)
(102)	Major Repairs Reserve	(18)
(23)	Grants to repay Borrowing	-
(13,701)	Government Grants and Other Contributions	(7,895)
	<i>Sums set aside from revenue:</i>	
(641)	Direct Revenue Contributions	(360)
(2,525)	Minimum Revenue Position (MRP)	(2,729)
<u>108,026</u>	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	<u>108,023</u>
	Explanation of movements in year	
(1,183)	Application of Capital Receipts to Repay Borrowing	-
(279)	Application of Capital Grant to fund HRA Appropriation	-
(23)	Grant to repay Borrowing	-
(64)	Repayments by Long Term Debtors	(66)
50	Increase in Finance Lease Obligations	288
8,614	Increase in borrowing unsupported by government financial assistance	2,504
(2,525)	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	(2,729)
<u>4,590</u>	Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	<u>(3)</u>

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 45: Financial Instruments

Categories of Financial Instruments

The borrowings and investments disclosed in the Balance Sheet are made up of the following categories of financial instruments:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
Long Term £000s	Current £000s		Long Term £000s	Current £000s
		Investments at Amortised Cost		
-	5,010	Loans and receivables at Amortised Cost	-	5,002
-	7,800	Liquidity Accounts included in Cash Equivalents	-	15,454
-	12,810	Total Investments at Amortised Cost	-	20,456
197	-	Assets at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income (Note 1)	197	-
197	12,810	Total Investments	197	20,456
		Debtors		
3,601	7,061	Financial Assets (including Trade Debtors and General and Other Debtors and Long Term Debtors)	3,363	8,124
3,601	7,061	Total debtors	3,363	8,124
		Borrowings at Amortised Cost		
75,637	3,464	Financial liabilities at amortised cost (Note 2)	72,692	3,502
75,637	3,464	Total Borrowings at Amortised Costs	72,692	3,502
		Other Long Term Liabilities		
97	104	Finance lease liabilities	306	79
97	104	Total Other Long Term Liabilities	306	79
		Creditors		
-	7,845	Financial liabilities carried at contract amount (Trade Creditors and General and Other Creditors)	-	6,840
-	7,845	Total Creditors	-	6,840

Note 1 - The Council holds minority shares in Tees International Airport and in Suez Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd. These share holdings originated through policy initiatives with other Local Authorities and are not held for trading or income generation. Therefore the Council have elected to designate the equity as Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income.

Note 2 - As required accrued interest relating to long term borrowing is disclosed within the short term borrowing figure on the balance sheet.

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 45: Financial Instruments

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

This note comprises details of income, expenses and revaluation losses that relate specifically to financial instruments. Interest expense, interest income and gains or losses on revaluations are included along with other non financial instrument related income and expenditure within the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2020/21			
	Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost	Finance Lease Payments	Financial Assets: Loans and receivables at amortised cost	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Interest expense	2,853	10		2,863
Interest income	-	-	(146)	(146)
(Gain) / Loss on revaluation	-	-	-	-
Net (gain)/loss for the year	2,853	10	(146)	2,717

	2019/20			
	Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost	Finance Lease Payments	Financial Assets: Loans and receivables at amortised cost	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Interest expense	2,919	13	-	2,932
Interest income	-	-	(363)	(363)
Net (gain)/loss for the year	2,919	13	(363)	2,569

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 45: Financial Instruments

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

Except for financial assets carried at fair value, all other financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. However disclosure of their fair value is required and is set out below.

Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. Input to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the financial statements are categorised within the "fair value hierarchy," as follows:

- Level 1 - Unadjusted quoted market prices for identical assets or liabilities;
- Level 2 - Inputs other than quoted market prices that are either directly or indirectly observable;
- Level 3 - Unobservable inputs.

The fair value of the below assets and liabilities has been assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining life of the instruments (Level 2 in the fair value hierarchy), using the following assumptions:

- For loans from the PWLB payable, premature repayment rates from the PWLB have been applied to provide the fair value under the PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For non-PWLB loans payable, premature market rates have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or the billed amount;
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

The fair values are calculated as follows:

31 March 2020			31 March 2021	
Carrying Amount	Fair Value		Carrying Amount	Fair Value
£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s
Financial Liabilities				
45,383	123,276	Market Loans	45,378	99,580
33,718	42,469	Public Works Loan Board	30,816	43,306
7,845	7,845	Trade Creditors and General and Other Creditors	6,840	6,840
97	97	Long Term Finance Lease Liability	306	306
87,043	173,687		83,340	150,032
Financial Assets				
12,813	12,813	Money market loans < 1 year	20,456	20,456
7,061	7,061	Short term debtors	8,124	8,124
3,601	3,601	Long term debtors	3,363	3,363
23,475	23,475		31,943	31,943

Note 45: Financial Instruments

The fair value of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans of £43.306m measures the economic effect of the terms agreed with the PWLB compared with estimates of the terms that would be offered for market transactions undertaken at the Balance Sheet date. The difference between the carrying amount and the fair value is calculated by applying the PWLB redemption interest rates, which are lower than the borrowing interest rates. The fair value therefore measures the additional interest that the Council will pay over the remaining terms of the loans under the agreements with the PWLB, against what would be paid if the loans were at prevailing market rates, taken to be these lower redemption interest rates. However, it should be noted that the borrowing interest rates on the debt drawn equated to the prevailing borrowing, as opposed to redemption rates at the Balance Sheet date.

However, the Council has a continuing ability to borrow at concessionary rates from the PWLB rather than from the markets. A supplementary measure of the additional interest that the Council will pay as a result of its PWLB commitments for fixed rate loans is to compare the terms of these loans with the new borrowing rates available from the PWLB. If a value is calculated on this basis, the carrying amount of £30.816m would be valued at £37.780m. But, if the Council were to seek to avoid the projected loss by repaying the loans to the PWLB, the PWLB would raise a penalty charge for early redemption in addition to charging a premium for the additional interest that will not now be paid. The exit price for the PWLB loans would be the outstanding loan debt and accrued interest of £30.816m plus a penalty charge of £12.490m totalling £43.306m.

The fair value of the liabilities is higher than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the prevailing rates at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional loss (based on economic conditions at 31 March 2021) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders above current market rates.

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

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income

Some of the authority's financial assets are measured in the balance sheet at fair value through Other Comprehensive Income. As these share holdings originated through policy initiatives with other Local Authorities and are not held for trading or income generation the Council have elected to designate the equity as Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income. These assets are described in the following table which includes the valuation techniques used to measure them.

Recurring fair value measurements	Input level in fair value hierarchy	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	Fair Value	
			31 March 2020	31 March 2021
			£000s	£000s
Equity shareholdings in Teesside International Airport	Level 3	Based on various factors including reviewing the Business Plan, passenger numbers and historic performance (see below)	-	-
Equity shareholdings in SUEZ Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd	Level 3	Face value (see below)	197	197
			<u>197</u>	<u>197</u>

Equity shareholdings in Teesside International Airport

The Authority's shareholding in Teesside International Airport - the shares in this company are not traded in an active market and the fair value has been based on valuation techniques that are not based on observable current market transactions or available market data. The Council has assessed a number of factors in detail to determine the valuation of these shares. At present the Council has determined to value these shares at £nil.

Equity shareholdings in Suez Recycling & Recovery Tees Valley Ltd

The Authority's shareholding in SUEZ Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Ltd - the shares in this company are not traded in an active market and the fair value has been based on valuation techniques that are not based on observable current market transactions or available market data. 196,845 £1 preference shares are owned by Hartlepool Council, as such the Council is not entitled to the retained profits of the company. The face value of the shares is deemed to be the fair value of the shareholding.

Changes in Valuation Technique

There has been no change in the valuation technique used during the year for the financial instruments.

Note 46: Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

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

- market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Council as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movements.
- credit risk – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Council.
- liquidity risk – the possibility that the Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments.
- re-financing risk - the possibility that the Council might be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms.

The Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets, and are structured to implement suitable controls to minimise these risks. The procedures for risk management are set out through a legal framework in the Local Government Act 2003 and associated regulations. These require the Council to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services and Investment Guidance issued through the Act. Overall, these procedures require the Council to manage risk in the following ways:

- by formally adopting the requirements of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice,
- by the adoption of a Treasury Policy Statement and treasury management clauses within its financial regulations/standing orders/constitution,
- by approving annually in advance prudential and treasury indicators for the following three years limiting:
 - the Council's overall borrowing;
 - its maximum and minimum exposures to the maturity structure of its debt;
 - its maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable rates;
 - its maximum annual exposures to investments maturing beyond a year.
- by approving an investment strategy for the forthcoming year setting out its criteria for both investing and selecting investment counterparties in compliance with the Government Guidance.

The annual treasury management strategy which incorporates the prudential indicators was approved by Council on 20 February 2020 and is available on the Council website. The key issues within the strategy were:

- the Authorised Limit for 2020/21 was set at £155m (£142m in 2019/20). This is the maximum limit of external borrowings or other long term liabilities;
- The Operational Boundary was expected to be £145m (£132m in 2019/20). This is the expected level of debt and other long term liabilities during the year
- the maximum amounts of gross fixed interest rate exposure for borrowing and investments was set at 100% and 100% respectively (100% and 100% respectively in 2019/20).
- the maximum amount of gross variable interest rate exposure for borrowing and investments was set at 75% and 100% respectively (75% and 100% respectively in 2019/20).

These items are reported with the annual Treasury Management strategy which outlines the detailed approach to managing risk in relation to the Council's financial instrument exposure. Actual performance is also reported annually to Councillors. The Council has now extended the role of the Audit Committee to include the scrutiny of treasury activities.

Note 46: Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments**Credit Risk**

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

This risk is minimised through the Annual Investment Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, in accordance with the Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poors Ratings Services. The Annual Investment Strategy also imposes a maximum amount and time to be invested with a financial institution located within each category. Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they meet the minimum requirements of the investment criteria outlined above. The Council now operates a very restricted counterparty list which is actively managed to reflect continued developments in the banking and financial sector.

The Investment Strategy for 2020/21 was approved by Full Council on 20 February 2020 and is available on the Council's website.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in banks and building societies of £16.567m cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. Recent experience has shown that it is rare for such entities to be unable to meet their commitments. A risk of irrecoverability applies to all of the Council's deposits, however there was no evidence at 31 March 2021 that this was likely to crystallise.

No credit limits were exceeded during the reporting period and the Council does not expect any losses from non-performance by any of its counterparties in relation to deposits.

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

Amounts Arising from Expected Credit Losses

The following analysis summarises the Council's changes in loss allowances i.e. bad debt provision for Debtors. The Council has made no loss allowance for other financial assets as the Council has assessed that any risk of default in relation to borrowers are not material.

	Asset Class: Debtors (Financial Assets) £000
Opening balance	<u>(2,042)</u>
Amounts written off	7
Changes in Impairment of Financial Assets	<u>(812)</u>
Closing balance	<u>(2,847)</u>

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Note 46: Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

The Council does not generally allow credit for customers, such that £3.071m of the £8.124m Debtors (Financial Assets) balance is past its due date for payment. The past due but not impaired amount can be analysed by age as follows:

31 March 2020 £000s		31 March 2021 £000s
575	Less than three months	1,423
262	Three to six months	266
295	Six months to one year	329
522	More than one year	1,053
<u>1,654</u>		<u>3,071</u>

Liquidity Risk

The Council has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. If unexpected movements happen, the Council has ready access to borrowings from the money markets and the Public Works Loans Board. There is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Council will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates. The Council sets limits on the maturity structure of its fixed rate borrowing during specified periods. The limits have been set to enable maximum flexibility as experience has shown it is possible to move from 100% long term borrowing to 100% short term borrowing and then back to 100% long term borrowing over a period of two years. Therefore the lower limit was set to nil and the upper limit to £145m, equal to the operational boundary.

The maturity structure of financial liabilities (borrowing and finance leases) at the year end was as follows:

31 March 2020 £000s		31 March 2021 £000s
2,991	Less than one year	2,945
5,250	Between one and five years	2,989
4,122	Between five and ten years	4,115
3,956	Between ten and fifteen years	3,815
2,451	Between fifteen and twenty years	2,250
2,251	Between twenty and twenty-five years	2,313
2,648	Between twenty-five and thirty years	2,742
6,525	Between thirty and thirty-five years	6,166
2,725	Between thirty-five and forty years	2,723
654	Between forty and forty-five years	467
45,151	More than forty-five years	45,112
<u>78,724</u>		<u>75,637</u>

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year.

Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates 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 Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise.
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the liabilities borrowings will fall.
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services will rise.
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall.

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Note 46: Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

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

A large proportion of the Council's long term borrowing (£20m) is held in the form of LOBO (Lender Option Borrower Option) loans from the money markets. These loans are subject to periodic "calls" from the lender. Where the lender decides to "call" a loan, they increase the interest rate of the loan and the Council then has the opportunity to accept the increased rate or to repay the loan. In accordance with the Code of Practice, the Council's LOBOs are included in the maturity analysis according to the end date of the loan rather than when the next call date falls.

The Council's view is that the risk of these loans being called is very low and there is therefore minimum refinancing risk owing to low current market rates. The Council manages this risk through the Treasury Management Strategy.

The view of the Director of Resources and Development is that limits on fixed and variable rates of borrowings are unhelpful and could lead to unnecessary higher cost of borrowing. Previous experience has shown that it is possible to move from a position of predominantly fixed rate borrowing to variable rate borrowing and then back to fixed rate borrowing over a period of two years. The intention is to move to fixed rate borrowing when rates are at an appropriate level and may require the use of variable rate borrowing in the interim. The Council has maximised the use of its balances to defer borrowing and avoid the risk of default on investments.

According to this assessment strategy, at 31 March 2021, if interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the financial effect would be:

	£000s
Increase in interest payable on borrowings	(762)
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	(205)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(967)
	£000s
Decrease in fair value of fixed rate borrowings liabilities (no impact on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement)	(31,941)

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

Price Risk

The Council, excluding the pension fund, does not invest in equity shares but does have shareholdings in Durham Tees Valley Airport Limited and SUEZ Recycling and Recovery Tees Valley Limited. These shares are all classified as Assets at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income, meaning that all movements in price will impact on gains and losses recognised in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Foreign Exchange Risk

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

Collateral Risk

During the reporting period the Council held no collateral as security and is therefore not exposed to losses arising from this risk.

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Note 47: Cash Flow Statement - Operating Activities

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
363	Interest Received	146
(2,961)	Interest Paid	(2,883)

Note 48: Cash Flow Statement - Adjustments for non-cash movements

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

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
10,059	Depreciation	10,242
737	Impairment and Downward Valuations	2,039
9,297	Downward / (Upward) Valuation of Investment Property	1,160
(492)	Increase / (Decrease) in Provisions	(577)
8,595	Increase / (Decrease) in Creditors	3,856
(4,376)	(Increase) / Decrease in Debtors	(12,999)
(153)	(Increase) / Decrease in Inventories	33
12,736	Pension Liability	14,407
6,279	Carrying amount of Non-Current Assets Sold	879
(3,782)	Other non-cash items charged to the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services	-
38,900		19,040

Note 49: Cash Flow Statement - Adjustments for Investing and Financing Activities

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

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(10,221)	Capital Grants credited to surplus or deficit on the provision of services	(7,895)
(1,563)	Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property	(155)
28,075	Proceeds from short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)	8
16,291		(8,042)

Note 50: Cash Flow Statement - Investing Activities

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(17,942)	Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment and Investment Property	(8,817)
-	Purchase of Short-term and Long-term Investments	-
(52)	Other Payments for Investing Activities	(96)
1,563	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property	155
-	Proceeds from the sale of Short-term and Long-term Investments	-
9,225	Other Receipts from Investing Activities	7,693
(7,206)	Net cash flows from investing activities	(1,065)

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 51: Cash Flow Statement - Financing Activities

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(618)	Council Tax and NNDR adjustment	133
(102)	Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases	(96)
<u>(8,910)</u>	Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	<u>(2,887)</u>
<u>(9,630)</u>	Net cash flows from financing activities	<u>(2,850)</u>

Note 52: Pensions Schemes Accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Capita Teachers' Pensions 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.

This is a defined benefit scheme. Although the scheme is unfunded, Teachers' Pensions use a notional fund as the basis for calculating employers' contribution rate paid by local authorities. The last valuation was effective from 1 September 2019.

The scheme has in excess of 11,200 participating employers and consequently the Council is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme. As a proportion of the total contributions into the Teachers' Pension Scheme during the year ending 31st March 2021, the Council's own contributions equate to approximately 0.05%.

The Council's contribution to the Teacher's Pension Scheme in 2020/21 amounted to £3.913m (£3.573m in 2019/20) which represented 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy). There were no contributions remaining payable at the year-end. The contributions due to be paid in the next financial year are estimated to be £3.900m, this is based on 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy).

The Council is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the teachers' scheme. These benefits are fully accrued in the Pensions Liability relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Council is not liable to the scheme for any other entities obligations under the plan.

Public Health staff employed by the Council are members of the NHS Pensions Scheme, administered by the NHS Business Services Authority. The Scheme provides employees with specified benefits upon their retirement, and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

This is a defined benefit scheme. Although the scheme is unfunded, it is subject to a full actuarial valuation. The latest valuation was undertaken as at 31st March 2016 and determined current contribution rates for employers and scheme members. The scheme has in excess of 8,200 employing bodies and it is not possible for the Council to identify a share of underlying liabilities in the scheme attributable to its own employees. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme. As a proportion of the total contributions into the NHS Pension Scheme during the year ending 31st March 2021, the Council's own contributions equate to approximately 0.0012%.

The Council's contribution to the NHS Pension Scheme in 2020/21 amounted to £0.183m (£0.202m in 2019/20). This represented 20.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administrative levy). The contributions due to be paid in the next financial year are estimated to be £0.183m. There were no contributions remaining payable at the year-end.

Note 53: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes
Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of 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 and to disclose them at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme, administered locally by the Teesside Pension Fund. This is a funded defined benefit final salary scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pensions liabilities with investment assets.

The Pension Scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the pensions committee of the Pensions and Investments Panel. This panel has plenary powers to make decisions without reference to Middlesbrough Council and acts in a similar manner to the Board of Trustees of a private sector pension fund. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pension Fund Regulations.

The Panel consists of representatives from the councils in the former Cleveland County area as well as representatives from the Trades Unions.

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

Discretionary post-retirement benefits on early retirement are an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. There are no plan assets built up to meet these pension liabilities.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The Council recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the reported 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 post employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements		Total	
	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement						
Cost of Services:						
· Current Service cost	18,477	17,750	-	-	18,477	17,750
· Past Service Costs (inc. curtailments)	443	178	-	-	443	178
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:						
· Net Interest Expense	2,666	3,680	278	240	2,944	3,920
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	21,586	21,608	278	240	21,864	21,848
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:						
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability:						
· Return on plan assets (excluding amount in net interest expense)	71,190	(102,258)	-	-	71,190	(102,258)
· Actuarial (gains) and losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	(12,075)	124,120	(91)	709	(12,166)	124,829
· Actuarial (gains) and losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(17,428)	-	(423)	-	(17,851)	-
· Actuarial (gains) and losses owing to liability experience	(7,025)	(6,580)	(56)	(365)	(7,081)	(6,945)
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	56,248	36,890	(292)	584	55,956	37,474

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Note 53: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements		Total	
	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Movement in Reserves Statement						
Reversal of net charges made to the Surplus or Deficit for the Provision of Services for post employment benefits in accordance with the Code	(21,586)	(21,608)	(278)	(240)	(21,864)	(21,848)
Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year:						
Employers' contribution payable to scheme	8,267	6,590	-	-	8,267	6,590
Retirement Benefits payable to pensioners	-	-	861	851	861	851
Transfer from Pension Reserve	(13,319)	(15,018)	583	611	(12,736)	(14,407)

Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

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

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements		Total	
	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Fair value of plan assets	431,002	537,270	-	-	431,002	537,270
Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(594,183)	(730,751)	(10,874)	(10,607)	(605,057)	(741,358)
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(163,181)	(193,481)	(10,874)	(10,607)	(174,055)	(204,088)

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

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements		Total	
	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Opening fair value of assets	(495,204)	(431,002)	-	-	(495,204)	(431,002)
Interest Income on assets	(11,830)	(9,849)	-	-	(11,830)	(9,849)
Remeasurement gains/(losses):						
Return on plan assets (excl amount in net interest)	71,190	(102,258)	-	-	71,190	(102,258)
Contributions by the employer	(8,267)	(6,590)	(861)	(851)	(9,128)	(7,441)
Contributions by participants	(3,236)	(3,296)	-	-	(3,236)	(3,296)
Net benefits paid out	16,345	15,725	861	851	17,206	16,576
Closing fair value of assets	(431,002)	(537,270)	-	-	(431,002)	(537,270)

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

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements		Total	
	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s	2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
Opening balance at 1 April	(610,405)	(594,184)	(12,027)	(10,874)	(622,432)	(605,058)
Current Service Cost	(18,477)	(17,750)	-	-	(18,477)	(17,750)
Interest Cost	(14,496)	(13,529)	(278)	(240)	(14,774)	(13,769)
Contributions from scheme participants	(3,236)	(3,296)	-	-	(3,236)	(3,296)
Remeasurement gains/(losses):						
Actuarial gains and (losses) on liabilities - financial assumptions	12,075	(124,120)	91	(709)	12,166	(124,829)
Actuarial gains and (losses) on liabilities - demographic assumptions	17,428	-	423	-	17,851	-
Actuarial gains and (losses) on liabilities - experience	7,025	6,580	56	365	7,081	6,945
Past Service Costs (inc. curtailments)	(443)	(178)	-	-	(443)	(178)
Benefits paid	16,345	15,725	861	851	17,206	16,576
Closing present value of assets	(594,184)	(730,752)	(10,874)	(10,607)	(605,058)	(741,359)

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

Note 53: Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

Local Government Pension Scheme Assets

The Local Government Pension Scheme's assets comprised:

	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000
Equity investments	313,339	428,741
Property	38,359	40,295
Cash	57,754	40,295
Other Investments	21,550	27,938
	<u>431,002</u>	<u>537,269</u>

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and discretionary benefits liabilities have been assessed by AON Solutions UK Limited, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Council Fund being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31st March 2019.

Principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Discretionary Benefit Arrangements	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Long-term expected rate of return on assets in the scheme:				
Equities	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Property	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Government Bonds	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Corporate Bonds	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Cash	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Other	2.3%	2.1%	-	-
Mortality assumptions:				
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:				
Men	21.8	21.9	21.8	21.9
Women	23.5	23.6	23.5	23.6
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:				
Men	23.2	23.3	-	23.3
Women	25.3	25.4	-	25.4
Other assumptions:				
Rate of inflation - CPI	2.0%	2.7%	2.0%	2.7%
Rate of general increase in salaries	3.0%	3.7%	-	-
Rate of increase in pensions - deferred and pensions in payment	2.0%	2.7%	2.0%	2.7%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.3%	2.1%	2.3%	2.1%

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Sensitivity Analysis

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

The sensitivity analysis below has been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all other assumptions remain constant.

The assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e.. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

LGPS Funded Benefits Only	Impact on Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme	
	Increase in Assumption £000s	Decrease in Assumption £000s
Adjustment to Discount rate (+/- 0.1%)	(14,615)	14,615
Adjustment to Salary increase rate (+/- 0.1%)	2,192	(2,192)
Adjustment to Pension increase rate (+/- 0.1%)	12,423	(12,423)
Adjustment to Longevity (decrease/increase 1 year)	27,038	(26,307)

Impact on the Council's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. The current funding level of the scheme is 115%. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The next triennial valuation is due to be completed on 31 March 2022.

The scheme will need to take account of the national changes to the scheme under the Public Pensions Services Act 2013. Under the Act, Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales and the other main existing public service schemes may not provide benefits in relation to service after 31 March, 2014. The Act provides for scheme regulations to be made within a common framework, to establish new career average revalued earnings schemes to pay pensions and other benefits to certain public servants.

The Council anticipated to pay £7.504m expected contributions to the scheme in 2021/2022.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 20.3 years in 2020/21 (20.3 years in 2019/20).

Note 54: Contingent Liabilities

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

The Council is responsible for the Claxton Site which is a closed landfill. There is a possible obligation arising relating to de-contamination of the site; it is not possible at this stage to quantify the potential liability or when the works may be required. The site is regularly tested to ensure compliance with the Environment Protection Act 1990.

Note 55: Financial Guarantees

In 1989 the Council gave a loan guarantee of £3m to North Housing Association (now Home Housing Association) for sums borrowed on the money markets that would come into operation should the housing association default on the loan terms. Provision is included in the agreement for any such payments to be secured on North Housing Association property. It is anticipated that this guarantee will exist until the loan is repaid in 2049. The likelihood of this guarantee being called upon is remote and therefore no amounts have been recognised in the balance sheet in respect of this guarantee.

A guarantee was given to the Teesside Pension Scheme for the staff transferred to Housing Hartlepool in 2004 in the event that Housing Hartlepool had financial difficulties. The likelihood of this guarantee being called upon is remote and therefore no amounts have been recognised in the balance sheet in respect of this guarantee.

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Note 56: Pooled Budgets

The Better Care Fund (BCF) was established by the Government to support the introduction of a fully integrated health and social care system.

On 1 April 2015 the Council entered into a pooled budget arrangement with NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the provision of services in accordance with the requirements of the Better Care Fund.

This is an annual agreement made in accordance with Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006. This is a jointly controlled pooled budget which is hosted by the Council on behalf of both partners in line with the agreement.

The Hartlepool BCF Plan will contribute to the delivery of:

- Reduced non-elective admissions;
- Reduced admissions of older people into residential care;
- Increased proportion of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services;
- Reduced delayed transfers of care from hospital;
- Increase in the estimated diagnosis rate for dementia; and,
- Improved patient experience of services.

The BCF is the national programme through which local areas agree how to spend a local pooled budget in accordance with the programme's national requirements. The pooled budget is made up of CCG funding as well as local government grants, one of which is the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF).

The iBCF was first announced in the 2015 Spending Review and was increased in the 2017 Spring Budget. Only the iBCF announced in the 2017 Spring Budget was included in the 2019/20 figures below however, in line with national allocations, it has all now been combined into one iBCF grant therefore the 2020/21 figures reflect this combined total.

Revenue Pooled Budget

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
	Revenue Funding provided to the Pooled Budget:	
(709)	Hartlepool Borough Council - Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	(5,201)
(7,229)	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	(7,612)
-	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group - Additional Contribution	(418)
<u>(7,938)</u>		<u>(13,231)</u>
	Expenditure met from the Pooled Budget:	
6,047	Hartlepool Borough Council	6,365
1,182	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	1,221
603	Hartlepool Borough Council - Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF)	5,095
106	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (iBCF)	106
<u>7,938</u>		<u>12,787</u>
<u>-</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>(444)</u>

Capital Pooled Budget

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
	Capital Funding provided to the Pooled Budget:	
(55)	Balance brought forward	-
(1,077)	Hartlepool Borough Council	(1,222)
-	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	-
<u>(1,132)</u>		<u>(1,222)</u>
	Expenditure met from the Pooled Budget:	
1,132	Hartlepool Borough Council	823
-	NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group	-
<u>1,132</u>		<u>823</u>
<u>-</u>	Balance carried forward	<u>(399)</u>

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

The HRA Income and Expenditure Statement shows the economic cost in the year of providing housing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from rents and government grants. Authorities charge rents to cover expenditure in accordance with the legislative framework; this may be different from the accounting cost. The increase or decrease in the year, on the basis upon which rents are raised, is shown in the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement.

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
	Expenditure	
180	Repairs and maintenance	198
339	Supervision and management	357
29	Rents, rates, taxes and other charges	33
5	Discretionary Housing Payments	1
50	Movement in the allowance for bad debts	25
10	Debt Management Expenses	10
904	Depreciation, impairment and revaluation losses of non-current assets	621
1,517	Total Expenditure	1,245
	Income	
(1,238)	Dwelling Rents	(1,257)
(19)	Charges for services and facilities (net of voids)	1
(279)	Contributions towards appropriation of land	-
(28)	Other Income	(126)
(1,564)	Total Income	(1,382)
(47)	Net Expenditure or (Income) of HRA Services as included in the whole authority Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(137)
355	Interest payable	355
(8)	Interest and investment income	(29)
8	Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	7
308	Deficit/(Surplus) for the year on HRA services	196

MOVEMENT ON THE HRA STATEMENT

2019/20 £000s		2020/21 £000s
(347)	Opening balance on the HRA	(391)
308	(Surplus) or Deficit for the year on the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement	196
	Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under statute :	
(709)	- Revaluations losses	(424)
(28)	- Impairment losses	(12)
(35)	- IAS19 Pensions Adjustment	(32)
279	- Application of S106 Funding in relation to appropriation of land	-
(167)	- Depreciation	(185)
167	- Transfer to Major Repairs Reserve	185
(185)	Net (increase) or decrease before transfers to or from reserves	(272)
141	Transfers to or (from) earmarked reserves	168
(44)	(Increase) or decrease in the year on the HRA	(104)
(391)	Closing balance on the HRA	(495)

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

NOTES TO THE HRA

Note 1: Depreciation and Revaluation

Included within the HRA is a total depreciation charge of £0.186m (2019/20 £0.167m) which transfers funding into the Major Repairs Reserve to meet the cost of future major repairs. The loss on revaluation for the year was £0.424m (2019/20 £0.709m). In previous years a "proxy" charge was applied however from 2017/18 a "true" depreciation charge was required to be calculated and transferred to the MRR. This represents an amount equivalent to the total depreciation charges for all the HRA assets. Under statute an adjustment between accounting basis and funding basis on the 'Movement on the HRA MRR' allows any difference between the depreciation credit on the reserve and the amount required for the major repairs for the year to be transferred back to the HRA.

Note 2: Capital Expenditure and Financing

2019/20 £000s	2020/21 £000s
2,094 Acquisition and renovation of Council Dwellings	536
- Appropriation of land	80
102 Major Repairs	18
2,196	634
Funded by:	
- Borrowing	(147)
- Homes England Grant	(32)
(740) Brownfield Homes Grant	(231)
(1,354) S.106 Contributions	(206)
(102) Major Repairs Reserve	(18)
(2,196)	(634)

Note 3: Number and Value of Council Dwellings

There were 307 Council Dwellings held as at 31 March, 2020 (301 in 2019/20), of which five have been classified as Work in Progress (WIP). The number of empty properties included in the above figures is 28, of which five are under refurbishment (included in the WIP figure) and 23 are void.

The table below shows the vacant possession value and the balance sheet value based on social housing use. The difference represents the economic cost of providing council housing.

1st April 2020 £000's	31st March 2021 £000's
7,991 Balance Sheet Value	8,770

The vacant possession value of HRA dwellings as at 1 April 2021 is £19.932m.

Note 4: Rent Arrears

The level of rent arrears as at 31 March 2021 was £0.162m (31 March 2020 £0.216m), these figures include rent, service charge and rechargeable repair arrears. The Bad Debt provision required in respect of these uncollectable debts is £0.105m (2019/20 £0.144m)

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

THE COLLECTION FUND

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

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000	Notes
	INCOME		
	Council Tax :		
(49,007)	Billed to tax payers	(51,089)	
(49,007)		(51,089)	1
	Non Domestic Rates :		
(33,446)	Income Collectable from Business Ratepayers	(21,119)	2
541	Transitional Protection Payment	649	
(32,905)		(20,470)	
(81,912)	TOTAL INCOME	(71,559)	
	EXPENDITURE		
	Council Tax :		
41,174	Precepts Hartlepool Borough Council	43,604	
6,116	Police & Crime Commissioner	6,483	
1,888	Cleveland Fire Authority	1,961	
132	Increased Provision for Non-Payment of Council Tax	1,406	
49,310		53,454	
	Non Domestic Rates :		
	Payment of Non Domestic Rates to Preceptors		
15,231	Hartlepool Borough Council	15,805	
311	Cleveland Fire Authority	323	
15,498	Payment of Non Domestic Rates to Central Government	16,116	
112	Cost of Collection Allowance	112	
719	Change in Provision for Non-Payment of NNDR	1,858	
(3,436)	Change in Provision for Non Domestic Rating Appeals	1,443	
44	Enterprise Zone Relief	11	
1,093	Disregarded Amounts	25	
29,572		35,693	
	Contributions for previous years estimated		
	Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) - Council Tax		
37	Hartlepool Borough Council	(138)	
5	Police & Crime Commissioner	(21)	
2	Cleveland Fire Authority	(6)	
44		(165)	
	Contributions for previous years estimated		
	Collection Fund Surplus/(Deficit) - Non-Domestic Rates:		
(263)	Hartlepool Borough Council	31	
(5)	Cleveland Fire Authority	1	
(269)	Central Government	32	
(537)		64	
78,389	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	89,046	
(3,523)	NET TOTAL	17,487	
	Movement on Fund Balances		
	Council Tax:		
347	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	2,200	
(45)	(Surplus)/Deficit brought forward	302	
302	(Surplus)/Deficit carried forward	2,502	
	Non Domestic Rates:		
(3,870)	(Surplus)/Deficit for the year	15,286	
2,724	(Surplus)/Deficit brought forward	(1,146)	
(1,146)	(Surplus)/Deficit carried forward	14,140	

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

Note 1 - Council Tax

Council Tax income comes from a charge made on residential properties. The income is used to support the Council's General Fund revenue expenditure, as detailed in the Income and Expenditure Account. It is also used to finance Hartlepool's share of the Police and Fire Authorities' expenditure, through precepts made on the Council's Collection Fund. The level of Council Tax in any year is determined by estimating the income required by the Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Fire Authorities, dividing this by the Council Tax base, which comprises residential properties banded by value and charged accordingly.

To allow for comparison between years and authorities the tax base is expressed as the number of Band D properties in the district, which is calculated by multiplying the number of properties in a band by an appropriate weighting, ranging from 6/9 to 18/9.

There were 34,392 Band D equivalents in 2020/21 (34,052 for 2019/20) and the basic amount of Council Tax for a Band D property was £2,090.38 (£2,013.18 in 2019/20).

Set out in the table below are the Band D weightings, property numbers and income from each band level.

Band	Weighting to Band D	No. of properties in each band	Equivalent no. of Band D Properties	Hartlepool BC demand per property (Ex Parishes) £	Police & Crime Commissioner demand per property £	Fire Authority demand per property £	Total demand per property £	Total Income per band £000's
A	6/9	23,543	15,695	1,167.34	173.69	52.55	1,393.58	32,809
B	7/9	7,344	5,712	1,361.90	202.64	61.31	1,625.85	11,940
C	8/9	6,228	5,536	1,556.45	231.59	70.07	1,858.11	11,572
D	9/9	3,300	3,300	1,751.01	260.54	78.83	2,090.38	6,898
E	11/9	1,729	2,113	2,140.12	318.44	96.35	2,554.91	4,417
F	13/9	732	1,057	2,529.24	376.34	113.87	3,019.45	2,210
G	15/9	495	825	2,918.35	434.23	131.38	3,483.96	1,725
H	18/9	77	154	3,502.02	521.08	157.66	4,180.76	322
TOTALS		43,448	34,392					71,893

The income of £51.089m for 2020/2021 (£49.007m for 2019/20) is receivable from the following sources:

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
68,555	Opening Liability	71,893
1,966	Net increase/(decrease) in liability	1,494
(124)	Disabled Relief	(123)
(7,006)	Discounts	(6,831)
(1,591)	Exemptions	(1,650)
(141)	Write Offs	(183)
<u>(12,652)</u>	Council Tax Support Scheme	<u>(13,511)</u>
<u>49,007</u>		<u>51,089</u>

SECTION 3 : Statement of Accounts

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

Note 2 - Non Domestic Rates

National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) is organised on a national basis. The Government specifies two amounts, the Small Business Non Domestic Rate Multiplier which was 49.9p in 2020/21 (49.1p in 2019/20) and, the Non Domestic Rate Multiplier which was 51.2p in 2020/21 (50.4p in 2019/20). Subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by that amount.

The total non domestic rateable value at the year end was £80.628m.

The NNDR income collectable from Ratepayers is shown below.

2019/20		2020/21
£000		£000
39,843	Gross Rates payable	38,654
(6,744)	Mandatory Reliefs	(18,185)
541	Transitional Relief	649
(194)	Write Offs	1
<u>33,446</u>		<u>21,119</u>

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

Scope of Responsibility

Hartlepool Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- Its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards,
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging these overall responsibilities, Hartlepool Borough Council is also responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. A copy of the code is on our website at www.Hartlepool.gov.uk or can be obtained from the Councils Contact Centre. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, Part 2 6(1) (a), which requires the Council to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with the statement of accounts. Regulation 6(1) (b) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, require that for a local authority that statement is an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

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

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

In order to facilitate the completion of the Statement, an officer working group has been formed and a programme of work developed. To ensure that the Statement has been given sufficient corporate priority and profile, the working group included both the Director of Resources and Development, the Assistant Director (Finance) and the Assistant Director (Corporate Services). As part of the process regular updates have been given to the Performance and Risk Management Officer Group and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

Significant Governance Issues Update from 2019/20 Statement

Progress has been made over the course of 2020/21 to actively manage and address issues identified as part of the 2019/20 process. This approach ensures the Council actively manages these issues. The table overleaf identifies action that has been taken to mitigate the areas identified.

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

Issue Raised	Action Undertaken
<p>Delivery of Council Plan, revised Performance Management Framework and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The sustainability of services, level of performance and the continuing need to achieve housing growth.</p>	<p>A strategic multiyear approach to financial management is embedded with a revised savings programme for 2019/20 and 2020/21 implemented. Member's seminars and staff communication strategy in conjunction with budget monitoring and defunding budgets at decision point have been implemented. Project planning and management reporting to Finance and Policy Committee and CMT have all been implemented.</p> <p>During 2020/21 the Council managed the financial impact of COVID-19 on services costs and income through the early forecasting of the impact – which was unprecedented in terms of the range of impacts and the financial value. This position was kept under regular review and a robust strategy implemented to manage the position. The strategy reflected the phased announcement of one off Government financial support. The Council managed the impact within available resources.</p> <p>The Council Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 was agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 9th March 2020 and was due to be considered by Council on 19th March 2020. Due to the restrictions imposed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic the Council meeting did not go ahead as planned and adoption of the Council Plan was therefore deferred to be considered later in the 2020/21 municipal year. In summer 2020 following a wide-ranging engagement exercise a Covid Recovery Plan was developed and agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 13th August 2020. This has taken the place of the Council Plan in 2020/21. As the challenges that the Borough faces have changed and evolved from those identified at the start of 2020 the Council Plan agreed by Finance and Policy Committee in March 2020 was reviewed and updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the Borough and a new Council Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 was agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 15th February 2021 and adopted by Council on 25th February 2021.</p>
<p>Managing corporate risk areas.</p>	<p>Assistant Director liaison ensures actions are implemented for all risks identified as part of the audit process. Follow up processes ensure that for all risk identified mitigating actions are embedded in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Strategic Risk Register for the Council as presented to Finance and Policy Committee in August 2019 has been reviewed and updated during the 2020/21 municipal year. This includes the key risks facing the organisation and the delivery of the Council Plan. Risks are reviewed as part of the Council's Performance Management Framework.</p>
<p>Delivery of Regeneration/ Capital Programme on time and budget in line with key Council objectives.</p>	<p>Responsibility for delivery of schemes allocated to senior officers with Project Management Boards established. Regular progress and budget monitoring undertaken through the capital programme management group, chaired by the Director and the Councils Strategic Asset Management Board. Regular updates provided to members.</p>
<p>All out elections leading to a potential lack of experience or knowledge if a significant number of new members are elected for the first time.</p>	<p>Arrangements to implement review will be enacted once issues around COVID-19 pandemic and certainty around elections are established.</p>
<p>Implementation of senior management structure review</p>	<p>The new structure has now been fully implemented and is fully operational.</p>
<p>COVID-19 Virus effecting the health and wellbeing of the Borough, service delivery and the financial stability of the Council.</p>	<p>Dedicated CMT response team setup to co-ordinate and manage the Council's strategic response, including implementation of national guidance at a local level. Emergency plans implemented. New functions established delivering vital services within the borough including Community Testing Hubs and Local Track and Trace. Vulnerable people and businesses supported in line with Government guidance and local solutions. Safe working arrangements implemented at the Council in line with Government advice including online virtual meetings and home working. Financial implications and risks are being managed and monitored. Communication strategy implemented.</p>

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

The Governance Framework

The key elements of the Council's Governance Framework are as follows:

Hartlepool Borough Council has adopted a Constitution, which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, the procedures that are followed to ensure that these decisions are efficient and transparent, and sets out the terms of reference for the Committee structure. The Constitution was developed in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and it sets out the delegated responsibilities to key officers such as the Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution at Article 14, the Monitoring Officer continues to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect. A report to the Constitution Committee on 25 November 2019 addressed issues which had arisen since the previous review reported to Full Council on 21 March. A further report was submitted to the Constitution Committee on 27 January which addressed issues raised in relation to the Articles, Procedure Rules and Referrals by Full Council.

Officer Decision Records continue to be published on the internet and Officer Guidance has been circulated in relation to Key Decision Forward Plan Consultation to give clarity to officers on when and how consultation should be undertaken on Key Decision matters to be considered by Policy Committees.

A programme of Members' Seminars has been developed by the CMT to ensure Members are updated/briefed on key strategic issues.

Effective procedures to identify, evaluate, communicate, implement, comply with and monitor legislative change exist and are used. Legal Division procedures exist for monitoring new legislation, advising relevant departments, and members where appropriate. Workforce Services policies identify suitable recruitment methods and ensure appropriate job descriptions exist for legal staff. A corporate induction session is now in place and is held approximately every four weeks. This is aimed at new employees within the Authority but is also open to any existing member of staff who would benefit from a refresher. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services opens every session which ensures Chief Officer presence and support. This forms one part of a new corporate induction programme which is being developed to include a wider range of information for new employees. Departments have responsibility to provide induction training specific to their departmental needs.

Committee terms of reference are included in the constitution. A procedure is in place to ensure that all Committee agendas, minutes and supporting material are available to all staff on the Council's intranet, and to the public on the Council's Internet site.

The constitution contains financial and contract procedure rules, and code of conduct for Members, which have been formally approved. Financial procedure rules have been updated and agreed by Council and contract procedure rules have also been updated to take into account new procurement procedures and legislative requirements. The constitution is available to all employees on the intranet and to the public on the Internet. A register of gifts and hospitality is maintained for Members and Officers. The Authority has a Treasury Management Strategy that was approved by Audit and Governance Committee on 10th December 2020 and referred to Council for approval on for the financial year 2021/22. The approved Treasury Management Strategy includes the Investment and Borrowing strategies in compliance with revised CIPFA Prudential Code, CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local government (HCLG) guidance. The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and policies before making any necessary recommendations to Council. The Director of Resources and Development reports to the Audit and Governance Committee how the Council's financial arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).

The full range of Member committees regularly meet to review specific policy areas, to consider plans, reports and progress of the Council.

Human Resources has drawn up policies to ensure suitably qualified employees are employed in key areas. Supporting terms and conditions of employment for all employees cover all aspects of good employment. Induction courses for key new officers and all new Members incorporate suitable training on corporate governance issues according to responsibilities and there is a general staff awareness programme in place.

The Council Code of Conduct for Employees has been approved, published and communicated to all employees. The Council has also implemented a programme of Health and Safety Leadership Training for senior managers.

The Council has an ongoing programme of monitoring and reviewing arrangements in place in respect of the operation of its key partnerships. A framework of reporting by exception to Corporate Management Team operates and Internal Audit provides audit coverage of partnership arrangements.

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

The Council has a three-year Council Plan that sets out the Council's ambitions for the Borough. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions imposed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic the Council meeting which was due to consider the new Council Plan did not go ahead as planned and adoption was therefore deferred to be considered later in the 2020/21 municipal year. In summer 2020 following a wide-ranging engagement exercise a Covid Recovery Plan was developed and agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 13th August 2020. This has taken the place of the Council Plan in 2020/21 and the Council's performance management arrangements have focused on this with consideration of progress regularly at CMT with reports to Finance and Policy Committee. As the challenges that the Borough faces have changed and evolved from those identified at the start of 2020 the Council Plan was reviewed and updated to reflect the impact of the pandemic on the Borough and a new Council Plan 2021/22 – 2023/24 was agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 15th February 2021 and adopted by Council on 25th February 2021.

A Data Quality framework is in place with Internal Audit conducting a targeted annual review of PIs. The Council's Performance Management Framework includes information relating to departmental and officer responsibility for the collation of data, target setting and addressing performance issues. The Framework also includes action plans, risks and performance indicators enabling clearer links between corporate, departmental and service planning outcomes, actions, risks and PIs.

Key policies such as the Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure, Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering), Whistle Blowing Policy and Counter Fraud and Corruption Policy have been developed and approved for use across the whole Authority. The policies are available to employees via the intranet. The Council is a member of the National Anti Fraud Network and takes part in regular National Fraud Initiative reviews and the North East Fraud Forum. The Council has updated its Fraud and Corruption Strategy in line with CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption.

The Council agreed new Risk Management Framework during 2019. The new Framework builds upon the previous one and reflects best practice. It has simplified the Council's approach, provided further clarity to officers about how risk should be considered within the Council and demonstrates the added value of appropriate risk management. A Strategic Risk Register has been identified within the performance management framework and changes are reported to Elected Members regularly through the monitoring of the Council Plan.

The Risk Management Framework and an Officer Toolkit are available to all staff via the intranet. Key staff have undergone appropriate training and departmental risk champions lead on communicating the process to all relevant staff in their departments.

There is corporate support at senior management level for development of Risk Management with risk assessment procedures published and training given to officers. Risk introduction/refresher sessions are offered as and when individual departments/teams require them. Each department also has a risk co-ordinator.

The Finance and Policy Committee is responsible for ensuring the consideration of risk across and for reviewing the progress made in the management of strategic risks. The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management arrangements and providing comment and challenge on risk management activity and progress. Risks and control measures relating to the Council Plan are analysed within performance reports to help ensure that risk and performance reporting are linked. The Council Plan and performance framework is considered as part of the preparation of the AGS.

The Council's Corporate Strategy and Performance Team hold information on the Council's Strategic Risks. Risk registers are also maintained for significant projects. Officers that manage risks are notified that risks need to be reviewed and progress is monitored on a quarterly basis through the service planning process. Departments have access to a central funding pot for risk management to assist in the financing of risk mitigation.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is European legislation and replaces the Data Protection Act in the UK. This was designed to harmonise data privacy laws across Europe, to protect and empower all EU citizens' data privacy and to reshape the way organisations across the region approach data privacy and security. In order to ensure compliance the Council has completed information audits identifying all personal data held, including a lawful basis for processing the data. Privacy notices have been developed and are available on the Council's website. All policies and procedures have been updated to ensure GDPR compliance and staff have received specific GDPR training. The Information Governance Group meets regularly to discuss GDPR compliance.

The Council has long-standing, nationally and regionally recognised emergency planning arrangements through the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU). The Council's Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) meets bi-monthly and contributes to the makeup of the Council's Major Incident Plan which is tested annually.

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

Responsibility for updating and implementing Corporate Business Continuity has transferred to the Assistant Director (Regulatory Services). A significant amount of work has been progressed to address the concerns highlighted by internal audit with arrangements having been reviewed to reflect current best practice. These revised arrangements have been rolled out across each Council department to ensure that accurate up to date information is held to assist in the recovery of services, should it be necessary. Tests are planned to ensure that these plans are fit for purpose and any lessons learnt from these exercises will be incorporated into future plans.

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October, 2010 and brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. The Act provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act covers the 9 protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, gender and sexual orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is supported by "specific duties" to assist public bodies to achieve the aims of the general duty. Under the specific duties, the Council must:

- Publish equalities information to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty by the 31st January each year; and
- Develop and publish equality objectives by 6th April 2012 and then every four years.

In order to demonstrate our compliance with the above requirements, we have produced a Workforce Equality Information Report 2019/20 to demonstrate the progress that the Council has made to date. We are aware that there are gaps in our data and are working to provide more information in an accessible format. On that basis the report is regularly updated. Our latest equality objectives were agreed by Council as part of the Council Plan 2017/18 – 2019/20 mid-term review on 9th October 2018.

Equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies - in how they act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure from others. We do this by considering impacts on equality as an integral part of our decision-making process and this is reflected in reports to Committees in the Equality & Diversity Considerations section and through our use of Equality Impact Assessments.

Internal Audit reports on a regular basis to the Audit and Governance Committee on the effectiveness of the organisation's system of internal control. Recommendations for improvement are also made and reported on. Internal Audits performance is measured against standards agreed by management and Members. Internal Audit reporting arrangements have been formalised and strengthened as part of the review of financial procedure rules. Internal Audit have undergone an external inspection carried out by Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council and are now fully compliant with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and can report as such on all correspondence.

Other review bodies external to the Council also make regular reports on efficiency, effectiveness and compliance with regulations. Ofsted has rated the overall effectiveness of the Council's Children's Services as 'Good'. The most recent ILACS inspection which took place in July 2018 rated Hartlepool CS as 'good' overall and 'outstanding' in the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers. Most childcare providers and schools are rated "good" or "outstanding". A CQC Local System Review of services for older people in October 2017 identified multiple examples of good practice and found that a multidisciplinary integrated approach provided a proactive and solution focused service that improved people's experiences. A review of progress in January 2019 reported that the direction of travel continued to be positive with services better integrated and new pathways implemented. These changes have delivered significant improvements in performance in relation to delayed transfers of care and the proportion of people having their needs assessed in a hospital setting. Survey feedback from both people who use services and carers continues to be positive with satisfaction rates comparing favourably regionally and nationally. Over 90% of services that are commissioned for adults with care and support needs are rated 'good' by CQC with no services rated inadequate. An Ofsted inspection of Adult Education in December 2017 rated the service as good. Hartlepool Connect has achieved the Customer Service Excellence standard.

In their 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter, Mazars, the Councils External Auditor, issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements and value for money conclusion at the Council.

Review of Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Audit and Governance's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

The process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control includes:

- CMT agreed process for the review of the internal control environment. The risk inherent in meeting departmental objectives and the controls to mitigate those risks are recorded as part of the corporate service planning process at a departmental level. This has brought together risk management, control identification and the process for compiling the evidence needed to produce the AGS. This enables managers to provide documented evidence regarding the controls within their service units as part of the service planning process. The controls in place are designed to negate the identified and recorded risks of not achieving service, departmental or corporate objectives. In order to ensure adequate controls are in place the procedures, processes and management arrangements in place to mitigate identified risks and the officers responsible for them are also documented. Gaps in controls can be addressed as part of the regular reviews of departmental risks and control measures.

- Director of Resources and Development – reports to the Audit and Governance Committee how the Council’s financial arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).

- Internal Audit – the Council has the responsibility for maintaining and reviewing the system of internal control and reviewing annually Internal Audit. In practice, the Council, and its External Auditors, takes assurance from the work of Internal Audit. In fulfilling this responsibility:
 - Internal Audit has reviewed its procedures in line with PSIAS and following an independent external assessment is fully compliant.
 - Internal Audit reports to the Section 151 Officer and Audit and Governance Committee.
 - The Head of Audit and Governance reports to the Audit and Governance Committee how the Council’s financial arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2019).
 - The Head of Audit and Governance provides an independent opinion on The adequacy and effectiveness of The system of Internal control, quarterly update reports and an annual Internal Audit performance report to The Audit and Governance Committee.
 - Internal Audit plans are formulated from an approved risk assessment package and Internal Audit continues to provide assurance across a broad range of Council activities and functions through the audits it completes.

- External Audit – in their annual audit letter, comment on their overall assessment of the Council. It draws on the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council.

- Other review and assurance mechanisms: for example, Department of Education, Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, HMI Probation and Service Excellence.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit and Governance Committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

SECTION 4 : Annual Governance Statement

Significant Governance Issues

The following significant governance issues have been identified:

No	Issue	Action	Timescale
1	Delivery of Council Plan, revised Performance Management Framework and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The sustainability of services, level of performance and the continuing need to achieve housing growth.	<p>The approved 2021/22 MTFS included the use of reserves which enabled the budget to be set. This strategy provides a period of financial stability to support recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The report also highlighted the significant deficit deferred to 2022/23 and the ability to reduce this by increasing Council Tax in 2022/23 – including the deferred Adult Social Care precept.</p> <p>The MTFS recognises the budget position for 2022/23 to 2024/25 will be the most challenging financial years the Council has ever faced. Detailed proposals for addressing the deficits in the next three years will be developed during 2021/22. This strategy will be supported using reserves to support the phased implementation of the savings plan and to fund the one off costs of achieving savings. A new three year Council Plan has been adopted in February 2021, taking into account the impact of the financial challenges facing the Council. Performance will be reported regularly to CMT and Finance and Policy Committee.</p>	2021/22 -2023/24
2	Delivery of Regeneration/ Capital Programme on time and budget in line with key Council objectives.	Responsibility for delivery of schemes allocated to senior officers. Project Management Boards to be embedded with training provided. Regular progress and budget monitoring undertaken through the capital programme management group and the Councils Capital Programme Board, chaired by the Director. Regular updates provided to members.	2021/22
3	All out elections leading to a potential lack of experience or knowledge if a significant number of new members are elected for the first time.	CMT to address risk through general member induction training. A programme of member training events has been scheduled on key corporate issues. Regular update reports will be provided to committees over the course of the municipal year.	2021/22
4	COVID-19 Virus effecting the health and wellbeing of the Borough, service delivery and the financial stability of the Council.	Dedicated Corporate Management Team response team setup to co-ordinate and manage the Council's strategic response, including implementation of national guidance at a local level. Following a wide-ranging engagement exercise a Covid Recovery Plan was developed and agreed by Finance and Policy Committee on 13th August 2020. Emergency plans implemented. New functions established delivering vital services within the borough. Vulnerable people and businesses supported in line with Government guidance and local solutions. Safe working arrangements implemented at the Council in line with Government advice. Financial implications and risks are being managed and monitored. Communication strategy implemented.	2021/22

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

Signed on behalf of Hartlepool Borough Council:



Managing Director

Chair of Audit and Governance Committee

DRAFT INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report on the financial statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Hartlepool Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2021, which comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flows, the Housing Revenue Account, the Collection Fund and the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of Hartlepool Borough Council as at 31st March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20.

Basis for opinion

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

Emphasis of Matter

Effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of investment properties and surplus assets and the Council's share of pension fund property assets

We draw attention to note 3 of the financial statements, which describes the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the valuation of the Council's investment properties and surplus assets and the valuation of the Council's share of Teesside Pension Fund's property assets (directly owned property and pooled investment property vehicles). As disclosed in note 3 of the financial statements, the Council's and Pension Fund's valuers included a 'material valuation uncertainty' declaration within their report as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic creating a shortage of relevant market evidence upon which to base their judgements. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- the Director of Resources and Development's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the Director of Resources and Development has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Council's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

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

DRAFT INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the Director of Resources and Development for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Director of Resources and Development's Responsibilities, the Director of Resources and Development is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Director of Resources and Development is also responsible for such internal control as the Director of Resources and Development determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Director of Resources and Development is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis, unless the Council is informed of the intention for dissolution without transfer of services or function to another entity. The Director of Resources and Development is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

We are required by the Code of Audit Practice to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make a recommendation under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under sections 28, 29 or 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Conclusion on Hartlepool Borough Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

Conclusion

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2020, we are satisfied that, in all significant respects, Hartlepool Borough Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020.

**DRAFT INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Basis for conclusion

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General, having regard to the guidance on the specified criterion issued in April 2020, as to whether the Council had proper arrangements to ensure it took properly informed decisions and deployed resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined this criterion as that necessary for us to consider in satisfying ourselves whether the Council put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2020.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, the Council had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Responsibilities of the Council

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We are required under section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice requires us to report to you our conclusion relating to proper arrangements. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Use of the audit report

This report is made solely to the members of Hartlepool Borough Council, as a body, in accordance with part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the members of the Council those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the members of the Council, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Hartlepool Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.



Gavin Barker
For and on behalf of Mazars LLP
The Corner
Bank Chambers
26 Mosley Street
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 1DF

Date: 07 December 2020

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

- recognising;
- selecting measurement bases for; and
- presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies do not include estimation techniques.

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

ACTUARIAL GAINS AND LOSSES

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

- events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains or losses); or
- the actuarial assumptions have changed.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on the acquisition of an asset or expenditure that adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing asset.

CODE OF PRACTICE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTING

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA) Code sets out the accounting concepts and accounting principles which underpin the statement of accounts.

COMMUNITY ASSETS

Assets that the local authority 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 historical buildings.

CONSISTENCY

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

CONSTRUCTIVE OBLIGATION

An obligation that derives from an Authority's actions where:

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

CONTINGENT LIABILITY

A contingent liability is either:

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

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

CREDITORS

Amounts owed by the Authority for work done, goods received or services rendered within the accounting period but for which payment was not made at the balance sheet date.

CURRENT ASSETS

Assets which can be expected to be consumed or realised during the next accounting period, e.g. debtors and stocks.

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Amounts which will become payable or could be called in within the next accounting period e.g. creditors, cash overdrawn.

CURRENT SERVICE COST (PENSIONS)

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

CURTAILMENT

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

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

DEBTORS

Amounts due to the Authority for works done, goods received or services rendered before the end of the accounting period, but for which payments have not been received by the end of that accounting period.

DEFINED BENEFIT SCHEME

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

DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEME

A pension 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 sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

DEPRECIATION

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

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

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS

Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award and which are awarded under the Authority's discretionary powers, such as The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996.

ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES

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

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

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

EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

Events after the Balance Sheet date are events, favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

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

EXPECTED RATE OF RETURN ON PENSION ASSETS

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

FAIR VALUE

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

FINANCE LEASE

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.

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

A legally enforceable agreement between two or more parties, expressing a contractual right or a right to the payment of money. Typical examples include investments, loans, trade creditors and trade debtors.

GOING CONCERN

The concept that the Authority will remain in operational existence for the foreseeable future, in particular that the revenue accounts and Balance Sheet assume no intention to curtail significantly the scale of operations.

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

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

HERITAGE ASSETS

Assets preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historical associations. It applies to assets held and maintained by the Authority principally for the contribution of knowledge and culture.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Local Authorities are required to maintain a separate Housing Revenue Account - which sets out the expenditure and income arising from the provision of Council housing. Other services are charged to the General Fund.

IMPAIRMENT

A reduction in the value of Property, Plant and Equipment below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet.

INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

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

INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Expenditure which may properly be capitalised, but which does not result in an asset with substance. Examples of this type of expenditure are software and other licences, patents and trademarks and artistic originals.

INTEREST COST (PENSIONS)

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

INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS (IAS)

These standards are developed by the International Accounting Standards Board and regulate the preparation and presentation of financial statements.

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS (IFRS)

These standards are developed by the International Accounting Standards Board and regulate the preparation and presentation of financial statements. The Companies Act 1985 requires compliance with these Standards or disclosures in the notes if there are any material departures from these Standards.

INVENTORIES

The amount of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. When use will not arise until a later period, it is appropriate to carry forward the amount to be matched to the use or consumption when it arises.

Inventories comprises the following categories:

- goods or other assets purchased for resale;
- consumable stores;
- raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;
- products and services in intermediate stages of completion;
- long term contract balances; and
- finished goods.

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

Interest in land and/or buildings:

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

INVESTMENTS (PENSIONS FUND)

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

LIQUID RESOURCES

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

LONG TERM CONTRACTS

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

MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP)

The statutory minimum amount that authorities must set aside each year as provision for debt repayment based on the Capital Financing Requirement.

NET BOOK VALUE

The amount at which assets are included in the Balance Sheet, that is their historical cost of current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

NET CURRENT REPLACEMENT COST

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

NET DEBT

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

NET REALISABLE VALUE

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

NON-CURRENT ASSET

Assets that yield benefits to the Authority, and the services it provides, for a period of more than one year.

NON-OPERATIONAL ASSETS

Assets held by a local authority but not used or consumed in the delivery of services or for the service or strategic objectives of the Authority. Examples of non-operational assets include investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements, pending their sale. It should be noted that the incidence of rental income does not necessarily mean that the asset is an investment property; it would be deemed an investment property only if the asset is held solely for investment purposes and does not support the service or strategic objectives of the Authority and the rental income is negotiated at arm's length.

OPERATING LEASES

A lease other than a finance lease.

OPERATIONAL ASSETS

Assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the Local Authority in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility or for the service or strategic objectives of the Authority.

PAST SERVICE COST

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

PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of material errors. A material error is one that is of such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

PROJECTED UNIT METHOD

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

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

The accrued benefits are the benefits for service up to a given point in time, whether vested rights or not.

PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT

This covers all assets with physical substance that are for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purpose, and expected to be used during more than one period.

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

PROVISION

Funds set aside to cover potential liabilities or losses which are likely or certain to be incurred at a future date but where the exact amount and timing of the liability or loss is currently not known.

RELATED PARTIES

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

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

Examples of related parties of an authority include:

- Central Government;
- Local Authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the Council Tax;
- its subsidiary and associated companies;
- its joint ventures and joint venture partners;
- its Councillors;
- its Chief Officers; and
- its Pension Fund.

Examples of related parties of a pension fund include its:

- administering Authority and its related parties;
- scheduled bodies and their related parties; and
- Trustees and Advisors.

These lists are not intended to be comprehensive

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

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

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTION

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

- the purchase, sale, lease, rental or hire of assets between related parties;
- the provision by a pension fund to a related party of assets or loans, irrespective of any direct economic benefit to the Pension Fund;
- the provision of a guarantee to a third party in relation to a liability or obligation of a related party;
- the provision of services to a related party, including the provision of pension fund administration services;
- transactions with individuals who are related parties of an authority or a pension fund, except those applicable to other members of the community or the pension fund, such as Council Tax, Rents and payment of benefits.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive.

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

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

REMUNERATION

All sums paid to or receivable by an employee and sums due by way of expenses allowances (as far as those sums are chargeable to UK income tax) and the money value of any other benefits received other than in cash. Pension contributions payable by the employer are excluded.

RESERVES

The accumulation of surpluses, deficits and appropriations over past years. Reserves of a revenue nature are available and can be spent or earmarked at the discretion of the Authority. Some capital reserves such as the Revaluation Reserve cannot be used to meet current expenditure.

RESIDUAL VALUE

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

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after completion of employment. Retirement benefits do not include termination benefits payable as a result of either:

- 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, because these are not given in exchange for services rendered by employees.

REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE (REFCUS)

Revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute. This is expenditure that can be properly capitalised, but which does not result in an asset for the Authority. Expenditure is therefore written off to revenue.

SAFETY-NET GRANT

This grant is received by Local Authorities whose business rates income drops below a set percentage (92.5%) of the minimum level the Local Authority requires as determined by the Government.

SCHEME LIABILITIES

The liabilities of a defined benefit 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.

SERVICE REPORTING CODE OF PRACTICE

A Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) guide to accounting for local government services which provides a consistent and comparable calculation of the total costs of services.

SETTLEMENT

An irrecoverable 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. Settlements include:

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

SECTION 6 : Glossary of Terms

USEFUL LIFE

The period over which the Authority will derive benefits from the use of an asset.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Copies of this document can also be provided on audiotape or in large print, Braille and ethnic minority languages on request. We can also be contacted via Typetalk and enquiries in any language can be dealt with in person or on the telephone using Language Line instant translation service.

Checklist of questions to assist with the understanding of the Council's Financial Report (Appendix A)

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (page 21) and Note 7 Expenditure and Funding Analysis (page 45).	
1	Is the purpose of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement clear (i.e. does it show actual financial performance under accounting standards before fiscal adjustments)?
2	Do the service net expenditure figures clearly demonstrate the financial performance of the services on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement during the year?
3	Are the material items of income and expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement presented separately on the face of the Statement or explained in the notes?
4	Do the notes to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement provide easily understandable information relating to the Statement (or lines within the Statement)?
5	Are there any unexplained significant variances between current and previous year information?
6	Have any significant differences between budget reports and net expenditure chargeable to General Fund balances been explained?
7	Are the major statutory adjustments clearly explained and easily understood?
Movement in Reserves Statement (page 20)	
8	Can the major movements in net worth that occur within the Movement in Reserves Statement be easily identified? Are these explained within the financial statements or Narrative Report?
9	Do the opening balances in the Movement in Reserves Statement match with the closing balances of the preceding year? Are any adjustments to opening balances explained on the face of the Statement and/or in the notes?
10	Is there a clear explanation of the statutory adjustments in the adjustments from income and expenditure charged under the accounting basis to the funding basis line in the Movement in Reserves Statement? (Note this may be linked with the Expenditure and Funding Analysis.)
11	Do the entries on the statutory adjustment line net to nil?
12	Do the related notes on reserves clearly explain the purpose for holding reserves?
13	Does the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure line in the Movement in Reserves Statement agree with the information in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement?
14	How have the balances of usable reserves moved during the year? Are these balances sufficient to support the Council's financial plans in the immediate future and over the medium term?

Balance Sheet (page 22)

15	Does the property, plant and equipment information tell the story of the Council's property portfolio during the year (including the major movements in that portfolio i.e. major disposals and acquisitions)? Do these balances reflect the Council's asset management strategy?
16	Has there been any substantial movement in the pension asset or liability? If yes, has the reason for such a movement been explained and the subsequent consequences described in the financial statements or the Narrative Report?
17	Have there been any new provisions or significant movements in provisions in the year? If yes, have the reasons for making these provisions been set out in the financial statements or any material movements been explained?
18	Have there been any significant movements in the Council's borrowings during the year? Are these movements reflected in the Council's borrowing strategy and what impact will this have on the prudential indicators or future investment plans?
19	Are there any significant movements in the Council's investment portfolio? Do these agree with the plans in the Council's treasury management strategies and statutory investment plans?
20	Are there any other significant movements in balances in the balance sheet that are not clearly explained?
21	Do the balance sheet reserves agree with the totals in the Movement in Reserves Statement?

Cash Flow Statement (page 23)

22	Do the cash balances in the cash flow statement agree with the relevant balances in the balance sheet?
23	Are the Council's balances reflected adequately in the council's treasury management strategies?

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

29th July 2021



Report of: Director of Neighbourhood and Regulatory Services

Subject: SAFER HARTLEPOOL PARTNERSHIP
PERFORMANCE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For information.
- 1.2 To provide an overview of Safer Hartlepool Partnership performance for Quarter 3 and 4 – October 2020 to March 2021 against key indicators linked to the priorities outlined in the Community Safety Plan 2020/21.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Safety Plan 2020/21 was published in late 2020 after being delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- 2.2 The strategic objective of the Community Safety Plan was to *“make Hartlepool a safe, prosperous and enjoyable place to live, work and visit”*. The plan focused on three priorities:
 - Anti-Social Behaviour;
 - Drugs and Alcohol; and
 - Domestic Violence.

3. PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 3.1 The report attached (**Appendix A**) provides an overview of performance against key indicators linked to the agreed priorities during Quarters 3 and 4 of 2020-21, with comparisons made to the same time period in the previous year, where appropriate.

4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Risk Implications	No relevant issues
Financial Considerations	No relevant issues
Legal Considerations	No relevant issues
Consultation	No relevant issues
Child/Family Poverty Considerations	No relevant issues
Equality and Diversity Considerations	No relevant issues
Section 17 of The Crime And Disorder Act 1998 Considerations	No relevant issues
Staff Considerations	No relevant issues
Asset Management Considerations	No relevant issues

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Audit and Governance Committee note and comment on the information provided for Quarters 3 and 4.

6. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 The Audit and Governance Committee has within its responsibility to act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee and in doing so scrutinise the performance management of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-
Safer Hartlepool Partnership – Draft Community Safety Plan 2020/21

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Safer Hartlepool Partnership Performance Indicators**Quarter 3 – October to December 2020****Community Safety Plan Priority – Anti-Social Behaviour**

The following indicators have been identified to assist in the monitoring of this priority area.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct - Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
ASB incidents reported to the Police	4348	896	1246	350	39
Rate of ASB per 1,000 population	46.6	9.6	13.3	3.7	-

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents reported to the Police in Hartlepool increased by 39% when compared to the previous year and by 7% (+ 80 incidents) compared to Q2. The increase is attributable to more than one quarter of ASB incidents (28%, 348 incidents) in Q3 being recorded as COVID related. When COVID related incidents are excluded, ASB incidents remained static; 898 incidents compared to 896 in the previous year. ASB incidents in this quarter reduced month on month as detailed below.

Quarter 3	ASB Incidents	ASB Incident (exc. COVID)
October	518	387
November	426	283
December	302	228

Repeat locations for ASB incidents are evident and during this quarter 10 or more incidents were recorded as occurring in Osprey Way (Hart ward), Vincent Street (Headland and Harbour ward) and Ward Jackson Park (Rural West ward).

In Quarter 3, ASB incidents reported to the Police increased in all four Local Policing Area across Cleveland. Hartlepool experienced the second greatest percentage increase of reported incidents, but the second lowest rate of incidents per 1,000 population as detailed in the tables below:

Indicator - ASB Incidents reported to the Police	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct - Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Redcar & Cleveland	5765	1407	1762	355	25
Middlesbrough	8396	1884	2478	594	32
Stockton	8884	1723	2425	702	41

Police Anti-Social Behaviour Incident rate per 1,000 population	Hartlepool	Redcar & Cleveland	Middlesbrough	Stockton
	13.3	12.8	17.6	19.4

COVID related incidents in Redcar, Middlesbrough and Stockton equated to 22% (389 incidents), 28% (683 incidents) and 28% (670 incidents) of all ASB incidents respectively.

Number of ASB complaints received by the ASBU	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
	321	105	90	-15	-14

Unlike Police incidents, anti-social behaviour complaints received by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit reduced by 14% in this quarter compared to the same period in the previous year and by 35% compared to Q2.

Number of ASB cases opened by Thirteen	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
	351	91	91	0	0

Thirteen Group ASB cases have remained static when compared to the same period in the previous year, but reduced by 35% compared to Q2.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Number of noise complaints received by the Council	441	91	87	-4	-4

Noise nuisance complaints received by the Council's Public Protection Team reduced by 4% when compared to the previous year and 51% compared to Q2. Although complaints have reduced. The most common noise complaints relate to loud music with more than one third of complaints (37%) citing this as the main issue.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Number of fly-tipping reports received by the Council	2467	386	614	228	59

Whilst the Council's Contact Centre recorded a 59% increase in Fly-tipping reports compared to the previous year, compared to Q2 incidents have reduced by 38% (-378 reports).

A fly-tipping working group has been established to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling this issues. Membership of this group includes representatives from the voluntary and community sector, the Big Town Tidy Up and Plastic Free Hartlepool.

A Three Point Plan has been developed which focuses activities on education, prevention and enforcement.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Number of Deliberate Secondary (F3) fires	371	73	86	+13	+18%
Number of Deliberate Vehicle Fires	27	8	6	-2	-25%

Deliberate secondary fires (F3) are any non-accidental fires that do not involve property or casualties/rescues or where four or fewer appliances attend. Deliberate F3 fires in Hartlepool are predominantly refuse (rubbish) fires and grassland.

With an 18% increase in comparison to the previous year, more than half (57%) of the incidents attended by the fire brigade in Q4 occurred in the Manor House, Headland & Harbour and Seaton wards.

Community Safety Plan Priority – Drugs and Alcohol

The following indicators have been identified to assist in the monitoring of this priority area.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Drug Offences - Possession	232	56	72	16	29
Drug Offences - Supply	147	24	86	62	258

The increase in drugs offences recorded by the police is indicative of proactive policing. Responding to community intelligence a number of warrants were carried out during this period with positive results, particularly in respect of the identification and disruption of cannabis farms.

During this quarter, drug possession offences were recorded in all wards except De Bruce. Offences in the Victoria (17), Burn Valley (14) and Headland & Harbour (11) wards equated to 59% of all recorded offences.

Drug supply offences were recorded in all wards except Fens & Rossmere. More than one third of offences (37%) occurred in the Victoria ward (32), with 16% each in the Burn Valley (14) and Manor House (14) wards.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
% of opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment	2.9	3.3	2.9	-	0.4
% of non-opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment	25.7	27.2	25.7	-	-1.5
% of alcohol users that have successfully completed alcohol treatment	34.6	26.5	34.6	-	8.1
% of young people that have successfully completed treatment	53	81	53	-	-28
Number of young people known to substance misuse services	43	54	43	-11	-20
% of people dependent on alcohol and not in the treatment system	76.3	75.3	76.3	-	1
% of people dependent on opiates or crack and not in the treatment system	46.9	55.5	46.9	-	-8.6

Information provided by the Council's Public Health Team identifies that there has been an increase in the number of individuals who successfully completed alcohol and drug treatment compared to the previous year.

Figures continue to indicate a high level of unmet need, with three quarters of all individuals known to be alcohol dependant and almost half of opiate or crack users not currently accessing treatment services.

During the summer of 2020 a new integrated drug and alcohol treatment service launched in Hartlepool known as START – Supporting Treatment and Recovery Together, to help people reduce their level of dependency. A key priority of the service is to reduce the harm to individuals, significant others, and the local community.

Community Safety Plan Priority – Domestic Violence

The following indicators have been identified to assist in the monitoring of this priority area.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct – Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police	2832	765	909	144	19
Rate of Domestic Abuse incidents per 1,000 population	30.3	8.2	9.7	-	-
Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse	1229	314	375	61	19
Rate of repeat Domestic Abuse incidents per 1,000 population	13.2	3.4	4.0	-	-

In Hartlepool, Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police during quarter 3 increased by 19%, 144 more incidents than in the same period in the previous year and resulted in the rate of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population increasing from 8.2 to 9.7.

The highest number of incidents were reported in October, 311, with 298 reported in November and 300 in December.

The rate of repeat domestic abuse incidents also increased from 3.4 to 4.0, with incidents increasing month on month; October – 120, November – 124 and December – 131.

Whilst referrals to all specialist domestic violence services provided by Harbour increased slightly from 817 to 844, referrals for refuge / supported accommodation increased by almost one quarter, 24% from 66 to 81.

Referrals for refuge / supported accommodation were predominantly self-referrals (46%).

Number of Domestic Abuse cases opened by Thirteen	Year to Date Apr - Dec 20	Oct - Dec 19	Oct - Dec 20	Difference	% Difference
	91	19	23	4	21

Domestic Abuse Support Workers from Thirteen Group have reported a 21% increase in cases compared to the same period in the previous year, an actual increase of 4 cases.

Quarter 4 – January to March 2021

Community Safety Plan Priority – Anti-Social Behaviour

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20 – Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
ASB incidents reported to the Police	5413	951	1065	114	12
Rate of ASB per 1,000 population	58.0	10.2	11.4	-	-

Total anti-social behaviour incidents reported to the Police in Hartlepool during quarter 4 increased by 12% (+114 incidents) when compared to the previous year, but experienced a 15% reduction (- 181 incidents) when compared to Q3. COVID related incidents (135) equated to 13% of all ASB recorded but reduced significantly when compared to Q3, falling from 348 to 135. When COVID related incidents are excluded from the total number of incidents, ASB incidents remained static; 930 incidents compared to 934 in the previous year. A breakdown of ASB incidents by month is detailed in the following table:

Quarter 4	ASB Incidents	ASB Incident (exc. COVID)
January	363	279
February	311	280
March	391	371

Repeat locations for ASB incidents are evident and during this quarter 10 or more incidents were recorded as occurring at ASDA, Marina Way (Headland and Harbour ward, Vincent Street (Headland and Harbour ward), Wiltshire Way (Jesmond ward), West View Road (De Bruce ward) and Owton Manor Lane (Manor House ward).

During this quarter, ASB incidents reported to the Police increased in all four Local Policing Area across Cleveland. Hartlepool experienced the greatest percentage increase of reported incidents, and had the second highest rate of incidents per 1,000 population as detailed in the tables below:

Indicator - ASB Incidents reported to the Police	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Redcar & Cleveland	7058	1192	1293	101	8
Middlesbrough	10198	1657	1802	145	9
Stockton	10490	1535	1606	71	5

Police Anti-Social Behaviour Incident rate per 1,000 population	Hartlepool	Redcar & Cleveland	Middlesbrough	Stockton
	11.4	9.4	12.8	8.1

COVID related incidents in Redcar, Middlesbrough and Stockton equated to 17% (218 incidents), 16% (284 incidents) and 17.5% (281 incidents) of all ASB incidents respectively.

Number of ASB complaints received by the ASBU	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
	411	92	89	-3	-3

Anti-social behaviour complaints received by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit remained static in this quarter compared to the same period in the previous year and with Q3.

Number of ASB cases opened by Thirteen	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
	449	109	98	-11	-10

ASB cases opened by Thirteen Group in this quarter reduced by 10% when compared with the same period in the previous year, with a small increase compared to Q3 of 8% (+7 cases)

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Number of noise complaints received	522	88	81	-7	-8

Noise complaints also remained fairly static when compared with both the previous year and Q3, reducing by 8% and 7% respectively.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Number of fly-tipping reports received by the Council	3288	596	821	225	38

The Council's Contact Centre recorded a 38% increase in Fly-tipping reports during this quarter compared to last year and a 34% increase compared to Q3.

Reports of Fly-tipping continue to relate to side waste (additional black bags not placed in wheelie bins) left in back alleys as well as the more "traditional" reports of larger household items e.g. mattresses, furniture etc. being dumped in more rural parts of the town. Work is underway to increase the capacity of the Council's bulky waste disposal service. It is anticipated that shorter waiting times will improve take up of this service and deter individuals from dumping waste illegally.

A publicity campaign will be undertaken to promote the service to ensure that the public are aware of the services on offer, are provided with additional advice on recycling and the dangers and consequences of fly-tipping.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Number of Deliberate Secondary (F3) fires	487	105	116	11	10
Number of Deliberate Vehicle Fires	33	13	6	-7	-54

Deliberate secondary fires increased by 10% (+11) compared to same period in the previous year, but by 35% (+30) in comparison to Q3. This quarter on quarter increase is attributed to further increases in deliberate fires in the Manor House, Seaton and Headland and Harbour.

In comparison to Q3, incidents in these wards increased by 32%, 85% and 57% respectively. Problematic / repeat locations are identified as Gulliver Road – Manor House, Brenda Road and Tees Bay Retail Park – Seaton, and Old Cemetery Road – Headland and Harbour

In January 2021, a Deliberate Fire Action Group was established which will, in line with the Fly-Tipping Action Group, focus on a three point plan of prevention, education and enforcement activity.

In addition, specific work will be undertaken to tackle issues in particular locations where deliberate fires are occurring such as Summerhill and other parks and green spaces. It is recognised that, although the fire brigade are not always called to these locations, deliberate fire setting is having a detrimental and dangerous impact in these areas.

Community Safety Plan Priority – Drugs and Alcohol

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Drug Offences - Possession	306	63	74	11	17
Drug Offences - Supply	171	25	24	-1	-4

Drug possession offences recorded by the police increased by 17% in Q4 when compared to the same period in the previous year and remained static when compared to Q3.

Whilst drug supply offences remained static in comparison with the previous year there was a significant reduction in the number of offences recorded when compared to Q3; 24 offences compared to 86 between October and December 2020.

In May 2021, Cleveland Police will launch Operation Endeavour which is aimed at disrupting and dismantling organised crime groups, many of which are concerned in the production and supply of illegal drugs, and targeting offenders that have the most detrimental effect on our communities.

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
% of opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment	3.6	3.3	3.6	-	0.3
% of non-opiate drug users that have successfully completed drug treatment	28.3	29.2	28.3	-	-0.9
% of alcohol users that have successfully completed alcohol treatment	33.9	25.4	33.9	-	8.5
% of young people that have successfully completed treatment	44	72	44	-	-28
Number of young people known to substance misuse services	63	82	63	-20	-23
% of people dependent on alcohol and not in the treatment system	75	75.6	75	-	-0.6
% of people dependent on opiates or crack and not in the treatment system	46.8	50.3	46.8	-	-3.5

Community Safety Plan Priority – Domestic Violence

Indicator	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police	3613	758	781	23	3%
Rate of Domestic Abuse incidents per 1,000 population	38.7	8.1	8.4	-	-
Repeat Incidents of Domestic Abuse	1532	298	303	7	2%
Rate of repeat Domestic Abuse incidents per 1,000 population	16.4	3.2	3.2	-	-

Domestic Abuse incidents reported to the Police during quarter 4 increased by 3%, 23 more incidents than in the same period in the previous year, but reduced by 14%, 128 less incidents than quarter 3, resulting in the rate of domestic abuse incidents per 1,000 population standing at 8.4 in Q4.

The highest number of incidents in Q4 were recorded in January, 281 with 236 reported in February and 264 in March.

The rate of repeat domestic abuse incidents remained static when compared to the previous year at 3.2 per 1,000 population. In comparison to Q3, repeat domestic abuse incidents reduced by 19% (-72 incidents)

In Q4, the highest number of repeat incidents were recorded in January, 119 with 91 recorded in February and 93 in March.

Whilst referrals to all specialist domestic violence services provided by Harbour increased slightly from 791 to 823, referrals for refuge / supported accommodation increased by 126% from 35 to 79.

More than half (42) of the referrals for refuge / supported accommodation were self-referrals.

During Q4, with some one-off grant funding provided by the Clinical Commissioning Group, Harbour have developed a “Grab Bag” scheme which will enable them to provide individuals fleeing domestic abuse with the basic essentials when they arrive at the refuge or other safe accommodation. The “Grab Bag” will contain items such as toiletries, pyjamas, and a change of clothes and, in some cases, a pay-as-you-go mobile phone.

Updates on the delivery of the project will be provided to the SHP.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021

The Domestic Abuse Bill received Royal Assent and was signed into law on 29th April 2021. The Domestic Abuse Act is set to provide further protection to those who experience domestic abuse, as well as strengthen measures to tackle perpetrators.

The Act places a statutory framework for the delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability.

The Act places a number of duties on local authorities including the requirement to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and the development and publication of a domestic abuse strategy.

In Hartlepool, it is intended that the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board will be a formal sub group of the Safer Hartlepool Partnership. Meetings of the Board have commenced and work is underway to complete a needs assessment to inform a Domestic Abuse Strategy for the Town.

Number of Domestic Abuse cases opened by Thirteen	Year to Date Apr 20- Mar 21	Jan – Mar 20	Jan – Mar 21	Difference	% Difference
	115	24	25	1	4

Domestic Abuse Support Workers from Thirteen Group have reported a 4% increase in cases compared to the same period in the previous year, an actual increase of 1 case, and an increase of 9% (2 cases) compared to Quarter 3.

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

29th July 2021



Report of: Healthwatch Hartlepool CIO

Subject: HEALTHWATCH WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Outline the current and ongoing work of Healthwatch Hartlepool for the coming year.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is a local Healthwatch in every area of England. We are the independent champion for people who use health and care services. We find out what people like about services, and what could be improved, and we share these views with those with the authority to make change happen. Healthwatch also help people find the information they need about services in their area, and we help make sure their views shape the support they need.

3. PROPOSALS/ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Each and every year Healthwatch Hartlepool aims to publish a revised Work Programme. We champion what matters to people and work with others to find ideas that work. We are independent and we do not represent ourselves, we represent the voice of people. We are committed to making the biggest difference to our communities. People's views come first - especially those who find it hardest to be heard. As the only non-statutory body to have statutory responsibilities both nationally and locally, we have the power to make sure that those in charge of health and care services hear people's voices. As well as seeking the public's views ourselves, we also encourage health and care services to involve people in decisions that affect them.
- 3.2 Our approach – what is important to us?
- Listening to people and making sure their voices are heard.
 - Including everyone in the conversation – especially those who don't always have their voice heard.
 - Analysing different people's experiences to learn how to improve care.
 - Acting on feedback and driving change.
 - Partnering with health and care services and the voluntary and community sector to make care better, whilst retaining our independence.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Note the attached Healthwatch Hartlepool Work Programme.

5. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which was amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, outlines the main legal requirements of Healthwatch. This is underpinned by many other regulations, which give more detail about how activities should be undertaken

5.2 The law refers to the roles of:

- Local authorities - who are required to make provision for Healthwatch
- Providers of Healthwatch services
- Healthwatch England - whose main role is to provide advice and support to every Healthwatch

5.3 Local authorities must make provision for the following statutory activities:

- Promoting and supporting the involvement of local people in the commissioning, the provision and scrutiny of local care services
- Enabling local people to monitor the standard of provision of local care services and whether and how local care services could and ought to be improved
- Obtaining the views of local people regarding their need for, and experiences of, local care services and, importantly, to make these views known to those responsible for commissioning, providing, managing or scrutinising local care services and to Healthwatch England
- Making reports and recommendations about how local care services could or ought to be improved. These should be directed to commissioners and providers of care services, and people responsible for managing or scrutinising local care services and shared with Healthwatch England
- Providing advice and information about access to local care services, so choices can be made about local care services
- Formulating views on the standard of provision and whether and how the local care services could and ought to be improved; and sharing these views with Healthwatch England
- Making recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to conduct special reviews or investigations (or, where the circumstances justify doing so, making such recommendations direct to the CQC); and to make recommendations to Healthwatch England to publish reports about issues
- Providing Healthwatch England with the intelligence and insight it needs to enable it to perform effectively

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None

7. CONTACT OFFICER

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Work Programme 2021/22

Healthwatch Hartlepool is the independent consumer champion for patients and users of Health & Social Care services in Hartlepool. To monitor the robust delivery and support our work we have an appointed Volunteer Steering Group (VSG), which enables us to feed information collated through our communication & engagement plan to form the strategic vision. This ultimately, should lead to influence of all services within the borough. Further information relating to the work of Healthwatch can be viewed via www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

The purpose of this work programme is to set out the activities, priorities and outcomes expected from Healthwatch Hartlepool in 2021 and 2022. This will be delivered in accordance with our Governance Framework, through a range of meetings & associated task & finish groups, public meetings and service specification. This work will build upon progress made during recent years. Please read in conjunction with the associated appendices that confirm our priorities of GP Access (Appendix 1), national issues to be monitored (Appendix 2), local context & feedback (Appendix 3).

Established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the requirements set out in the legislation mean HealthWatch Hartlepool will be expected to:

- Obtain the views of the wider community about their needs for and experience of local health and social care services and make those views known to those involved in the commissioning, provision and scrutiny of health and social care services.
- Promote and support the involvement of a diverse range of people in the monitoring, commissioning and provision of local health and social care services through membership of local residents and service users.
- Make reports and recommendations about how those services could or should be improved.
- Provide information to the public about accessing health and social care services together with choice in relation to aspects of those services.
- Represent the views of the whole community, patients and service users on the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Hartlepool Clinical Commissioning Group (locality) Board.
- Make the views and experiences of the broad range of people and communities known to Healthwatch England helping it to carry out its role as national champion.
- Make recommendations to Healthwatch England to advise the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to carry out special reviews or investigations into areas of concern (or, if the circumstances justify it, go direct to the CQC with recommendations, if for example urgent action were required by the CQC).

Healthwatch Hartlepool is for adults, children and young people living in or accessing health and/or social care services in the Borough of Hartlepool. Healthwatch Hartlepool aims to be accessible to all sections of the community. The Healthwatch VSG will review performance against the work programme on a quarterly basis and report progress to our membership through the monthly newsletter and an Annual Report. The full Healthwatch Hartlepool work programme will be available from www.healthwatchhartlepool.co.uk

Please note Appendix (4) details the key principles we shall follow when delivering the HealthWatch Hartlepool work programme

Theme	Objective	Time frame
Acute Care	Examine the quality and timeliness of Midwifery led service provision at the University Hospital of Hartlepool. Focus on pre-natal and post-natal care with a consultation of expectant mothers, their families and other key stakeholders. Agree outcomes with NT & H NHS Hospital Trust. Look at interventions and associated impact of maternal wellbeing checks undertaken in the community and in hospital setting.	July 2021 to September 2021
Acute Care	Discharge Procedures - Examine the findings of HWE consultation in conjunction with a review the implementation of recommendations from HWH's previous work in respect of Hospital Discharge and associated patient experience. To include a review of the discharge procedures from James Cook hospital. Scoping to be undertaken upon completion of consultation with Sheltered Housing, Care/Nursing Homes and 50+ Forum/VCS	Consultation June/July 2021 Scoping August 2021 Delivery of work September/October 2021

Acute Care	Examine the quality of care in respect of those living with dementia accessing acute services not related to their primary diagnosis.	November 2021
Mental Health	Continue to work with the Hartlepool Mental Health Forum in closely monitoring the impact of ongoing reconfiguration of TEWV services areas such as Crisis and Community based services to ensure patient care and experience is maintained and improved.	June onwards
Primary Health	GP access during Covid-19: Examine patient experience of accessing appointments, repeat prescription requests and access to regular treatment/medication.	July /August 2021
Primary Health	Consult with the wider community regarding support procedures and practices for carers (Including young carers) relating to patients with signs of the onset of dementia.	September/October 2021
Primary Health	Review the provision of Emergency Dentistry.	November 2021
Primary Health	Review the implementation of recommendations in respect of LD Health Screening.	December/January 2021
Primary/Acute	Investigate the provision of the integrated Urgent Care Service at Hartlepool Hospital and in particular patient experience and pathways associated with out of hours care and treatment Consult with the wider public regarding the 111 pathway for	E & V Summer 2021 – Focused on patient experience upon exit

	accessing Accident & Emergency Services at the University Hospital of North Tees. Terms of reference to be agreed with the Hospital Trust.	
Social Care	Look at the experiences of residents in care homes across Hartlepool by means of a programme of enter and view visits. This will be conducted as 'virtual' visits until it is guaranteed to be safe to carry out face-to-face visits.	Delayed until safe to do so and new guidance issued.
Social Care	Review the Community Led Support and first point of contact for Social Services via Hartlepool's 3 main Community Hubs. Agree a survey and desired outcome framework with Hartlepool Borough Council and measure impact of new single point of access.	June/July/August with review January to March 2022
Life-long conditions	Organise and host 4 on-line/ face to face seminars focusing on member led lifelong condition priorities. Men's Health, Nutrition & Dietetics plus 2 agreed by Hospital Trust & our own VSG.	Scoping May 2021 with delivery July 2021 onwards
Digital Exclusion	Work with all stakeholders with a view to expanding our reach of signposting, information & guidance to those identified as excluded through lack of technology or isolated.	To be completed December 2021
Strategic	Continue to recruit, develop and support Healthwatch members with a view to having a broader cross section of the population represented.	Ongoing
Strategic	Work with Healthwatch England on a review of a	

	Quality Standard Framework in line with our service specification – Focus on quality/impact.	
Strategic	<p>Represent and contribute to strategic decision making across the borough. Examples of such:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & Wellbeing Board • Audit & Governance • Adult Services Policy Committee • Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group • North East Ambulance Service • Hartlepool Mental Health Forum 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>NB In respect of collaboration Healthwatch Hartlepool is a key partner in respect of the Council's review of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.</p>
Strategic	Review Healthwatch Hartlepool Board, the Volunteer Steering Group and general work streams related meeting structures and patterns. Ensure this work is undertaken in-line with addressing those digitally excluded.	October 2021
Enter & View	Continue to review and develop member training & development requirements around their Enter and View role and activity in line with new national guidelines	Ongoing
Training & Development	Develop, implement and deliver a robust and meaningful Induction Programme for Healthwatch members & volunteers	Ongoing
Consultation	Undertake a strategic consultation exercise in respect of the Covid – 19 in conjunction with supporting	Completed

	national surveys #becausewecare	
Communication & Engagement	<p>Continue to develop and deliver a comprehensive schedule of activity which will focus on developing engagement activity with seldom heard and hard to reach groups including -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with local communities • Understanding stakeholders in the community • Mapping outreach • Collating patient stories • Effective outreach • Analysis and reporting • Joint ICA/Healthwatch Surgery • Promote & participate Covid Champions • Annual General Meeting 	Ongoing
Communication & Engagement	<p>Promote the work of Healthwatch with the wider community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade the Healthwatch Hartlepool Website in-line with HWE latest version • Examine use of social media to enhance engagement hard to reach groups including children and young people • Monthly newsletters • Press releases • Input into Hospital Trust Communications Strategy • Annual report 	Ongoing

health 

GP access during COVID-19

A review of our evidence: April 2019 – December 2020

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Foreword

Access to General Practice has for a long time been the issue people talk to us about the most – both prior to and during the pandemic.

It is not surprising that access to General Practice is such a significant issue for the public. GP services are often the first port of call for people who need care and are the main ‘gatekeeper’ to other services. We all have had an experience of GP services or may know someone who has struggled to get in touch with a GP practice for a prescription, some advice, or a referral to another service.

The pandemic has not helped, and many of the issues people have raised with us are problems that we’ve reported on before, such as difficulties in booking appointments or poor communication about changes to services.

What has fundamentally shifted though, is the way we access GP services – potentially permanently. Instead of phoning for an appointment or walking-in to a local surgery, access to care has rapidly moved to online bookings, and video and phone consultations.

For some people the rapid digitalisation of care has worked. Our previous report *[The Doctor will Zoom you now](#)* highlighted how for many, remote consultations were more convenient, making access to care quicker, more efficient and easier to fit around their lives. Therefore, it is important that where people’s experiences of accessing care have improved, that we acknowledge this and make the improvement a permanent feature of the system.

On the other side of the coin, it is clear many people are now struggling to access care from their GP, often simply because they do not know how. This is leading to people feeling that GP practices are not ‘open for business’ or that they should not seek care for their health issue because of the pressures the pandemic has placed on the NHS. This puts people’s health and wellbeing at risk and increases demand on overstretched hospitals – both from those who cannot get a GP appointment so seek care at A&E, and from people who now need more advanced care and treatment because they were unable to get help sooner.

While the pandemic has presented new challenges for General Practice, in many ways it has just exacerbated longer-term problems and made them more apparent. This provides an important opportunity for the NHS to learn and address these problems, and to embrace the improvements brought about by new ways of offering the service.

To do this, we are calling on NHS England to undertake a formal review of the ways people access General Practice to make sure the service works for everyone, and crucially, that people understand changes and how these affect the way they can get the care and support they need.

Sir Robert Francis QC, Chair of Healthwatch England

Where does our evidence come from?

This report is based on:

- A thematic analysis of 10,089 people who have shared their experience of GP services via local Healthwatch or directly with Healthwatch England between April 2019 and December 2020.
- A thematic analysis of the themes in 458 local Healthwatch reports about GP services during the same period, containing the views of 172,234 people.
- A representative poll of 2,431 people in England undertaken by Yonder Data Solutions between 22 – 24 January 2021, about their experiences of accessing GPs during the pandemic and attitudes to the COVID-19 vaccine.

This data is contextualised with other relevant sources, particularly NHS England’s GP Patient Survey 2020, which had 739,637 responses.

Executive summary

GP practices have faced significant challenges to deliver a safe and effective service during the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst for many people the experiences of care from their GP service have continued to be positive, we have repeatedly heard from others about the problems they have faced when trying to access care and treatment:

- **Communication:** Communicating information about changes to services because of COVID-19 has not been a top priority for all GP practices. As a result, people were confused about how to get in touch with their GP, whether they could make an appointment and how, and what to expect if they attended the surgery in person.
- **Booking an appointment:** Before the pandemic, we repeatedly heard about the problems people faced when booking appointments, particularly for working people and parents of school-aged children. While we heard very little about problems people had when contacting their GP practice in the initial lockdown, by autumn 2020, people started telling us about long waits when phoning services. People also told us about problems booking appointments because of triage systems and not being sure when their GP or other healthcare professional will call back, leaving people feeling anxious.
- **Appointments not meeting people's needs:** Remote GP appointments haven't met everyone's needs. While telephone appointments are convenient for some, others are worried that their health issues will not be accurately diagnosed. These problems were exacerbated for disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, people without access to the internet and for anyone whose first language is not English.
- **Access to regular treatment and medication:** People also struggled to get appointments for regular health check-ups, treatments and medication reviews. As a result, they were unable to get the medication and treatment that they need to manage their condition.

People's experiences of accessing their GP before the pandemic

Before the pandemic, we consistently heard about and reported a range of issues related to accessing support provided by GP services.¹

- **Issues with registration:** People struggled to register with their GP practice. For example, they were told practices were full, that they lived outside the catchment area, that additional identification was required or that they only registered people during set times of day (often during working hours).
- **Being de-registered:** GP surgeries unexpectedly de-registered patients, leaving them without care.
- **Booking appointments:** One of the most common issues people raised with local Healthwatch was difficulty in booking appointments, in particular:
 - Being unable to get through to their practice by phone and having to walk in to make an appointment or call NHS 111.
 - Working people and parents being unable to phone or queue at 8 am.
 - Working people having to take a holiday or unpaid leave to attend appointments.
 - People wanting longer appointments to discuss all their health issues at once, especially if they needed to travel a long distance or have additional needs.
- **Changes to GP services:** Poor communication about changes to GP services and how they are delivered has made it harder for people to access care.
- **Seeing the right person:** While people have told us they wanted it to be easier to see 'their' GP, this did not necessarily mean they wanted to see the same GP each time. Instead, they wanted it to be easier to see a relevant health professional at their surgery when they needed it.
- **Disabled people's experiences:** Disabled people have found it difficult to access care from their GP, from struggling to book same-day appointments to being denied home visits. They also told us about a lack of interpreters and translators available or other alternative communication methods.

¹ What have people been telling us: July – September 2019 <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2019-11-13/what-have-people-been-telling-us-july-september-2019>; What have people been tell us: October – December 2019 <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2020-03-11/what-people-are-telling-us-october-december-2019> and; COVID-19: What are people telling us about their care: <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/report/2020-09-07/covid-19-what-people-are-telling-us-about-their-care>.

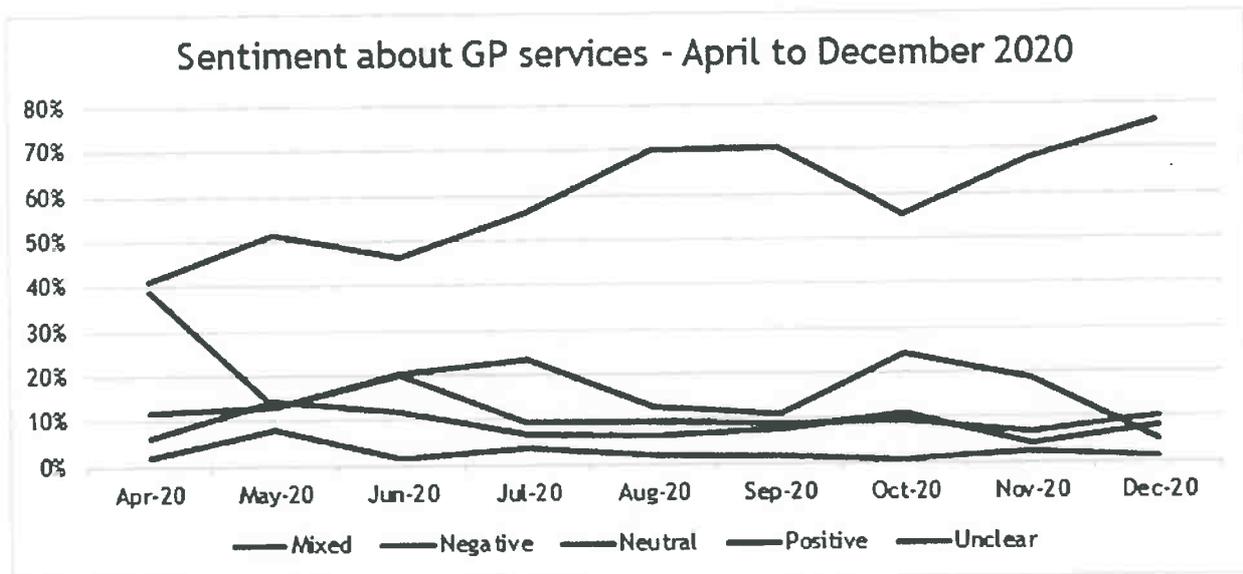
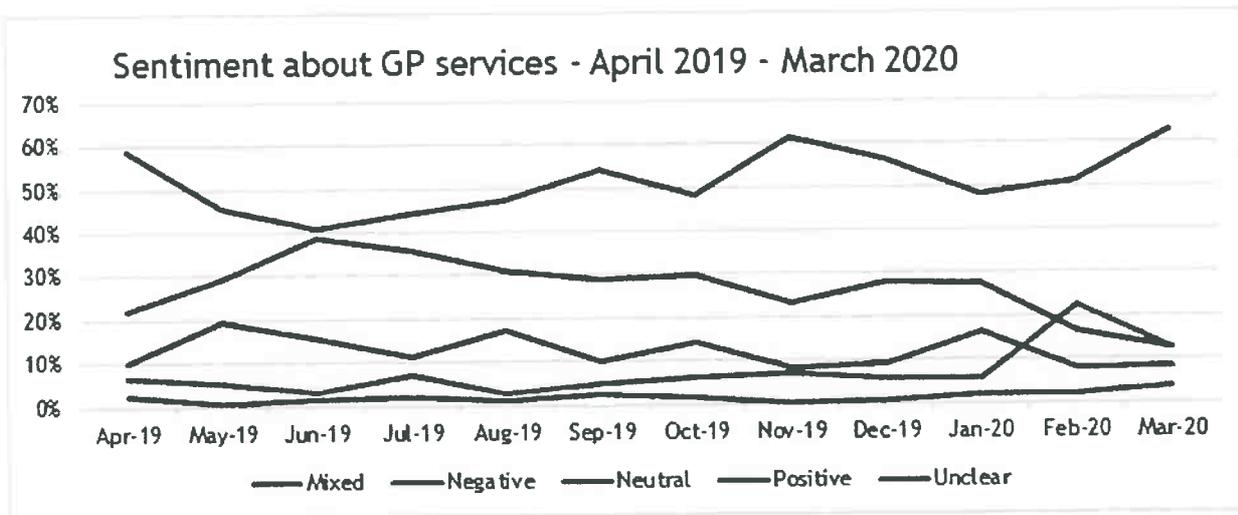
- **Digital services:** People experienced technicalities with online systems, such as couples not being able to use the same email address, password issues, re-registering, and apps crashing.

We explore how these issues have been impacted by the pandemic throughout the report.

People’s experiences of accessing their GP during the pandemic

How do people feel about care from their GP – before and during the pandemic

We looked at the overall sentiment of feedback shared with local Healthwatch about GP services from April to December 2020 and compared it with feedback received from April 2019 to March 2020.²

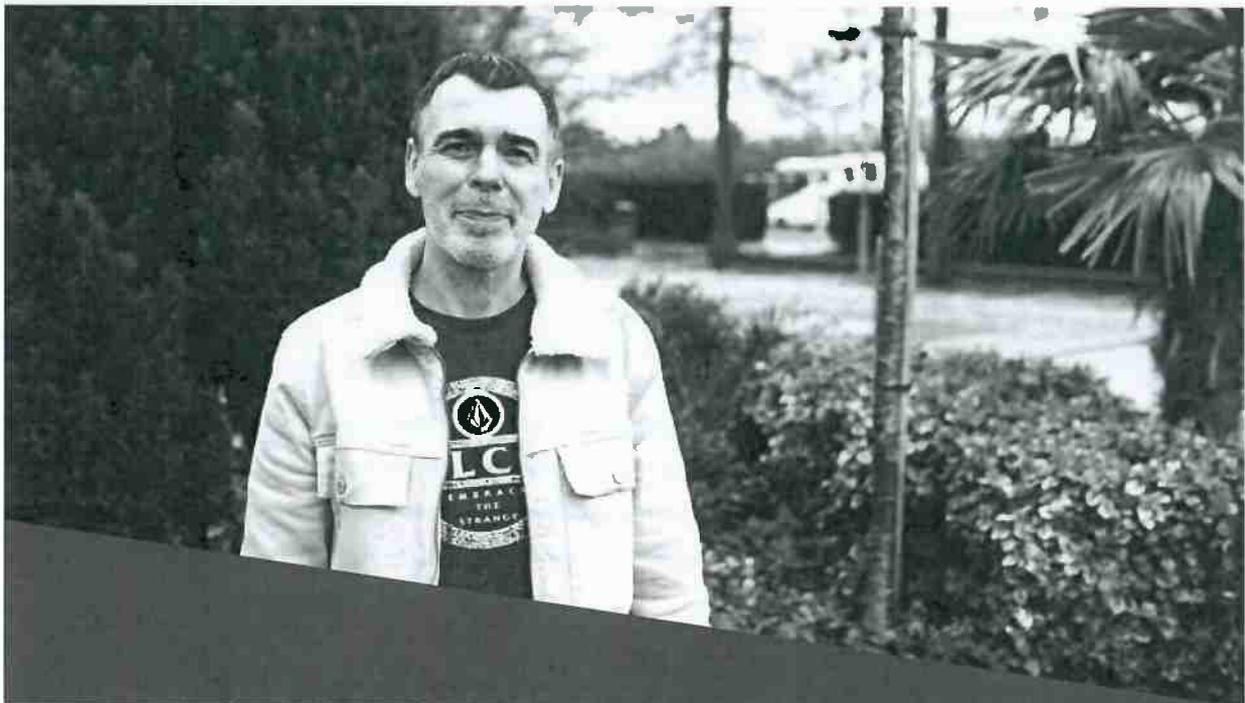


² Through a thematic and sentiment analysis of 10,089 people who have shared their experience of GP services via local Healthwatch or directly with Healthwatch England between April 2019 and December 2020.

At the onset of the pandemic we saw a significantly higher proportion of neutral feedback – for example, those seeking information about how they could get access to GP services and prescriptions. But, from July 2020, there is a marked increase in negative sentiment, which coincided with the initial lockdown measures easing and the economy opening up.

By December 2020, around 75% of people reported negative sentiments, which is up 20% on the same point in 2019.

The national polling undertaken by Yonder Data Solutions in January had similar findings. Over a third (36%) described their most recent experience of accessing GP services as ‘about the same’, compared to 12% who noted a better experience and 20% who reported a worse one.



Information and communication about changes to GP services

The pandemic has left many people unsure whether or how they can access care from their GP. Before COVID-19, we consistently reported that changes to GP services were not always communicated clearly to patients, leaving some people unaware of important information, such as how best to contact GP practices.

This has become more prevalent during the past 12 months, during which time the lack of consistent and accurate information has become even more apparent. Necessary but sudden changes to health services meant patients were unable to use traditional methods of getting in touch with their practice, such as walking in. Many people were also unsure whether they were even able to access care from their GP because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Information on GP websites

Often the first place people looked for information about changes to services was their GP website. However, research by local Healthwatch has shown significant variation among GP websites, in both volume and quality of information about COVID-19 and its impact on services.³ For example, *Healthwatch Medway* found that 26% of GP websites had no information about the new procedures in place, such as PPE use or social distancing, leaving people worried about accessing care from their GP safely.

There was also limited advice about COVID-19 and staying safe, or they received conflicting information from different communication channels, leaving people confused and frustrated.

“GP sent a text to advise they were commencing their flu jab programme so to call on either Monday, 28/9 or Tuesday 29/9 between 10am and 1pm to make an appointment. This number was separate to the surgery number. After continually calling for two days, it was continually engaged, and it was obvious that this number was not viable. On checking their website, it states that the flu jabs were starting on 30/9 and appointments would be sent out by letter or text. No mention of the telephone number and message that was sent out to call them. Mixed messages and confusion.”

Story shared with Healthwatch Havering

The quality of information on GP websites is not a new issue. In the *2020 GP Patient survey*, nearly a quarter (24%) of patients reported that GP practice websites were not easy to use when looking for information or accessing services when compared to the previous year.⁴ In fact, there has been an increase in people reporting difficulties when using their GP websites since 2018.

The impact of poor communication

People’s feelings of anxiety and uncertainty were exacerbated by not knowing how their GP practice had been affected by the pandemic.

In the initial lockdown, people were unsure how to get tested for COVID-19, whether they should be shielding and who was classed as ‘vulnerable’. Coupled with being worried about catching COVID-19 in healthcare settings, this sometimes resulted in people not seeking care from their GP.

The impact of limited communication about the availability of GP appointments has also resulted in worries about “overloading” services, and in people not speaking to their GP practice unless they felt their health issue was of extreme importance. This was especially prevalent in feedback from older people.

³ Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Healthwatch Peterborough: *Giving GP websites a check-up* and; Healthwatch Buckinghamshire: *Information about services on dentists and GP websites during the coronavirus outbreak*.

⁴ The GP patient survey was conducted between 2 January and 6 April 2020

“I am, by the way, reluctant to phone them unless I feel really bad. I can't waste their valuable time.”

Story shared with Healthwatch England

Feedback also showed concerns that this would result in extra pressures on emergency services. The public perception that GP practices were not open has led to people reporting that they resorted to calling NHS 111 or 999, or going directly to A&E, because they feel that they cannot or should not call their GP. We continue to hear this feedback despite Government campaigns like “Help us to help you” to encourage people to go to their GPs if they are concerned about their health.

“Many people may have various worries and concerns about something which is not acute, and consequently are reluctant to even contact a GP for fear of the issue being deemed “trivial”. Of course, the problem is that many trivial symptoms may have an underlying more serious cause.”

Healthwatch Shropshire



Access to General Practice

Deregistration

Before COVID-19, local Healthwatch reported that people were left without support when they had suddenly been de-registered from their GP practice.

The General Medical Services Contract outlines that patients exhibiting aggressive or inappropriate behaviour or moving outside of the GP practice's catchment area are appropriate reasons for removing individuals from their lists.

However, with some GP practices reviewing their registered patients list for those living out of area and others not taking new patient registrations due to the pandemic, those left de-registered have been unable to access the care, support or treatment they need. At an already difficult time, this has had a particularly devastating effect on people with long-term conditions having to self-isolate.

"Client was contacted by a lady who is currently registered at a GP practice but they have changed their boundaries and she has been given 28 days to find another practice. Lady is on the government shielding register and she needs regular prescriptions for her medication."

Healthwatch County Durham

Difficulties with registration

Where GP practices are taking on new patients, people have described confusing online processes or that they have been asked to attend the practice, which many people do not want to do.

"Resident recently moved ..., previous GP has de-registered him as it's out of their area. Patient is in the shielding category. Urgently needs a prescription but unaware of how to achieve this and no GP practices currently operate an online registration service." –

Healthwatch Milton Keynes

Crucially, this impacts on the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, as people will only be contacted to arrange a vaccination appointment if they are registered with a GP practice.

Like deregistration, difficulties registering with a GP practice is a long-term issue, particularly for people who don't have the correct identification, despite *guidance* stating this is not necessary. For example, homeless people have experienced referrals not being processed or being unable to register with a GP because they do not have proof of address.

Although *Healthcare for Homeless cards* have allowed some people to access the support they need, local Healthwatch have consistently reported homeless people encountering difficulties when trying to register with a GP practice. Being registered with a GP practice is important so that health issues can be diagnosed, and patients referred for treatment where necessary. With certain

conditions being prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccination, it is important that people have an up-to-date diagnosis of their condition.

As well as practical barriers, *Healthwatch Nottingham and Healthwatch Nottinghamshire* also reported that people told them that “feeling judged or stereotyped by healthcare practitioners” was a barrier to accessing services.

Healthwatch Milton Keynes reported that, although the local GP Federation appeared to support a form of words for inclusion on websites to clarify that proof of address or ID were desirable, and not essential, a review showed that this was not adopted by any GP practice they had looked at.

Lack of access to a GP can lead to pressure on other services. *Healthwatch Sandwell* reported barriers to registration and identified that lack of access to a GP was a significant factor in people using emergency health services.

Temporary registration has also not always been straight forward. For example, foreign visitors and students have not been able to register with a GP practice for immediate support. Sometimes, when they have temporarily registered at a GP practice elsewhere, they have been removed from their main GP practice’s list.

Healthwatch Reading also reported on asylum seekers and refugees who were housed in a local hotel as part of the Home Office’s pandemic response, finding that 57% were still not signed up with a local GP. This led to delayed access to free NHS prescriptions and dental care.

Contacting General Practice

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, issues relating to accessing GP surgeries by phone was a consistent theme in the feedback people shared with us.

However, once the nation went into lockdown in March 2020, feedback about this issue mostly stopped. The reasons for this are unclear. However, some individuals reported not wanting to take up the time of services with what they felt were minor health issues, while others expressed fears around catching COVID-19.

Since mid-September 2020, reports of problems contacting GP surgeries by phone have increased beyond what we were hearing before the pandemic. People tell us that when they are trying to phone their GP practice to make an appointment or reorder a prescription, the line is continuously engaged, or they have had to wait in long queues for their call to be answered. Some people report having to ring many times over several days before they get through, while others say that they cannot afford the cost of waiting on hold to the geographic numbers used by their surgery.

In some cases, the surgery asked the person to contact them to arrange an appointment, for example, for a flu vaccine or to discuss the results of tests.

“I accept that these are difficult times, but I’m writing to report and register a complaint about the difficulty getting through to the surgery. ...I need to make a follow up telephone

appointment with my GP there. When I phone there is an initial message about COVID-19, then you are told that your call is very important, and you are asked to wait while you are put through to an operator. You then wait in a queue for 10 minutes during which they say they are experiencing high call volumes, (which I accept as all their work is now going through the telephone system), after which either the phone goes dead, or you get a dialling tone, after which you get an engaged tone, and then the phone goes dead. Each of those processes takes a little more than 10 minutes during which you are paying for the call. I have now been trying on 3 working days. Yesterday I tried to see if I could book an appointment online. I couldn't, so I emailed the practice and was told by email that booking was now only by telephone. After phoning continually from 8.30 to 10am and then from 11 to about 11.30 I finally got through and was told that my GP was not in on Monday and that I would have to call in on Tuesday. I was unable to book a call for today. I have been phoning continually today from 8.30 until 9.30 and have gone through the cycle 4 or 5 times today."

Story shared with Healthwatch Oxfordshire

The impact of people not being able to get through on the phone to their GP surgery can be profound. People who rely on prescription medication to manage their condition and don't use an app to reorder it face having to do without because they cannot get through to the surgery to order a repeat prescription. Some people feel that they have no choice if they need a same day GP appointment but to contact NHS 111 or even 999 to see a medical professional.

"My very recent interactions (or lack of interaction) with my father's GP surgery has left me feeling stressed and bereft of goodwill in any respect. It has left me acting out of character and moreover, it has cost the NHS probably thousands of pounds in wasted time and effort... to the extent of a paramedic having to go to my father's home after more than SIX HOURS trying to make contact with the practice. This included Holistic Care, Community District Nurses, 111, 999 and ... a 111 on call doctor. All because my 91-year-old father developed a rash and swelling of his right leg and foot."

Story shared with Healthwatch Lambeth

Local Healthwatch have also reported that some people experienced difficulties when trying to use GP websites to book appointments:

- *Healthwatch Wokingham* highlighted that only 23% of GP websites that they reviewed had clear information about how to book virtual appointments.
- *Healthwatch Coventry* pointed out that the format of some GP webpages made it difficult for people to read information or navigate to information about how to make an appointment.

It should be noted that the NHS App also offers a secure way of accessing services for those comfortable using such a feature on their smartphones or tablets. However, Healthwatch England have not received any feedback from the public on their experience of using the app.

The appointment process and timing

Of the people we polled, 1,190 had booked an appointment since March 2020. Of these, 75% booked via the telephone, 18% booked via their GP's app or website and just 5% booked by visiting their GP surgery.

It appears that many GP surgeries are using online triage systems such as e-consult, or telephone triage via a receptionist or practice nurse to determine which type of appointment to provide. This often means they offer telephone or video consultations first and only offer a face-to-face appointment if the initial appointment indicates that it would be appropriate. This means people might have three interactions with their GP surgery to get the care that they need, or they give up.

"A woman with a disabled son fed in information about how she couldn't get access to her GP. She said that they don't want sick people in the surgery so referred to a consultation online which she described as 'death by a thousand questions'. She gave up in the end and said she feels very let down by health at the moment and pities anyone that has health issues unrelated to COVID-19."

Healthwatch Redcar and Cleveland

Remote appointments can be particularly difficult when the surgery doesn't give an appointment time. Some people have been told a GP will call any time in the morning or afternoon or between 8:00 am and 6.30 pm, without checking whether it would be convenient or appropriate for them to wait. People who work full time find this particularly hard.

"Although I have formally raised pre-arranged telephone appointments being treated the same way as a face-to-face appointment there is no change at [my local GP surgery].... I have just made an appointment ... and it is for between 8:30 and 12:30. I questioned this again and was told it was in case there was an emergency and that most patients are happy with the system. I am now returning to work ... and there is no way I can have access to my mobile phone [at work] ...or would agree to take a call on a bus, train, in a street or in a restaurant. Like many people I have a life where I am not sitting by the phone all morning or all afternoon. Are we running the health service to serve GPs and receptionists or to serve patients?"

Story shared with Healthwatch Swindon

"As a registered patient, I booked online for a video appointment... A text arrived from the doctor at my appointment time. I clicked on it, was able to use the video app in seconds, and there was my doctor on my phone! I never thought it would work. He liked it as he could see me which might help a bit with diagnosis. He issued a prescription which was sent electronically to the chemist for me to collect same day. Very lucky to have this service!"

Story shared with Healthwatch Bucks

But, while remote appointments are more convenient for some, others have found it more difficult to get the care they need. Often, this is because patients are worried that services will not adequately diagnose health issues over the telephone.

Healthwatch Derbyshire found that some patients found it difficult to talk to someone who they hadn't met before and could not see about either long-term conditions, sensitive issues, like gynaecological pain, or if they didn't have a private space in their home to have a confidential conversation with their GP. Research by Deloitte also highlights that most people (75%) intended not to continue with remote medical appointments after social distancing restrictions are lifted.⁵



One size doesn't fit all

Routinely offering remote appointments before face-to-face appointments disadvantage some people, including:

- People on persistent low incomes
- Some older people
- People with learning disabilities
- Autistic people
- People with Dementia

⁵ *Digital Consumer Trends 2020*, Deloitte, August 2020

- People whose first language isn't English.
- Homeless people
- People with sensory and communication impairments
- People who cannot access technology (e.g. no internet access, a laptop or smartphone or because they find it difficult to use technology).⁶

NHS England guidance for GPs about establishing online triage systems during the pandemic emphasises the need to make adjustments for people who can't access online systems.⁷

Nevertheless, we continue to hear cases like these:

"We received an e-mail from the English, Maths and ESOL coordinator for [the local Community Learning Centre], explaining how one of her learners was having difficulty making an appointment with his GP. They had been informed that the surgery does appointments but only after an e-consultation where the patient reports their symptoms to the GP electronically and uploads photos. If done before 1pm, they can then get a phone call back the same day. Their learner was however really struggling with this approach as he had limited English and IT skills, limited access to IT equipment and no home Internet. ... He would have ideally liked a face-to-face consultation as he has a rash which he felt the Dr needed to see. ...He had tried a telephone consultation but really struggled with the language. The surgery receptionist explained how due to the new way of working around COVID-19, no patients can be seen face-to-face initially – symptoms must be explained over the phone [or via] e-consult and then the GP decides whether they can come in to the surgery."

Healthwatch Middlesbrough

Some GP practices have also advised elderly patients to go online to book their flu vaccinations without checking first whether it is a realistic option for them.

"Caller's spouse has received a letter from their GP practice with regard to flu vaccinations. The letter advises the patient to log on and book an appointment online and then drive to a drive thru location. There is a number to call if you don't have access to a computer. Both caller and spouse are registered at the local GP practice which is currently closed for all appointments and patients are being diverted to another surgery in a town a few miles away. Caller and spouse don't have a computer and neither of them drives. Because of the current situation they feel unable to use public transport, taxis or ask neighbours for a lift

⁶ 4% of all households in Great Britain do not have home internet access in 2020. This increases to 20% of households with one adult over 65, 47% of adults over 65 and 24% of people who are Equality Act disabled don't have a smartphone for private use, compared to 16% for all adults. (*ONS – Internet Access : households and individuals, August 2020*).

⁷ Advice on how to establish a remote 'total triage' model in general practice using online consultations version 3, NHS England, September 2020

and they have no family."

Healthwatch Cornwall

Healthwatch Worcestershire further highlighted that some autistic people or those with a learning disability might not have online access or be able to use technology, without support or a carer present.

Lack of appropriate support for disabled people is a long-term problem. For example, disabled people found it difficult to book same-day appointments if their GP practice required them to physically attend the surgery and queue in the morning. Similarly, people who have paid carers were only able to attend appointments at certain times of the day. But this often did not match with the times available for same-day appointments.

In August 2020, we worked with Traverse, National Voices and PPL to *research people's experience of virtual appointments*. We used the findings to develop best practice guidance for offering and running remote appointments, and advice for the public about how to get the most out of online and telephone appointments. We are currently undertaking more research to understand the experiences of people who cannot access remote GP appointments. This will be published in Spring 2021.

Adjusting services for those who need it

People have told us that when they need a specific type of appointment, they don't always get them. For example, people have reported being unaware that their GP service may offer home visits. *Healthwatch Sheffield's report* about carers' experiences found that only 26% were given options on how to access support when they couldn't get to the surgery because of their caring role (e.g. home visits or telephone consultations). This meant that many carers were not offered a home visit either because of a lack of communication or because GP practices were not conducting them.

For people with complex needs, the alternatives to home visits are often not appropriate. For example, people have told us telephone appointments are being offered to people who are hard of hearing or have difficulties speaking.

Variation across the country in the provision of home visits from GPs is an ongoing issue. Before the pandemic, people had been told that home visits were only for those who are housebound, and if they were not, they had to get a taxi to their service, which they might not be able to afford. Surgeries even refused to book home visits when they saw that people had attended hospital appointments. Positively though, when people do receive home visits, they are generally very positive about the care they receive.

"Email from York resident giving feedback on behalf of elderly father who is deaf & has been trying to get a face to face GP appointment. No appts available. Claims ... [surgery]"

won't see their father due to COVID-19. Did get a phone appt, but they were very unsatisfied with this. Line poor. Hard to hear GP. Undignified: father wants to be independent & have private talk with GP, but had to have daughter present because of hearing probs."

Healthwatch York

Providing the right communication support

Deaf people are specifically entitled to British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters to ensure they can receive and understand information about their care and communicate with practitioners.

Healthwatch Sheffield (2020), (2018), *Healthwatch Sandwell*, and *Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire* completed dedicated research about the experience of health and social care for Deaf communities, before and during the pandemic. People reported limited access to BSL interpreters, and interpreters of a low skill level being provided during the pandemic.

Furthermore, the information provided about COVID-19 was frequently not provided in suitable alternative formats for those who were deaf.

"Deaf service users, and those with additional communication needs, find it hard to access services. We were told that GPs and other medical professionals won't always accept interpreters without vocal permission from the service user before they will speak to a third party (interpreter). As many deaf service users cannot speak, this is an impractical request. Deaf service users told us they often have no choice but to make arrangements by letter instead – creating delay in seeking medical help, often resulting in making health issues worse. Deaf service users [also] told us they are reluctant to seek treatment if a hospital, doctor, or dentist cannot provide a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter for the appointment, and we were told some services refuse to do so - even when consultations involve technical and detailed descriptions. This causes additional worry and anxiety for people during an already stressful time."

Healthwatch Greenwich

While people who do not speak English or have English as a second language and require extra support are not covered in the Accessible Information Standard, in 2018 NHS England stated that *"patients should be able to access primary care services in a way that ensures their language and communication requirements do not prevent them receiving the same quality of healthcare as others"*.⁸

During the pandemic, many local Healthwatch have conducted research with people who have English as a second language. People told them that they struggled to access primary care during the pandemic because of the reliance on digital appointments and bookings.

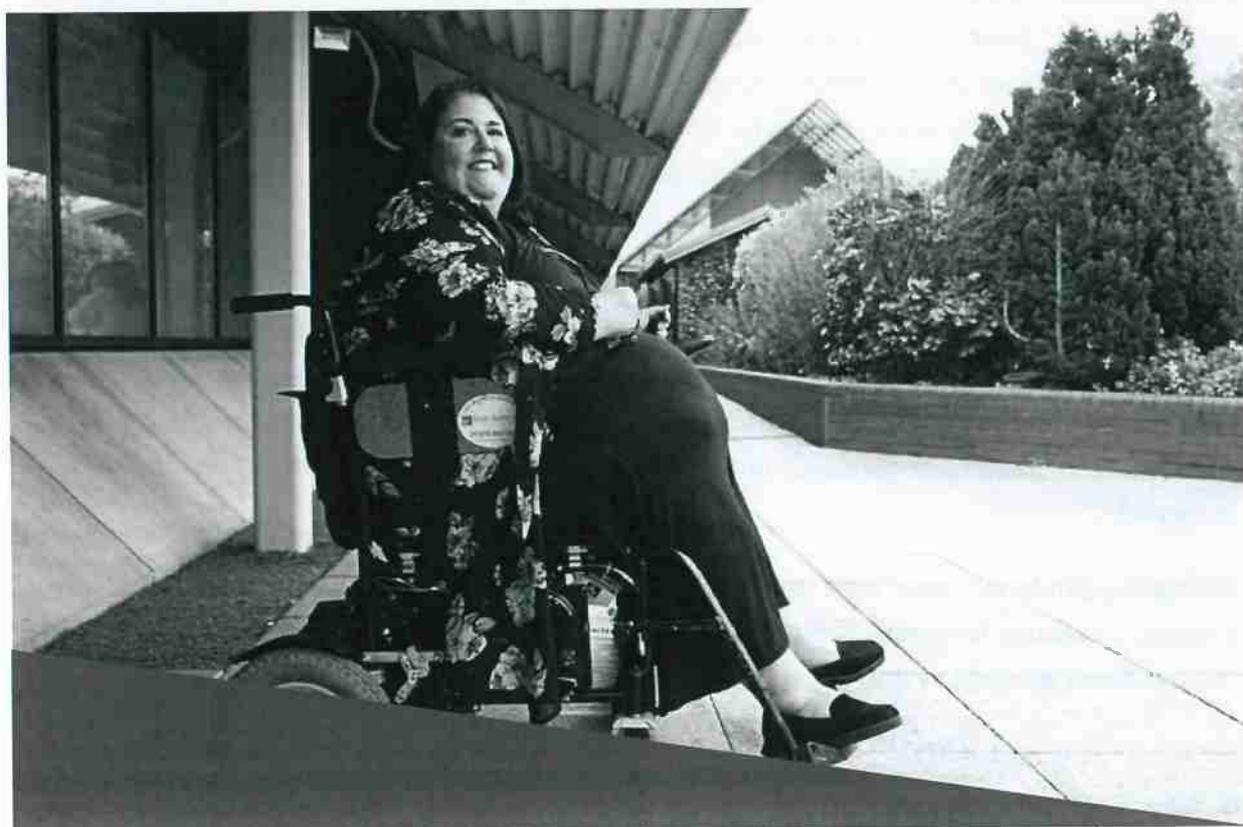
⁸ NHS England 2018: *Interpreting and Translation Services in Primary Care*

In dedicated research with the Somali community, *Healthwatch Birmingham* found that language was the most significant issue excluding Somali people from health care in Birmingham. People found it difficult to understand complex health terminology or express how they felt clearly to health professionals. The pandemic has exacerbated these issues; relying on phones or virtual appointments was difficult for those who did not speak English and there was confusion over whether translators would be available.

“Online delivering of healthcare services has made it easier to access services because you speak in your own house and you can show them through video what your problem is, and your Dr gives you more time. They are not in a rush. I just call the pharmacy and get my medication. So, I don’t have to travel. But this is easy for me [because] I don’t have a language barrier. What about those from the community with a language barrier – it is not clear whether you can have a third person there to help with translation. These virtual ways are difficult for those with a language barrier, the elderly who have difficulty to engage with technology.”

Healthwatch Birmingham

Again, access to communication support is not a new issue. People have frequently told us about how difficult it is to get an interpreter or translator to accompany them to their GP practice and that there was an over-reliance on phone calls to book appointments. Additionally, for people with hearing impairments there is not always a hearing loop or alternative method to let them know when their GP is ready to see them.



Feeling safe when visiting General Practice

Data from NHS England shows that GP surgeries are continuing to provide high levels of face-to-face appointments. In November 2020, nearly 60% of appointments were face-to-face, and even during the first lockdown, the proportion of face-to-face appointments never dropped below 45% of all appointments.

Research for the Health Foundation by Ipsos MORI found that the most people (87% in November 2020) would feel comfortable using their local GP service if they had a health issue that needed treatment.⁹ Of the 12% that wouldn't feel comfortable doing this, 38% were concerned about being exposed to COVID-19, and a further 30% weren't sure they'd get an appointment.

This has been echoed by the findings of the national polling we commissioned from Yonder Data Solutions in January 2021.

- 91% noted that signs providing information on new layouts and rules at their GP surgery were clear and easy to follow.
- 91% reported that staff at their GP surgery or home visit wore personal protective equipment (PPE).
- 95% stated that they spoke to their GP in a safe space, which allowed them to comfortably share confidential information with their GP.

On safety, 90% responded that they felt safe attending their GP surgery, or with their GP visiting them at home. In a follow-up question, only 211 (18%) of participants would not attend a face-to-face appointment in the future due to safety concerns relating to the pandemic.

Our analysis found that some people felt reassured by the surgery's infection control measures. Research by *Healthwatch Bucks* found that most people who had visited a GP surgery felt that the precautions taken to ensure social distancing and infection control made them feel safe when visiting the service. People felt reassured by one-way systems, limits on the number of people in waiting rooms and PPE worn by the staff.

"I used eConsult to inform my doctor about a skin problem. I was able to attach a photo and answer a range of questions which narrowed down my condition. I was informed that I would be contacted within 48 hours. That happened, and I was given an appointment to visit a GP within two days. ... At the Practice, the entry was well controlled and seating was spaced apart. I was encouraged to use hand-sanitiser on arrival and departure. I was pleased with the process and the outcome."

Story shared with Healthwatch Shropshire

⁹ Public perceptions of health and social care in light of COVID-19 (November 2020) - Results from an Ipsos MORI survey commissioned by the Health Foundation

However, as lockdown measures eased in June and July 2020, people expected greater access to GP service. People told us they felt confused about why other services – such as opticians, pharmacies, pubs, restaurants, shops, and veterinary clinics – were open for face-to-face appointments, but their GP practice was not. This confusion often led to anger directed towards GP practices.

“If we can now do pretty much everything else as long as we wear a mask and keep a distance why hasn't normality returned to doctors' surgeries and hospitals. [...] The doctor referred me for an x-ray which I got an appointment for quite quickly [...] If people in the X-ray department can see you face to face why can't other departments?”

Story shared with Healthwatch Shropshire, early September 2020

Some GP surgeries even appear to be holding face-to-face appointments in practice car parks as an infection control measure or asking people to wait outside until they are called for an appointment. Some people feel comfortable with this, but others express concerns that it is inappropriate in cold, wet, windy or extremely hot weather.

“Client stated they had been queueing for their midwife appointment on 13th August outside in 35 degree heat. Client stated it was the GP Surgery insisting they do this as a COVID measure, yet none of the patients waiting were offered a seat or provided any shade. Client waited outside in these conditions for 30 minutes before they were called in, by which point they were suffering with high blood pressure and needed to be taken to hospital”

Healthwatch Hertfordshire

We have also heard that people are concerned that infection control measures like this breach of confidentiality. People have told us that, as the surgery is locked, they must explain why they need to see someone via an intercom or give personal or private information in a place where they may be overheard. It can also be more difficult to hear your name being called when you are waiting outside, particularly for people who are hard of hearing.

Access to regular treatment

Throughout the pandemic, we have heard from patients who cannot access regular treatments, such as vitamin B injections and ear-wax removal/irrigation. People have also experienced difficulties getting medication and repeat prescriptions from GP practices and pharmacies.

Although some people did receive vitamin B injections, either as normal or at a different GP practice or local hospital, we also heard that there was an inconsistent approach to providing this treatment in many areas. Some people told us their treatment was changed from injections to tablets, despite this not being a suitable alternative for their condition. This also made them doubt the level of knowledge of their healthcare professionals. In other cases, services advised people to

purchase alternatives over the counter or online – leaving people concerned about the risks involved, without enough information or clinical monitoring.

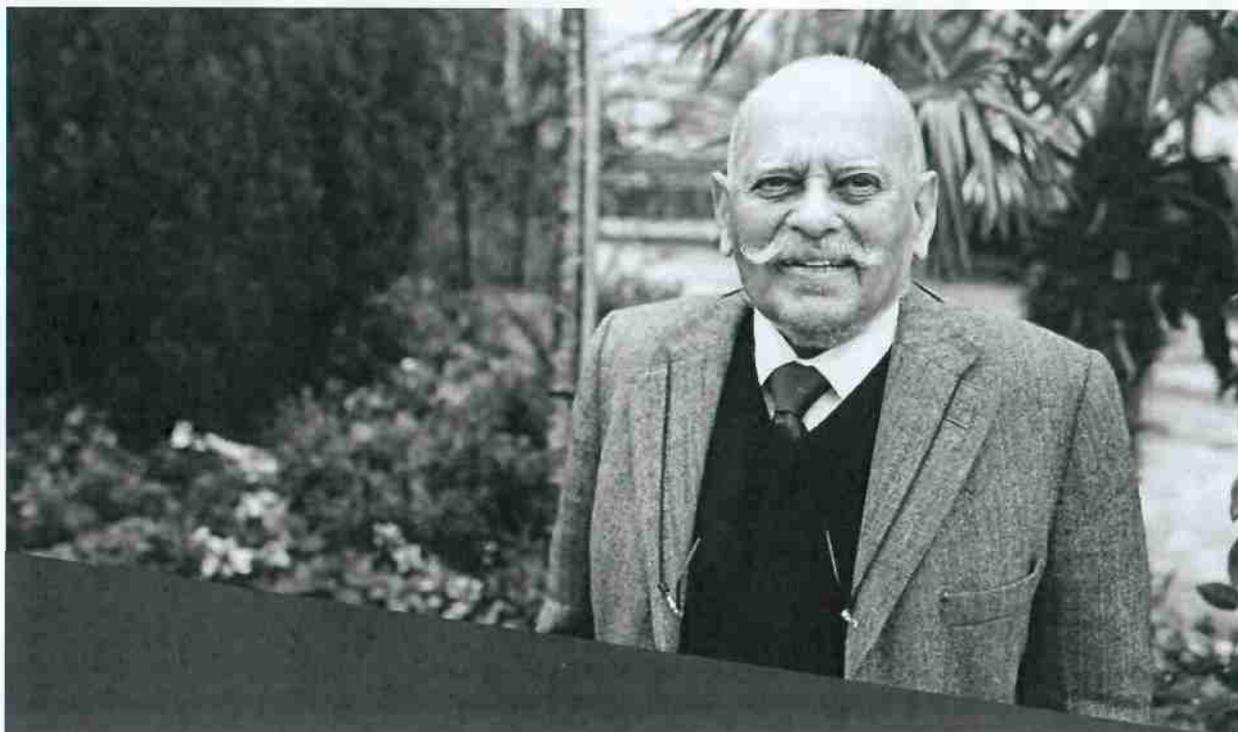
People told us about the worrying symptoms they were experiencing due to not receiving vitamin B12 treatment – including extreme tiredness, confusion, low mood and hair loss. Others described the anxiety they were feeling, due to worries about the impact a lack of B12 might have on their immune system, and other impacts on their physical and mental wellbeing. Some felt that their symptoms were not taken seriously enough by their healthcare professionals.

“My husband was due his Vit B12 injection the beginning of April. This was cancelled due to the virus. The next one was due the beginning of July. This again was cancelled due to us still shielding and arranged for August 3rd. It will be seven months since his last injection!!! Fingers crossed for next month.”

Story shared with Healthwatch Bucks

Feedback also indicates issues across the country in accessing ear wax removal/irrigation services. Although we are aware that some surgeries were already stopping these services prior to the pandemic, many patients have struggled with access to alternatives, such as paying privately at a local pharmacy. In some instances, fees at these sites have increased, with customers now required to pay for additional PPE use by their pharmacist as well.

Of course, not everyone can travel to or pay for treatment at a pharmacy or private setting. As a result, people have described feeling more isolated because of their hearing loss, concerned about their balance and being at higher risk of a fall.



COVID-19 vaccine

COVID-19 vaccine and communication

Clear communication will continue to be crucial to the success of the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out. Our national polling found that location and vaccine appointment time options were important for those who said they definitely or probably would get the vaccine.

- 22% said the distance to the location where the vaccine appointment takes place might stop them from getting it.
- 11% said having to get public transport or a taxi to the location of the vaccine appointment might stop them from getting it.
- 11% said not being able to book a vaccine appointment at their GP surgery might stop them from getting it.
- 10% said the times available to have the vaccine appointment might stop them from getting it.

These potential barriers were especially acute among Black respondents. Nearly a third (32%) of Black respondents that intended to get the vaccine said distance to a vaccination centre could be a problem. Nearly one in five (19%) were worried about getting public transport or taxis, and 19% were concerned about the time of vaccine appointments.

As our national polling shows that Black respondents have much lower levels of vaccine confidence, it will be crucial to address these logistical barriers to ensure higher take-up of the vaccine.



Recommendations

Our analysis shows that accessing GP services has been a long-standing issue for many people, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Below we have highlighted where improvements need to be made to ensure people's needs are met effectively when accessing GP services both now and in the longer-term.

NHS England review of accessing GPs

- The issues raised in this report suggest that there is a need for NHS England to commission a formal review of how people have accessed their GP services during the pandemic. We have witnessed a shift from visiting your GP or A&E to a system of digital appointments, triage and NHS 111 First, and that the shift has left some groups experiencing a worse service. NHS England should therefore also review the effectiveness of these new methods of access.
- This shift has happened extremely quickly, and there is little evidence that people have been consulted about how they view these changes. Therefore, there is a need for NHSE to incorporate patient experience within an access review.
- This review should also investigate whether practices are responding appropriately and promptly to applications from new patients for registration. Unfortunately, our feedback suggests that this has not been the case for some, leaving people de-registered and unable to access the care they need. Healthwatch England and the Healthwatch network should support this drive by collaborating with partners to review GP registration, particularly for those who have experienced barriers to healthcare, such as poverty, stigma or discrimination.

Relevant and up-to-date information on GP websites

- In line with the General Medical Services (GMS) Contract for GPs, NHS England as the commissioner, must ensure that information is provided and maintained on all GP websites about how to contact the GP to book an appointment and ask for help. This includes telephone details, and whether online booking is available and advice on how to do this. Some people may need to visit a GP practice in person, for example, if they cannot get through on the phone or cannot use e-consult to book an appointment. For these people, information on how to do this safely will need to be provided.
- GP practices must include updated information about how the practice/surgery has changed or altered the way it delivers its services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This must explain how the changes may affect patients' ability to access the care they need, such as what to expect if they attend the practice in person. This is a requirement as set out in the 2021/22 letter from

NHS England and NHS Improvement and the British Medical Association General Practitioners Committee England detailing further measures to support general practice.¹⁰

- As outlined in the COVID-19 Workload Prioritisation Unified Guidance, maintaining public confidence that GPs are available and that face-to-face access is possible must remain a clear communication priority at all levels of response.¹¹ With this in mind, we recommend that support be provided to GP practices to update their websites in a timely manner (e.g. within one working week of service changes) so that patients are aware of any changes in line with the current COVID-19 response.

Meeting people's communication needs

- GP practices should use consistent messaging throughout their communication channels to inform their patients about the COVID-19 vaccination programme and how to access it.
- GP practices must be supported to consider how patients may have different communication needs and adapt the method of communication accordingly. The Accessible Information Standard highlights that all health and social care providers in England are legally required to provide medical information in a format that people can access.¹²
- It is good practice to ask patients what their preferred method of communication is, whether this is at the point of registration, checking in at appointments or proactively getting in touch with patients.

Example

If a patient is identified as visually impaired, services should provide health information in audio format, large print, braille or email.¹³

Choice over types of appointments

- Wherever possible, GP services should offer patients a choice over the type of appointment they would prefer (e.g. video, face-to-face, home visit). Maintaining public confidence that 'general practice is open' and that face-to-face access is possible, must be a clear communication priority.¹⁴

¹⁰ NHS England (2021): [Supporting general practice in 2021/22](#)

¹¹ British Medical Association (2021): [COVID-19 workload prioritisation unified guidance](#)

¹² NHS England (2017): [Accessible Information Standard](#)

¹³ Royal National Institute of Blind People: [Accessible health information standard FAQs for patients](#)

¹⁴ British Medical Association (2021): [COVID-19 workload prioritisation unified guidance](#)

- We propose that the NHS Choice Framework include guidance on how to choose the type of appointment you want.¹⁵ This is especially important as the methods in which GPs support their patients are shifting even beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.
- However, when it may not be possible to offer the most suitable appointment, GP practices should give patients a clear reason why this is the case.

“There will be instances where a face-to-face consultation is required. Practices who do not do so may make clinical errors and therefore could be open to medico-legal and contractual risks. Practices need to ensure patients can access services appropriately. Face-to-face work should be allocated across clinical staff, taking into account individuals’ risk factors.”

British Medical Association¹⁶

Addressing inequality in accessing GP services

- It is imperative that GP services are united in providing support for everyone in the community so that every person has access to the support that they need. Collecting data relating to demographic information of GP patients will enable improvements to be made. There is a real need to better record and identify people with additional needs, with indicators such as carer identifiers, language support needs, and disability support needs. These requirements must be implemented into the GP contract to strengthen and further support the Improvement in Access for Patients agreement feature.¹⁷
- GP practices must provide support and reasonable adjustments for people where needed, especially relating to:
 - Communication methods and accessible information.
 - Seating, signs and health & safety.
 - Outside space and reasonable adjustments.
 - Access to personal facilities.
- Healthwatch Slough has published a helpful [checklist for GP surgeries](#) to use to ensure their practice is accessible for everybody.

¹⁵ Department of Health & Social care (2020): [The NHS choice framework: what choices are available to me in the NHS?](#)

¹⁶ British Medical Association (2021): [COVID-19 toolkit for GPs and GP practices](#)

¹⁷ NHSE (2020): [GP contract](#)

- Healthwatch England and the Healthwatch network should collaborate with partners to improve the quantity and quality of insight from inclusion health groups, to address inequalities in accessing GP services.
- Call handling training should be provided for all staff using telephone systems. This will ensure that staff are well equipped to deal with concerns over the phone and are familiar with the software, equipment and supporting the patient. The Royal College of General Practitioners has set up a COVID-19 resource hub, including training on online and telephone triaging and consultations.¹⁸ However, since COVID-19 can also have a significant impact on staff, GP practices must put contingency plans in place so that people can continue to contact services smoothly (e.g. when staff are self-isolating).

Improvements to data collection

- Further to the need for data relating to people's additional support needs and demographic data collection, NHS England must also work with partners to improve the way they collect and report on the types of appointments that GP practices are offering. As part of this, guidance and improved monitoring on how appointments are coded would be welcome, to address issues such as appointments being coded multiple times, which can lead to an unclear picture of actual appointment totals.
- As part of the current GMS contract, though GP practices must keep adequate records of attendance and treatment using accredited IT systems that include demographic fields like ethnicity, there is no direct requirement for this data to be proactively collected. New regulations now require GP practices to record ethnicity data where it is given.¹⁹ Healthwatch recommends an update to the GP contract to expand on this regulation and strengthen the requirement to collect this data. This would bring collection in line with the eight actions as set out by the NHS England Equalities Taskforce in the summer of 2020.²⁰

¹⁸ Royal College of General Practitioners (2020): *Remote consultations and triaging*

¹⁹ Department of Health and Social Care (2020): *The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts and Personal Medical Services Agreements) (Amendment) (No. 3) Regulations 2020*

²⁰ NHS England (2020): *Action required to tackle health inequalities in latest phase of COVID-19 response and recovery*

What issues are we monitoring?

Summary of key issues we are monitoring in relation to health and social care

10 May 2021

About

We monitor a range of health and care related issues so that we can alert health and social care leaders to emerging problems. This document provides a regular status update for local Healthwatch services so that you can prioritise the insight you share with Healthwatch England. We use the evidence you share to inform our national stakeholder updates and external reports.

Key issues we'd like you to tell us about

2

Priority	Issue	Description	HWE action
	Dentistry	Experiences of people accessing dental services	Monitoring in progress. Update to be published w/c 25 May
	Digital exclusion	Impact on people who cannot access GP digital healthcare services	Research continuing - report due in June 2021
	Vaccination access/attitudes/experience	People's experience of accessing Covid-19 vaccines, especially individuals from an ethnic minority background.	Ethnic minority findings due to report June 2021 Ongoing reporting of general population findings to stakeholders
	Access to GP services	People's experience of trying to access GP services	Report has been published. Continue to monitor
	Access to maternal wellbeing checks	Access to wellbeing checks affected by COVID-19	Monitor for emerging issues
	Delays to planned care	People reporting delays in treatment and care	Reported. Continue to monitor.
	Care home visits	Impact on care home residents and families of visiting restrictions.	Reported. Continue to monitor.

Criteria

High	Topics or emerging issue we are actively researching
Medium	Topics we have reported on and/or are continuing to monitor
Low	Topics we are monitoring to identify any new issues

Issues we are monitoring

healthwatch

Priority	Issue	Description	HWE action
	A&E booking service	People's experience of booking A&E visit slots (111 First) via NHS 111. Service started on 1 December.	Report published. Continue to monitor.
	Homelessness and refugees	The experience of people who are homeless or who are refugees when trying to access health and care support during COVID-19 restrictions	Network to share issues/insight
	Long COVID-19	Concerns that people who are experiencing ongoing issues from COVID-19 do not have their support needs met.	Identify any issues - NICE guidance available for info.

Criteria

High	Topics or emerging issue we are actively researching
Medium	Topics we have reported on and/or are continuing to monitor
Low	Topics we are monitoring to identify any new issues

How to share your insight

Please share any insight on these issues via the CiviCRM or to CV19enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk

Issues we are monitoring

healthwatch

healthwatch

Hartlepool

Covid Survey Summary

1. Throston Pharmacy
95-year-old man had been receiving medication delivered free of charge. Friend visited and was told medication delivery had not arrived and that he had no supplies left. Friend rang Throston pharmacy who said they no longer delivered free of charge and meds were at the pharmacy waiting to be collected. Friend went and picked them up and arranged to do so as required in future. Pharmacy had not informed patient of changes or tried to find out how he wanted to proceed in future. Without friend's intervention would have been left without meds
2. Bankhouse surgery
Patient rang Bankhouse surgery for over 2 days and were able to get through to order repeat meds. Had to go down to surgery and get emergency prescription. Surgery said phone lines had been down for a few days.
3. Victoria Pharmacy (Now Well Pharmacy)
Patient went to collect nomad trays. On arrival told prescription had not been received from Bankhouse due to the changeover to Well. Because of change over all prescriptions had to be re-issued. Patient went to Bankhouse and on arrival told Bankhouse changing to new computer system and therefore not able to send anything electronically. Had to collect paper copy and take to Well. Why didn't Bankhouse tell us about the problem?
4. Covid Test/119
On Sunday 16th August 3 family members advised to get Covid test as neighbour who they help had contracted Covid. After 50 minutes on hold with 119, offered 3 test places at 2pm at Dalton Park Test centre. On arrival could not find Test Centre. Rang 119 again and gave up after another 50 minutes. Rang Dalton Park management only to be told they were not open that weekend. Arrived home at 4pm and phoned 119 again, long wait again, and offered appointments in Middlesbrough at 6pm. Mother and daughter went, grandmother requested Hartlepool appointment which she attended at 10am on the Monday. Total driving distance for three tests 96 miles and several hours telephone time to get through to 119.
5. GP Service excellent – no further details
6. Pharmacy, GP and Social Worker, all excellent. Isolation very difficult, 93 next birthday, help from daughter with shopping. Include podiatry and sight in your work plan. No practice details given.
7. Dentistry
Patient lost four teeth. Dentist said bridge not possible and needed denture. Denture did not fit properly so had to go back on several occasions. Still not right, one falls out and the other hurts, name of dental practice not given.
8. Isolation has made me feel more under pressure with the people I care for. More support needed, e.g., online groups and opportunities to stay active.

9. GP Services/General

Visited GP as had shingles, and for blood test, felt safe and well cared for. Covid precautions all in place. Hardest thing has been loneliness and only 18 months since husband died, still grieving. Also fear from media coverage, overweight so worried what will happen if I do get covid. Also visited Sunderland Eye Infirmary, excellent service.

10. GP Services

Had virtual appointment with GP, system worked, and GP called at appointed time. System works but prefer normal system. The system of not visiting the surgery could be dangerous as there are symptoms which a GP may not pick up if they do not see you. Surgery name not provided.

11. 111, Walk In and GP

Unable to get through to 111 so went to walk in clinic at Hartlepool. Staff abrupt, said should have rang for an appointment, explained had tried. Staff asked husband to wait outside but then let another person wait nearby with their friend whilst I was waiting to be seen.

Generally found it harder to get help from GP or hospital because of Covid. GP service particularly hard to contact. Name of surgery not given.

12. One Life

24/9 called at One Life with painful lump on elbow. Nurse Practitioner examined elbow and prescribed antibiotics. Patient said the other elbow also painful and told would need to see GP. Tried to see GP but directed back to Nurse Practitioner who made an appointment for blood tests in three weeks. Name of surgery not provided.

13. GP Services – excellent experience, phone consultation, blood tests and bone scan arranged as well as flu vax. Afterwards they got in touch to ask how I was doing. Name of surgery not given.

14. GP Services

Routine check-up appointment cancelled twice, once due to staff sickness, then Covid, then 6 months wait between first appointment and seeing the nurse for general observations (height, weight, blood pressure etc). Told bloods to be taken and asked nurse to identify tests that would be made. Told it would be 2 weeks before results available and would only be informed if further tests needed. Would have preferred phone call to let me know. Not asked how feeling generally and would have liked to speak to trained nurse rather than HCA as other issues I wanted to discuss. Not told that I would be seeing HCA and think I should have been. Name of surgery not given.

15. Hartlepool Hospital and Audiology at One Life

Kidney scan, staff all caring and helpful. Hearing test at One Life, got new hearing aid immediately. Excellent service!

16. North Tees Hospital

Referred by GP to North Tees for tests in March. Staff really good and doctor said I had viral infection. I had to get a taxi to North Tees and had a friend with me. Able to go home same day again by taxi but felt unwell for days. Often wonder if it was Covid related. Also saw eye specialist who was great.

17. GP Services

Ordering tablets by phone went well and delivery by pharmacy was good. However, my GP reviewed one of my medications prescribed by hospital specialist without informing me. I only discovered this after visiting the pharmacy and then the surgery. I then had to contact the hospital and ask them to contact GP. Name of surgery not given.

Should include veteran care in your workplan.

18. GP Services

Excellent care from Dr Garcia at Chadwick practice. Also, excellent care from Ultrasound staff at Hartlepool Hospital, appointment received within 24 hours of referral.

19. Hospital Services

Treatment for skin cancer delayed by five months by me due to shielding. Once treatment/procedure was undertaken everything was managed efficiently. Stitches opening resulted in problem as I felt due to numbers pressure they would not restitch.

20. GP Services

Virtually impossible to get an appointment. Ridiculous only having appointments available at 8am, it does not consider working people. Free parking was good. Name of surgery not given.

21. GP/Hospital

From GP to diagnosis took 5 weeks maximum, all in all Covid pandemic has not compromised my care.

22. GP/Pharmacy/Dentist/Hospital

Have been involved with all the above and found them all to be more efficient than pre- Covid. In March 2020. Only issues have been in March had mouth infection, two types of antibiotic then filling fell out. Still cannot get replacement or cap. Future work should include the provision of domiciliary care, isolation and loneliness. No details of practices given.

23. Dentistry

Needed urgent dental care, telephoned, and was triaged. Dentist then rang later that day and again triaged again. Agreed I had an infection and would need extraction.

I was told to collect prescription for antibiotics from Boots. On arrival told pharmacist had gone to lunch at 11.45am and I would need to come back later. After taking meds for 1 week, have been offered date for extraction. This whole process has taken a long time. Name of dentist not given.

24. Hospital Care – North Tees (EAU + Ward 27)

Despite Covid my husband was referred urgently to EAU at North Tees. He received excellent care and was transferred to Ward 27 and was an inpatient for 6 days. I was informed of the need to admit but not which ward he had moved to.

During that time, I was not allowed to visit him. The ward phones were therefore very busy. At times it took several calls to get an answer, and the hospital ward had a system where they transferred incoming calls to a mobile phone which was taken to the patient. This allowed a good supportive network.

The staff were always happy to explain what was happening even when there were delays for procedures. The whole episode was well managed.

25. GP Services/One Life Audiology

At my GP surgery we can at present telephone in for prescriptions. Previously we had to go in person to do this. I had a hearing review at One Life which was very satisfactory. Name of GP practice not given.

26. GP Services

Unable to get through on telephone so had difficulty getting appointments. When I got through, kept waiting in queue for a further 30 minutes plus. Also, unable to access face to face professional help and would have liked to speak to someone face to face about my illness and options.

27. GP Services

"I wanted a consultation with my GP (West View Millennium Surgery) and was directed to the online portal. This was effective, and a prescription was sorted in no time.

I think that for simple conditions this is a useful tool.

Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic

"It has been relentless, and I think in all honesty I feel mentally fatigued; just tired. I've also put on a bit of timber due to snacking and/or comfort eating. I know I need to lose it longer term, so hopefully when the weather improves and lock down eases I will."

Is there any other information and/or self-help resources that you feel you may need to help keep you well and healthy in the future?

"Holistic mental wellness stuff"

28. GP Services

"Throughout the pandemic I feel that my surgery has been so focused on responding to Covid-19 that they have paid little attention to people who want to speak to them about other illnesses. I have contacted them a couple of times and been only allowed a phone conversation and diagnosis, which was unhelpful."

Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic

"I was very happy with the Covid-19 provisions in Hartlepool"

Would you like to suggest any other areas to include in our workplan?

"Advice on Calorie controlled diets, ways to lose weight healthily"

29. Dentistry

"Not being able to get a Dentist appointment as most things were not enough of an emergency."

Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic

"Unable to get an appointment to be seen"

30. GP Services

"I am a patient at Havelock Surgery, situated in the One Life. Other patients and I are so frustrated with their appointment system. Bookable appointments are not available, you are instructed to phone on the day at 8.30am. This means everyone trying to get through at the same time. The phones are engaged, then eventually you are in a queue. When you finally get through, your often told, 'all appointments are taken, and can you phone back the next day'?"

I find this system frustrating, and I have spoken to older people, who say 'they eventually give up'. So, missing important medical attention.

The disappointing appointment system is not a result of the Covid pandemic, that is how they conduct their service generally."

Would you like to suggest any other areas to include in our workplan?

"The difficulty in making GP appointments as described above"

31. GP Services

I am very lucky to be a patient at West View Millennium Surgery, but many times this year I have had to phone other GP Practices on behalf of our clients due to them not being able to get appointments for themselves. When people aren't in good health and they are trying to book appointments being on hold for half an hour is too long or trying to constantly call to get through to then be put in a que is daunting to someone who has no energy when they are already feeling poorly.

This is also the case for my partner who tried to get an appointment online and via the phone and was unsuccessful. The online app just went to the NHS website for advice and when he phoned there was no appointments available. This is unfortunately just a reoccurring theme throughout many GP practices in Hartlepool.

Coronavirus/Covid 19 pandemic

Yes! because you are now only contacted VIA telephone from your GP. I find it very worrisome to think they are diagnosing people over the phone. I really hope they get back to doing face to face appointments in the near future as it isn't the same having to try and explain your symptoms over the phone.

32. GP Services

"Can never get through on telephone"

Is there any other information and/or self-help resources that you feel you may need to help keep you well and healthy in the future?

"Cheaper home care – cleaning, cooking etc."

33. GP Services

Excellent care from GP services and 111 services, the nurse was very good (when i had 3 cracked ribs). Nothing much they can do with Ribs, just painkillers which were ready to pick up from the Pharmacy also excellent service with Anti Covid 19 Jabs

Would you like to suggest any other areas to include in our workplan?

People with sight problems, the blind etc.

Having had 2 sight problems it made me very grateful for my sight, my surgeon gave me excellent treatment at Sunderland Eye Infirmary.

34. Hospital care e.g. A&E, inpatient care, outpatient clinics

- Need big improvement for deaf awareness especially admin and staff
- Shout patients through, no visual noticeboard so on edge all the time, don't know when it's your turn or if you have missed your appointment
- Several Deaf BSL users have been sent telephone appointments, even got sent one for a cochlea implant related appointment.
- Deaf community feel discriminated against – don't know why we are constantly forgotten/not considered important
- Interpreters not always booked for appointments; how do we check?
- Since my cochlea implants I have never had an interpreter booked for my appointment – expect you to lip read but I don't understand a thing the doctor tells me
- I'm waiting to see specialist but delayed because of Covid, I don't know what's going on
- No interpreter booked for my surgery, my fiancé had to sign consent for me but she is also Deaf
- No interpreter because of Covid
- Stayed 48 hours in hospital – should have been 24 hours, don't know why they didn't explain
- Spent 2 weeks in hospital (tested positive for Covid) didn't have any language access for 2 weeks

Coronavirus/Covid19 Pandemic:

2 patients contracted Covid while in local hospitals for medical procedures, didn't get interpreter support. One person was communicated with a white board another person was shown pictures like 'food' and 'drink' was asked verbally if gave permission to have injection said yes but because he has learning disability didn't know what he was agreeing to. Only communication was yes or no answers.

No video interpreters were offered or used.

Deaf relative could not contact hospital, had to let patient's hearing sister call then she would text updates

Is there any other information and/or self-help resources that you feel you may need to help keep you well and healthy in the future?

Sign Video (or similar) to make contact with hospital departments or in-patients

In house interpreters who are employees of the hospital to ensure equal access to language.

Ability to text appointments to confirm, rather than finding someone to call for me

Deaf awareness training

35. GP Services

If you would rather be anonymous, avoid including things that can identify you:

- Impossible to get through to GP, not giving appointments out anyway
- I use Type Talk to call surgery, but line is always busy and never gets answered
- Nurse in surgery phoned me (I am profoundly Deaf) gave a different number to call her back on (couldn't return call when I had someone with me to talk on my behalf)
- Middlesbrough resident – I can text my GP and they set up video consultation
- Told do online consultation but couldn't because of English language, didn't want to ask my kids to help me. My wife helped (she is also Deaf) it took ages, went blank had to start again. Online consultation is not Deaf accessible, would prefer to send a video message.
- My doctor (Billingham) gave me an email address but I can't do that so my wife has to email for me.
- Deaf BSL users need sign video or similar access, Deaf people have to make all of the effort it's not fair
- Most Hartlepool GPs only have telephone access, they do not share email addresses as way for Deaf people to get in touch. Only telephone numbers or e-consult
- Have to physically walk into my GP to ask for an appointment
- I go at 8.30am and ask for appointment, have to pay parking for a 5-minute trip

Is there any way you feel your health care and wellbeing has been affected by the Coronavirus/Covid-19 Pandemic?

NO BSL Interpreter on Daily Briefings means Deaf people have to wait 24 hours to get access to same information. No BSL videos from any local agencies, public health, council, NHS Trust, etc.

Is there any other information and/or self-help resources that you feel you may need to help keep you well and healthy in the future?

Sign Video (or similar) to provide equal access to GP services, text messaging service to request appointments and medicines. BSL communications from my GP

Healthwatch Hartlepool have identified the following key areas of Health & Social Care to scrutinise over the coming year:

Hospital Discharge, Mental Health, Learning Disability Health Checks, Emergency Dentistry, Women's Health, Men's Health, Nutrition & Dietetics

Would you like to suggest any other areas to include in our workplan?

If YES let us know in the box below also with your reason for doing so:

That's a shame because I asked HW to continue to prioritise Deaf NHS Access following your annual review of 2020 when Healthwatch had so much success with Deaf access – the foundations have been laid but nothing has been done to make any improvements.

Clear - We will be clear about what activities we are carrying out. For example, we will be honest about whether we are informing, consulting, involving or co-producing.

Identify the need - We will be clear about the need to engage the community by:

- a. Being clear about the identified need or knowledge gap
- b. Involving the community at the earliest stage in the process
- c. Identify and justify the target audience
- d. Produce a clear project plan with deadlines including details of when results and actions will be available.

Consider other options/information -

- a. Where possible, look to coordinate consultation
- b. Identify if there has been recent research –sharing results
- c. Sharing common intelligence
- d. Forward planning-where possible linking consultation to the business planning cycle

Consistent - We are committed to involving citizens in all aspects of our work. These principles apply to the way we involve and consult across the board, including the way that we involve our own staff in decisions that affect their working lives.

Accountable - We will make sure that we feed citizen's views into decisions, policies and service developments and we will demonstrate and communicate what has changed as a result of public involvement.

Purposeful - We will only carry out engagement when there is a clear purpose. For example:

- a. Stakeholders themselves want to be involved
- b. The policy or strategy will have a direct impact on stakeholders' lives
- c. We have identified a gap in our knowledge
- d. There is a statutory requirement

Honest - when involving and consulting we will be honest about:

- a. What we are doing
- b. Why we are doing it
- c. What level of commitment we are asking from participants
- d. Be clear about individual responsibilities (that is both those asking and those responding)
- e. Only consult on what is achievable
- f. How we will use our findings
- g. How this feeds into our decision-making process
- h. How we will feed back

Open - We will make sure that our full meetings are held in public and that stakeholders can easily access the records of our meetings. We will also increase the opportunities for stakeholders to be involved.

Accessible - We will make sure that engagement is accessible by:

- a. Using plain English in any documents we publish
- b. Using the right methods of engagement for the right audiences
- c. Actively promoting materials in a range of formats, for example on tape, in Braille or in large print
- d. Using venues that are easy to get to and held at times and place that are appropriate to the participants.

Inclusive - We will be inclusive by:

- a. Making extra efforts to involve people whose views have been underrepresented in the past
- b. Making sure that people are not excluded from engagement processes through circumstances. This might mean providing crèches or carer support, hearing loop systems, language signers and holding meetings at appropriate times and in appropriate venues
- c. Making sure that no participants are out-of-pocket for taking part in involvement activities
- d. Ensuring consultees have the necessary information to participate effectively
- e. Enabling people to participate through building their capacity or by providing advocacy arrangements
- f. Communicating using plain English, avoiding jargon and abbreviations
- g. Making sure the consultation is widely communicated to the target audience
- h. Making sure information is available on request in large print or other formats (e.g. audio tape) and in both paper and electronic formats

Flexible - We will endeavour to provide a flexible approach by:

- a. Making sure that we allow enough time and space so that participants can contribute
- b. Where we have time constraints, making this clear and explaining the reasons why
- c. Making sure, where possible, to involve stakeholders at the earliest stages in the planning of services and projects rather than simply consulting them about pre-determined options
- d. Giving people the chance to get involved in ways that suit them best by offering a range of ways they can respond
- e. Making sure, with reason everyone who wants to take part can do so
- f. Giving people enough time to take part
- g. Working within the VCS Compact when involving voluntary and community groups
- h. Undertake robust research that can stand up to scrutiny

Safe - We will make sure that participants are safe and their views respected by:

- a. Making sure that we consider the needs of vulnerable participants
- b. Respecting what participants tell us in confidence
- c. Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998
- d. Recognising our duties under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Efficient - We will co-ordinate and link our community engagement activities where appropriate to help avoid duplication of effort, time and resources. We will take an active part in regional and countrywide activities and networks intended to achieve cost effectiveness.

Supported - We will make sure that elected members and staff undertaking public involvement activities are properly supported resourced and trained.

Evaluated - We will make sure that we build evaluation and monitoring into our consultation planning so that there is a way of measuring whether the outcomes have impacted on policy and strategy development.

Shared - We will make the results of engagement available to participants, partners and wherever possible, the general public and other key stakeholders.

Improved - We will learn lessons from our own activities and those conducted elsewhere so that we share, promote and publicise good practice and innovation in engagement

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

29 July 2021



Report of: Statutory Scrutiny Manager

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO CHILD POVERTY
IN HARTLEPOOL – SCOPING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform and assist discussions at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on the 29th July 2021 in the 'scoping' of the Committee's investigation into Child Poverty in Hartlepool.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Audit and Governance Committee, at its meeting on the 8th July 2021, considered its Work Programme for 2021-22.

- 2.2 Representations from the proposers of each topic suggestion were considered by the Committee and following detailed discussions the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year was agreed as follows:

- i) **Child Poverty** (Primary investigation for the year with a January deadline of presentation of the final report to the Finance and Policy Committee); and
- ii) **Accessibility to Services for those with Disabilities and Lifelong Conditions** (Council Referral – consideration required).

- 2.3 Given the requested timeframe for submission of a final report on the outcome of the Child Poverty investigation to the Finance and Policy by January 2022, it is proposed that this investigation be undertaken as a priority. Consideration of the Council referral to then be undertaken over the remainder of the municipal year.

- 2.4 Members are at today's meeting to be asked to develop and agree the process and timetable for the child poverty investigation.

3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION/ENQUIRY

- 3.1 To evaluate the true impact of child poverty and identify what the Council, and its partners, can do to make the positive changes required to reduce / eradicate it in Hartlepool.

4. PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION/ENQUIRY

4.1 The following Terms of Reference for the investigation are proposed as a starting point for discussion at today's meeting:-

- a) To gain an understanding from a local, national, regional and peer perspective of the:-
 - i) Scale and extent of child poverty;
 - ii) Causes of child poverty; and
 - iii) Impact of Covid-19.
- b) To examine barriers out of child poverty and explore their prevalence and impact in Hartlepool.
- c) To explore the effectiveness of activities and services currently in place to prevent, eradicate and remove barriers out of, child poverty:
 - i) In Hartlepool; and
 - ii) Across other geographical areas and sectors (areas of potential best practice).
- d) To identify service improvements or additions through which tangible reductions in child poverty levels across Hartlepool can be delivered.

5. POTENTIAL AREAS OF ENQUIRY / SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

5.1 The Committee is to be asked to discuss and identify during the course of today's meeting its preferred sources of evidence and methods of investigation. A presentation to the given at the meeting will assist Members in achieving this, in relation to:-

- a) **Potential Areas of Enquiry/Sources of Evidence:** Members of the Committee can request a range of evidential and comparative information throughout the Scrutiny review as part of the potential areas of enquiry and sources of evidence. The Committee can invite a variety of people to attend to assist in the forming of a balanced and focused range of recommendations.
- b) **Community Engagement/Diversity and Equality:** Community engagement plays a crucial role in the Scrutiny process and diversity issues have been considered in the background research for this enquiry under the Equality Standards for Local Government. Based upon the research undertaken, the Committee are to identify who to include within the Community engagement process.
- c) **Methods of Investigation:** The Committee have previously utilised a number of different methods of investigation including, presentations by experts, focus groups with specific groups of interest and online surveys. Members are requested to consider the best option to undertake the investigation to ensure the most effective use of the

Committee's resources.

6. PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION

6.1 Detailed below is the proposed timetable for the review to be undertaken, which may be changed at any stage:

9 September 2021 – Setting the Scene (Covering Terms of Reference a) and b))

29 September 2021 – What is currently taking place? (Covering Terms of Reference b) and c))

October 2021 (TBC) – Expert witnesses/reports/research (Covering Terms of Reference b), c) and d))

During October 2021 – Community Engagement to seek the views of groups and residents in terms of child poverty issues and how services could be better provided within the resources available. (Covering Terms of Reference b), c) and d))

11 November 2021 – Identification of Service improvements or additions (Covering Terms of Reference c) and d))

December 2021 – Formulation of recommendations for inclusion within the Final Report (informal Members session).

13 January 2022 - Agree Final Report for submission to Finance and Policy Committee.

17 January 2022 - Consideration of Final Report by the Finance and Policy Committee

7. RECOMMENDATION

7.1 That the Terms of Reference for the investigation into Child Poverty be approved.

7.2 For Members to identify and agree the following:

- (i) Potential Areas of Enquiry/Sources of Evidence;
- (ii) Community Engagement Diversity and Equality; and
- (iii) Methods of Investigation.

7.3 That the timetable, including additional meetings where required for undertaking the investigation be approved.

Contact Officer: - Joan Stevens – Statutory Scrutiny Manager
Chief Executive’s Department – Legal Services
Hartlepool Borough Council
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper(s) was/were used in the preparation of this report:-

- a) Hartlepool Borough Council Scrutiny Investigation – Child Poverty and Financial Inclusion – April 2010 – Final Report and Action Plan.
- b) Child and Family Poverty Strategy (under review 2021/22)
- c) Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

TEES VALLEY JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

19 March 2021

The meeting commenced at 10:00 am via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council: Councillors Sandra Smith (Chair) and B Clarke;
Darlington Borough Council: Councillor I Bell and B Donaghue;
Hartlepool Borough Council: Councillor G Hall;
Middlesbrough Borough Council: Councillors A Hellaoui and B Hubbard; and,
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council: Councillors E Cunningham, C Gamble and L Hall.

Also Present: A Armstrong, Hartlepool Borough Council
C Breheny, Middlesbrough Borough Council
G Woods, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
M Crutwell, D Gardner, B Kilmurray, C Lanigan, A Lowery, S Mayo
and Dr R Shah , Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust

Officers: S Fenwick RCBC Principal Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
A Pearson RCBC Governance Manager

24. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Rees (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council), B Harrison and B Loynes (Hartlepool Borough Council) and, E Polano (Middlesbrough Borough Council).

25. Declarations of Interest

None.

26. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2021 were approved as a correct record.

27. Community Mental Health Service Framework - Update

Representatives from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) gave a presentation on the Community Mental Health Framework and Developments in Mental Health Urgent Care Services.

The presentation highlighted the vision and outcomes for the Community Mental Health Framework which would be sustainable and joined up high quality mental health and care services that maximised the health and well being of the local population. It also set out the current structure of the Trust, key developments to date, the community model principles, and the next steps for 2021-22.

As part of the ensuing discussions the following points/questions were raised:

- Members felt that although the presentation was excellent it should have been circulated earlier as it contained a lot of information.
- The £600,000 awarded to Communities – was there any criteria and does it have to be applied for or was it awarded? Members were advised that a generic standard proposal form will be produced, there will be a general criterion in terms of aims and objectives and there will be an application process. Each area had a set amount as it was population base awarded. The aim of the funding was grassroots interventions at the VCS;
- A Member commented on the Marmot report on poverty and asked how the findings of that report would be incorporated into this framework, was there any capacity to spend in a preventative way and would greater awards be given to areas where the hot spots were in deprived areas. Members were advised that this will present opportunities to link to the population health management work that was taking place and will identify local needs, target those needs and invest in those areas;
- Members welcomed working together with clients and patients, but with regards to having named workers for each client a Member asked if there was a timescale. Members were advised that the arrangements for a named worker were currently being designed, the challenge would be the governance arrangements.
- A Member commented on 10 work streams and suggested it would be a benefit to have further information on the Local Authority work streams.
- A Member commented that the Trust did not do a very good job in dealing with armed forces veterans, it did not know how many veterans were in our areas annually as it was not included on the census. He asked whether consideration could be given to how they get assistance from Community Health. Members were advised that the Community Health Framework was at the start of its journey which would help to gain an understanding of what the local population needs were in each area. As part of this TEWV would also be working with groups like the British Legion, and this would be

an opportunity for this to be included.

- A Member commented on support workers who were working with the Police and on an evening and asked if they also work with local voluntary agencies i.e. Stockton Pastors to help people who are in distress on an evening. Members were advised that the Trust were currently looking at this and welcomed any thoughts on how to shape this service for the future.

RESOLVED that the information in the presentation be noted and information on TEWVs work with veterans be circulated

28. Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust: Our Big Conversation – Draft Strategic Framework

The Chief Executive of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) reminded Members that at the last meeting Members were presented with the Draft Strategic Framework, which set out the 3 goals the TEWV were committed to over the next five years. Members were advised that following consultation and work that had been carried out over the last six months the Strategic Framework had now been agreed.

RESOLVED that the information in the presentation be noted.

29. Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust Quality Account Update

Representatives from Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) presented the Quality Accounts for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The presentation looked back at progress made on the priorities this year, the Quality Accounts improvement metrics and the action taken in response to those metrics in Teesside.

Members were advised that detailed plans were currently being drafted for 3 proposed quality improvements priorities for 2021/22 namely: -

- Care Planning;
- Feeling Safe, and;
- Compassionate Care.

As part of the ensuing discussions the following points/questions were raised:

- Even though all targets have not been met it was encouraging to see there was an increase in the percentages towards the targeted figures.

- A Member expressed concern that the number of incidents of restraint had remained high and was similar to last year's figures. Last year Members were advised it was because of the eating disorder clinic, this year it was learning disabilities and people suffering from autism.
- Members commented that this is not just about individuals it was about staff, as the impact can also be traumatic for them too. Members were advised that a positive and safe program ran across the whole Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust which was focussed on supporting staff to provide interventions. The Burdett program was also being introduced.
- Too much restraining was being used and it should one of the priorities for next year. Members were advised that the numbers had reduced in Teesside but the figure were high with children with eating disorders as a lot of nasogastric feeding was taking place under restraint. It was suggested that this be discussed in detail at a future meeting.
- A Member commented that it was pleasing to hear the push on respect, compassion and dignity but asked in terms of data and statistics, how many people where behind the percentages and how many interviews have taken place in the categories to get the percentage responses. She commented that analysis of the data was important to know what sector of the population was affected and their particular challenges.

RESOLVED that:

1. The information in the presentation be noted.
2. That Representatives from the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) be invited to a future meeting to discuss in detail the target around physical intervention/restraint.

30. Work Programme and Future Meetings

The Governance Manager presented a report which advised of the annual handover arrangements for the Chair and administrative support for the Joint Committee and the work-programme items to be carried over into 2021-22.

Members were reminded that the terms of reference provided for the Chairing and administrative support of the committee to be rotated between all five Tees Valley Local Authorities on an annual basis. For the 2021/22 municipal year Middlesbrough Borough Council would take on this role.

The report also advised that at the first meeting of the Committee in the new municipal year the Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed and the remaining items on the work programme will be carried forward.

RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted.

Any other business

The Chair agreed that the following item could be discussed as any other business.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Report

The Chief Executive from Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) gave an update on a recent report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Members were advised that the report was currently embargoed but further information will be circulated to members in due course. - **NOTED**