

Statement of accounts

2023/2024

CONTENTS

	Page
Narrative Report	2
Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts	15
CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	16
Movement in Reserves Statement	17
Balance Sheet	18
Cash Flow Statement	19
Notes to the Core Financial Statements	20
SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENTS	
Collection Fund	65
Notes to the Collection Fund	66
Annual Governance Statement	69
Independent Auditor's Report	73

NARRATIVE REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council 's current [Corporate Strategy](#) sets out Our Vision: To be an innovative and forward-thinking council, that leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future.

It also states the values that we believe are key to achieving it: innovation, transformation, and delivery.

These values will enable us to deliver modern and successful public services that help to meet our four key priorities for the borough:

- Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council;
- Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment;
- Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance;
- Investing in our local economy.

The Narrative Report provides, amongst other things, an overview of the Borough Council; a brief explanation of the financial aspects of the Council's activities for the year 2023/24; a review of the year; and possible issues for the future.

2. OVERVIEW OF TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough

The Borough of Tonbridge and Malling is one of twelve districts in the County of Kent. It was established in 1974 by the merger of the Urban District of Tonbridge, the Rural District of Malling and parts of the Rural District of Tonbridge.

The Borough, with a population of 132,600, covers an area of 92.7 sq miles and is located in west Kent. Immediately to the east lies the county town of Maidstone. Sevenoaks lies some 6 miles to the west and Tunbridge Wells is located to the south close to the market town of Tonbridge. The Borough does not have a single urban focus but comprises a number of diverse, contrasting settlements and neighborhoods.

It stretches north, beyond the M2 motorway, encompassing Blue Bell Hill village and parts of Walderslade on top of the North Downs. To the south of the M2 is an area of the Borough known locally as the 'Medway Gap' where the River Medway cuts through the North Downs. This area includes a number of villages on the east and west banks of the River Medway which are based on a history of cement and papermaking. The urban area immediately to the south, which has resulted from the amalgamation of a series of former villages, comprises the parishes of Leybourne, East Malling and Larkfield, Ditton and Aylesford, and looks predominantly eastwards to Maidstone.

Most of the Borough is rural in character, with villages and small towns of varying size and character, many of which are of architectural or historic interest. The largest rural settlements are West Malling, Borough Green, Hadlow, Hildenborough and East Peckham. Kings Hill is a new mixed use community constructed on the former West Malling Airfield.

The Council

A Local Government Boundary Commission Review in 2022 recommended a reduction in the number of wards and the number of Councillors with effect from May 2023. The number of councillors reduced from 54 to 44 representing 19 wards after the local elections in May 2023.

Local Councillors are elected by the community to decide how the Council should carry out its various activities. They represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward in which he or she has been elected to serve a term of office. Elections of the whole Council are held every four years. The make-up of the Council is: Conservatives 20, Liberal Democrats 11, Green Party 8, Independent Alliance (Kent) 2 and Labour 3.

The Council operates on a system of Cabinet decision-making whereby the Leader and six Cabinet members are responsible for most day-to-day decisions. The Leader and each member of the Cabinet have responsibility for particular service areas. Members of the Cabinet are appointed annually by Full Council.

As at 31 March 2024 the Cabinet comprised the following Councillors:

Councillor M Boughton	Executive Leader
Councillor R Betts	Climate Change, Regeneration and Property
Councillor M Coffin	Deputy Executive Leader; and Transformation and Infrastructure
Councillor D Keers	Community Services
Councillor K Tanner	Finance and Housing
Councillor M Taylor	Planning

In addition to Cabinet there are a number of Committees with delegated responsibility for specific functions such as planning decisions. From April 2022 a number of governance changes became effective, introducing three Scrutiny Select Committees in addition to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee which give all Councillors the chance to discuss matters and assist the Cabinet in its decision-making. Members of Committees are appointed annually by full Council.

The full Council approves and adopts the budget and key policies within which Cabinet decisions are taken. Council holds the Cabinet and Committees to account for the decisions they take.

Further information on how the Council works can be found on the Council's [website](#).

Senior Management and Services

The Chief Executive is the most senior officer with overall responsibility to the Council for the management of its affairs and leads the Council's Corporate Management Team. The Chief Executive and four Directors make up the Council's Corporate Management Team.

Service areas are aligned with the Corporate Management Team as follows:

- Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service and Returning Officer for elections. Service responsibilities include conduct of elections, corporate policy, economic development / regeneration and electoral registration.
- Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. Service responsibilities include customer services, local land charges, democratic services, licensing, personnel and property.
- Director of Finance and Transformation and Section 151 Officer. Service responsibilities include accountancy, business rates, council tax, housing benefits, local council tax support and information technology.

- Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health. Service responsibilities include building control, development control, environmental protection, homelessness, housing advice and local plan.
- Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services. Service responsibilities include car parking, leisure centres, parks and open spaces, refuse collection and recycling and street cleansing.

Following the retirement of the Chief Executive in February 2024, the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and Transformation were appointed as interim Chief Executive and Interim Deputy Chief Executive until the arrival of the new Chief Executive in July 2024.

Further information on the Council's senior management can be found on the Council's [website](#).

3. OVERVIEW OF STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24. The Code is based on a hierarchy of approved accounting standards.

There have been no material changes to the presentation of the Accounts for 2023/24.

The accounting convention adopted for the preparation of the Accounts is an historical basis modified for the revaluation of certain categories of assets. The Accounts are supported by Accounting Policies and by various notes to the Accounts.

The Council's Accounts for the year 2023/24 in addition to the Narrative Report consists of the following sections.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

This sets out the respective responsibilities of the Authority and the Council's responsible financial officer. The Statement is signed when the Accounts are authorised for audit and again following the audit of the Accounts.

Core Financial Statements

The core financial statements consist of the following four statements and associated notes.

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement**

This Statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Movement in Reserves Statement and Expenditure and Funding Analysis.

- **Movement in Reserves Statement**

This Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end for the different reserves held by the Council. These are analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. It shows how the movements in year of the authority's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movement in the year following those adjustments.

- **Balance Sheet**

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

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

- **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.

- **Notes to the Core Financial Statements**

The notes present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used, for example, the method of depreciation used, policies in respect of provisions and reserves and accounting for pension costs. The notes also disclose information required by the Code that is not presented elsewhere in the financial statements. They also provide information that is not provided elsewhere in the financial statements, but is relevant to understanding them.

Supplementary Financial Statements

In addition to the four core statements the following supplementary statement and associated notes are included within the Accounts.

- **Collection Fund Statement and Associated Notes**

The Collection Fund Statement for English Authorities 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.

Annual Governance Statement

This Statement accompanies the Statement of Accounts, but is not part of the Accounts. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to assess and demonstrate that there is a sound system of corporate governance throughout the organisation.

Independent Auditor's Report

The Council's independent external auditors provide an independent opinion on whether the financial statements present a "true and fair view" of the financial position of the Council at the Balance Sheet date and its income and expenditure for the year. They also report on whether the Council has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

4. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Day to Day Expenditure and Income

The revenue account - known as the General Fund – shows the net cost of providing day-to-day services. The following paragraphs and tables provide details of actual General Fund spend compared to the budget on which the council tax was set. This is different to the accounting cost reflected within the financial statements whose format is set out under the accounting code.

In February 2023 the Council set a net revenue budget of £17,637,000. This was to be met from council tax income of £12,187,000, business rates of £2,954,000, grants and contributions of £3,010,000 and a collection fund surplus of £1,284,000; offset by a net contribution to specific earmarked reserves of £441,000 and a contribution of £1,357,000 to the general revenue reserve.

The revised net revenue budget of £18,457,000 prepared in the year was £820,000 more than the original budget set by the Council in February 2023. This, was primarily offset by a one off windfall in recovered VAT on Leisure Services provided up to 2013. This together with a decrease in business rates of £793,000; offset by the increased movement in the net contribution to or from specific earmarked reserves of £939,000 and an increase of £209,000 in other grants and contributions, led to a contribution to the general revenue reserve of £1,241,000 compared to the estimated contribution to the reserve of £1,357,000 when the budget was set in February 2023, a reduction of £116,000.

The actual spend (net) for the year of £16,222,000 was £1,209,000 less than the original budget set by the Council in February 2023. This, together with an increase of £2,859,000 in the planned net contribution to specific revenue reserves and an increase of £421,000 in other grants and contributions; offset by an increase of £767,000 in respect of business rates, led to a contribution to the general revenue reserve of £1,304,000 compared to the estimated contribution to the reserve of £1,357,000 when the budget was set in February 2023, a difference of £43,000.

The actual spend (net) compared with the original and revised budget is shown in the table below.

2022/23 Actual		Original Budget	2023/24 Revised Budget	Actual
£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000
3,484	Corporate Services	4,187	3,760	3,796
984	Chief Executive	1,321	1,260	1,068
464	Director of Central Services	379	930	507
(383)	Director of Finance & Transformation	571	(473)	(1,486)
4,928	Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	5,008	6,133	6,857
8,680	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	9,027	9,584	9,151
18,157	Cost of Services	20,493	21,194	19,893
(2,746)	Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	(2,856)	(2,736)	(3,510)
(116)	Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital	(206)	(166)	(161)
15,295	Sub-total	17,431	18,292	16,222
(1,194)	New Homes Bonus	(611)	(611)	(611)
(1,687)	Other Grants & Contributions	(2,399)	(2,792)	(2,820)
0	VAT Windfall	0	(2,043)	(2,043)
245	Contributions to or (from) Specific Revenue Reserves	647	1,545	3,606
12,659	Sub-total	15,068	14,391	14,354
950	Contribution to or (from) General Revenue Reserve	1,357	1,241	1,304
13,609	Budget Requirement	16,425	15,632	15,658
(1,722)	Business Rates Retention Scheme	(4,153)	(3,360)	(3,386)
(158)	Council Tax (Surplus) / Deficit	(85)	(85)	(85)
11,729	BALANCE TO BE MET FROM COUNCIL TAXPAYERS	12,187	12,187	12,187
£224.50	Council Tax at Band D (Borough Council only)			

Factors that contributed towards the favourable variance include high interest returns from investments, higher income from our major income sources and additional new burdens grants associated with Government Grant schemes over recent years. Offset by increased contributions to earmarked reserves.

The table below provides in more detail the reasons for the variation of £53,000 in the contribution to / (from) the General Revenue Reserve.

	Original Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Variance £'000
Business Rates Retention Scheme	(4,421)	(3,501)	920
Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes	1,494	2,383	889
Regen of Tonbridge Town Centre Reserve	0	650	650
Climate Change Reserve	0	618	618
Salaries (see adjacent page)	13,531	13,888	357
Temporary Accommodation	330	578	248
Benefits Admin Grants	(475)	(320)	155
Health & Safety - Trees	80	201	121
New Burdens Grants	(325)	(207)	118
Housing Benefits	(2)	105	107
Parking Fees & Charges	(3,303)	(3,271)	32
Planning Application Fees	(850)	(867)	(17)
Building Repairs Reserve	(395)	(428)	(33)
Bad Debt Provision	35	(7)	(42)
Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust	0	(80)	(80)
Information Technology	1,239	1,157	(82)
Investment Income	(1,125)	(3,207)	(2,082)
Other	5,017	3,191	(1,826)
TOTAL	10,830	10,883	53

An analysis of salaries is given in the table below. At 31 March 2024 the Council employed 261 permanent staff (31 March 2023: 250) or 230 full-time equivalents (31 March 2023: 220).

2022/23	2023/24		
Actual	Original Budget	Actual	Variance
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
842 Administration & Property	970	869	(101)
1,648 Environmental Health & Housing	1,788	1,762	(26)
567 Executive	638	688	50
1,742 Finance	1,778	1,783	5
1,020 Information Technology	1,170	1,130	(40)
608 Legal	664	720	56
527 Personnel	569	567	(2)
2,576 Planning	2,473	2,790	317
1,334 Street Scene & Leisure	1,362	1,350	(12)
697 Technical	752	769	17
11,561 Sub-total	12,164	12,428	264
1,380 Superannuation Back funding	1,430	1,430	0
0 Staff Turnover Saving	(120)	0	120
29 Apprenticeship Scheme / Levy	52	31	(21)
0 Ring Fenced Sums	6	0	(6)
12,970 Sub-total	13,532	13,889	357
(616) Contributions from Earmarked Reserves	(598)	(780)	(182)
12,354 TOTAL	12,934	13,109	175

More detailed information on the Council's income and expenditure for the year at service budget level can be found in the Revenue and Capital Outturn booklet on the Council's [website](#).

Capital Expenditure

The Council has a programme of capital investment that will assist in the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives. This investment includes the purchase of land and buildings; vehicles plant and equipment, and improvements to existing properties.

In February 2023 the Council set a capital budget of £7,057,000 net of specific government grants and other contributions all of which was to be met from the revenue reserve for capital schemes. The original budget was revised during the year to take account of the position at the end of 2022/23 and progress made on the Council's capital projects. The revised budget total was £2,316,000 of which £2,070,000 was to be met from the revenue reserve for capital schemes and the balance from capital receipts.

The Council's capital spend net of specific government grants and other contributions in the year including work completed, but not yet billed was £1,070,000 of which £247,000 was to be met from capital receipts and the balance from the revenue reserve for capital schemes. The underspend of £1,246,000 can largely be attributed to a lower than anticipated spend on capital renewals.

A summary of capital expenditure by service is shown in the table below.

2022/23 Actual £'000	Service	Scheme	Original Budget £'000	2023/24 Revised Budget £'000	Actual £'000
(75)	Planning, Hsg & Env Health	Other Schemes	30	113	10
(75)		Total	30	113	10
322	Street Scene, Leisure & Technical	Waste Collection Containers	120	120	116
126		Larkfield Leisure Centre	0	14	4
125		Land Drainage & Flood Defense	1,231	131	131
60		Sports Grounds	0	116	38
32		Other Schemes	45	70	81
665		Total	1,396	451	370
0	Corporate	Land and Property Development	3,285	225	118
0		Other Schemes	45	93	85
0		Total	3,330	318	203
0	Capital Renewals	Planning, Housing & Env Health	0	0	0
159		Street Scene, Leisure & Technical	1,776	929	340
35		Corporate	525	505	147
194		Total	2,301	1,434	487
784	TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		7,057	2,316	1,070
241	Funding	Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes	7,057	2,069	823
543		Capital Receipts	0	247	247
784	TOTAL FUNDING		7,057	2,316	1,070

More detailed information on the Council's Capital Plan for the year at service budget level can be found in the Revenue and Capital Outturn booklet on the Council's [website](#).

Net Worth

The Balance Sheet gives details of what the Council owns in the way of assets such as property, plant and equipment; what the Council has invested; and amounts of money owed to and by the Council (Net Worth). The table below shows the Council's Net Worth is £122.4m as at 31 March 2024 (31 March 2023: £113.5m). The increase in net worth can be attributed to a number of factors which are explained in the [Notes to the Core Financial Statements](#).

At 31 March 2023 £'000		At 31 March 2024 £'000
92,853	Council Assets	94,763
13	Inventories	16
54,506	Cash and Investments held	54,858
4,807	Money owed to the Council	5,990
(18,930)	Money owed by the Council	(15,917)
(10,463)	Long Term Liabilities	(11,132)
(9,275)	Pension Liability	(6,127)
113,511	TOTAL	122,451

This is represented by revenue balances and reserves of £33.8m available to fund services and £88.6m of other balances. A breakdown of the revenue balances and reserves is shown below.

At 31 March 2023 £'000		At 31 March 2024 £'000
7,882	Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes	9,436
8,611	General Revenue Reserve	9,915
1,300	Building Repairs Reserve	1,122
3,250	Property Investment Fund Reserve	3,250
7,045	Earmarked Reserves	8,448
1,250	Revenue Balances - General Fund	1,250
352	Grants & Contributions Unapplied	357
247	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	0
29,937	TOTAL	33,778

Council Assets

The Council's assets comprise Property, Plant and Equipment, Heritage Assets, Investment Property and Intangible Assets.

- Property, plant and equipment are assets that are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services or for administrative purposes and are expected to be used during more than one period.
- Heritage assets are defined as an asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge or culture.
- Investment property are those that are used solely to earn rentals 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.
- Intangible assets do not have physical substance, but are identifiable and controlled by the Council through custody or legal rights. Intangible assets held by this Council currently consist of IT software and associated costs.

- The Code requires the Council to consider material changes in other assets not due for revaluation in the current year under the five-year rolling programme. In addition to non-operational properties the valuers were instructed to revalue the Council's homelessness properties, three main leisure facilities and the Café at Leybourne Lakes Country Park. Heritage asset values have been reviewed and uplifted to reflect the insured value of the asset. The resulting revaluation was a net gain of £2,902,000, of which £3,896,000 is recognised in the revaluation reserve and losses of £994,000 recognised in the (surplus) / deficit on provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

The External Valuers used during the valuation process, Wilks Head & Eve determined that no other property asset class required revaluation because of a notable change in value. The revaluation is carried out at the end of each year after accounting for depreciation and disposals. As at 31 March 2024 the total value of the Council's Assets was £94.8m (31 March 2023: £92.9m).

Borrowing

The Council had no recourse for short term or long term borrowing during the financial year and remained debt-free at 31 March 2024 and, at least in the short term, does not expect to borrow to support its capital programme.

Investments

Investments are broken down into internally managed core funds and cash flow surpluses (including cash equivalents). The Council prepares a Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy as part of the Budget Setting Process each year. The Strategy for 2023/24 was approved by full Council in February 2023 and outlined the Council's approach to the management of risk both in terms of security and liquidity of its investments. Investment performance is monitored during the year and a report on treasury management activity including performance is reported to each meeting of the Audit Committee. In addition, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy and any revisions during the year are presented to the Audit Committee prior to consideration by Cabinet and Council approval to provide an independent scrutiny role.

At the start of the year a balance of £5m was invested in property investment funds and no further sums were invested during the year. The Council achieved an investment return of 3.59% on its property investment funds for the year. This equates to investment income of £179,360. At the end of March 2024 the value of the Council's property investment funds stood at £4.041m including the entry fee paid at the time the investment was made.

At the start of the year a balance of £4.25m was invested in multi-asset diversified income funds and no further sums were invested during the year. The Council achieved an investment return of 4.94% on its multi-asset diversified income funds for the year. This equates to investment income of £207,760. At the end of March 2024, the value of the Council's multi-asset diversified income funds stood at £3.762m.

The decrease in the capital value of the long-term investments are a result of the current economic conditions which include the inflationary pressures on the UK economy. The fund valuations will fluctuate from year to year and any losses or gains will only be recognised on the sale of the investments.

The Council achieved an investment return of 5.39% on its core funds for the year. This equates to investment income of £1,489,030. At the end of March 2024, the value of the Council's core fund investments stood at £32.0m.

The Council achieved an investment return of 5.51% on its cash flow investments (including cash equivalents) for the year. This equates to investment income of £1,717,990. At the end of March 2024, the value of cash flow investments stood at £13.916m.

Further information on Treasury Management performance for the year ended 31 March 2024 can be found in the Treasury Management Outturn report annexed to the Revenue and Capital Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2024.

Cash Flow Statement

This table summarises the inflows and outflows of cash and cash equivalents for both revenue and capital purposes.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
3,290	Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services	(3,262)
(864)	Adjusting for Non-Cash Movements	4,287
934	Adjusting for Investing & Financing Activities	285
3,360	Net Cash Flows from Operating Activities	1,310
3,294	Investing Activities	9,748
(4,267)	Financing Activities	(2,225)
2,387	NET (INCREASE) / DECREASE IN CASH RESOURCES	8,833

Pension Fund

The Council is a member of the Local Government Pension Scheme which is administered on behalf of the Council by Kent County Council. The Statement of Accounts reflects the full adoption of International Accounting Standard 19 (Retirement Benefits) (IAS19).

Pension costs charged to services are based on the cost of providing retirement benefits to employees in the period that the benefits are earned by the employee rather than the actual cash contributions to the Pension Fund. This cost, referred to as the current service cost, is calculated by the Fund's actuary.

The net liability at 31 March 2024 was £6.1m (31 March 2023: £9.8m). The change in the pension fund deficit over the year is mainly dependent on asset returns, discount rates linked to corporate bond yields and market expectations of inflation, this year has seen significant increases in bond yields and inflationary effects which when taken together has resulted in a decrease in the pension fund deficit compared to the previous year.

It is important to note that IAS 19 does not have any impact on the actual level of employer contributions. Employers' levels of contribution are determined by triennial actuarial valuations which are based on the Fund's actual investment strategy (rather than being based on corporate bond yields). The scheme has been assessed by Barnett Waddingham LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, on behalf of Kent County Council. The valuation in March 2022 gave a pension fund deficit of £3.5m and set the employers' contribution rate at 20.7% for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. Employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5%.

Further information relating to the assets, liabilities, income and expenditure of the pension scheme can be found in [Note 12](#) to the accounts.

5. REVIEW OF THE YEAR

A year of rising costs for households and for the council, where grant schemes are introduced to help those worse affected, and the council continues to look closely at ways to balance the books, while still aiming to achieve targets for climate change reform and develop strategies for business and housing. The start of the reign of King Charles III.

- April 2023 – Launch of the Community Development Grants scheme, and the green business grant funding launched for business development initiatives and to help reduce the carbon footprint of business premises. Announcement of Blue Bell Hill car park closure due to anti-social behaviour.
- May 2023 – Coronation parties taking place, a new Mayor and Cabinet are agreed, as Matt Boughton is re-appointed Leader of TMBC.
- June 2023 – Report on the third year of the council's climate change action plan showed that progress has been made but there's still a long way to go. The one-year partnership with enforcement company NES had seen more than 1,000 penalties issued for dropping cigarette butts, fly-tipping and littering and was voted to be continued.
- July 2023 – Councillors agreed to distribute the Government's Household Support Fund to residents who are struggling to meet rising energy bills and general costs of living.
- August 2023 – TMBC's draft economic strategy is launched, to support businesses, enhance high streets and boost tourism across the borough, via a range of council-led initiatives and partnerships including business grants, retail improvements, advice, and events to help strengthen the local economy and provide jobs.
- September 2023 – Councillors consider changes to car park charges, and extensions of car park charging periods in order to meet rising operating costs.
- October 2023 – Policy approved that all licensed taxis in the borough take credit card payments and are barred from refusing to take passengers who are travelling short journeys.
- November 2023 – Chief Executive, Julie Bielby, announces her retirement. Refurbishment or replacement of the Angel centre is discussed by councillors, and consultations launched on the perception of safety in the borough for women and girls, and the management of Taddington Valley woodland.
- December 2023 – Adrian Stanfield takes on the role of Interim Chief Executive, and local organisations which want to learn more about how to cut their carbon emissions are invited to apply for funding to undertake carbon literacy training.
- January 2024 – A trio of employment schemes launched in partnership with KCC, Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to enhance the prospects of those seeking work.
- February 2024 – New council tax rates agreed, bottle banks and bring sites to be removed due to improved and widely available recycling facilities, littering fines increased and TMBC, working in partnership with Kent Police, issued more than 40 fixed penalty notices of £100 to boy racers in Larkfield. Kent Police also put dispersal orders in place to be able to move on anyone at gatherings in the area.
- March 2024 – It was announced that Damian Roberts was to be the new Chief Executive at TMBC, bee friendly bus shelter installed in Quarry Hill Road, Tonbridge, 180 solar panels were fitted to the roof of Tonbridge Swimming Pool to save energy costs and reduce carbon emissions, community grants launched to help improve the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the borough via voluntary and community groups, and annual clean-up of the River Medway in Tonbridge takes place.

Financial and Performance Statistics

- We collected 98.02% of the £115.3m of council tax due for the 2023/24 year (2022/23: 98.4% of the £109.1m due).
- We collected 99.4% of the £66.7m of business rates due for the 2023/24 year (2022/23: 99.4% of the £56.1m due).

- We paid 99.7% of the 5,906 invoices processed within 30 days of receipt in 2023/24 (2022/23: 99.7% of the 5,539 invoices processed).
- On average 49% (2022/23: 47%) of household waste was recycled, 50% (2022/23: 52%) energy recovery and 1% (2022/23: 1%) to landfill in 2023/24.
- 87% of major planning applications and 86% of minor planning applications were determined within the recommended timeframe in 2023/24.

Transparency

As part of its commitment to openness and accountability the Council publishes a number of datasets under the heading Transparency in Local Government. Information provided includes:

- Payments the Council has made to suppliers.
- Senior officer remuneration.
- Allowances paid to Members.
- Prompt payment statistics.
- The cost of operating the Council's On and Off Street Car Parking.

Further details can be found on the Council's [website](#).

6. THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covers both revenue and capital budgets over a rolling ten-year period. The Strategy affords the opportunity to take a measured and structured approach to budget pressures rather than a "knee jerk" reaction. The Strategy sets out the high level financial objectives the Council wishes to fulfil over the agreed time span. This currently includes achieving a balanced revenue budget that delivers the Council's priorities and to retain a minimum of £3.0m in the General Revenue Reserve by the end of the strategy period, and not to fall below £2.0m at any time during the 10-year period. The general revenue reserve balance at 31 March 2024 was £9.9m (31 March 2023: £8.6m).

Since 2010/11 the Council has seen its local government finance settlement (core funding) decrease by some 61% or £4.0m (from £6.6m in 2010/11 to £2.6m in 2024/25). The fall in core funding is, in part, negated by the grant award under the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme and other grant income. The future of NHB or a replacement scheme, remains the subject of discussion, but at the very least the scheme will not continue in its current form, leaving one of two options: the scheme is withdrawn and not replaced; or is replaced, but the funding stream and sum awarded is much reduced (managements working assumption). The future of other grant income is also uncertain.

For medium term financial planning purposes, it is assumed that government grant funding will steadily reduce from circa £9.665m in 2024/25 to £3.442m in 2027/28 before seeing a modest increase year on year thereafter. Following this review and savings of £195,000 identified and included in the 2024/25 budget, a revised savings target of £1,705,000 was identified. In addition to this savings target, some £600,000 of saving initiatives, covering officer accommodation and homelessness reduction have been included within the MTFS.

Dependent on the outcome of the yet to be concluded Fair Funding Review, and what is to happen to NHB and other grant income, business rates reforms, the extent and speed of the recovery following the pandemic and the impact of prevailing economic conditions on the Council's finances, there is a risk the funding gap could be more (and could potentially be less) than is presently reflected in the MTFS.

The council believes that our MTFS is resilient and the financial pressures likely to confront the Authority can be addressed in a measured and controlled way, but this is becoming progressively more difficult. That said, as in previous iterations of the MTFS the latest projected funding gap can be broken down into

tranches to enable more measured steps to be taken, (Tranche 1 – £305,000 by April 2025; Tranche 2 – £700,000 by April 2026; and Tranche 3 – £700,000 by April 2028).

It goes without saying that the Council faces a difficult and challenging financial outlook. Alongside the MTFS sits a Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). The purpose of the STS is to provide structure, focus and direction in addressing the financial challenges faced by the Council. In so doing, it recognises that there is no one simple solution and as a result the Council will need to adopt a number of ways to deliver the required savings and transformation contributions within an agreed timescale. A number of key themes have been identified, together with outline targets and timescales.

More detailed information on the Council's Budget for 2024/25, the MTFS and the STS can be found on the Council's [website](#).

Issues for the Future

The Council going forward, amongst other issues, will need to give due consideration to:

- The economic impact effecting energy prices, inflation and income including council tax and fees and charges more widely as cost of living pressures deepen.
- The outcome of the expected multi-year settlement and the Fair Funding Review;
- The Waste Services operation beyond the current contract period;
- Welfare Reform and cessation of the administration of housing benefits for working age claimants over a transitional period in the lead up to the migration to Universal Credit;
- The sustainability of the NHB scheme and what will follow;
- Business rates reforms;
- The ongoing impact of the localisation of council tax support; and
- Climate Change agenda and associated costs; and

The increased volatility and uncertainty attached to a number of these issues is such that financial planning is becoming increasingly difficult with the increased risk of significant variances compared to projections.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required:

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

The Director of Finance and Transformation's Responsibilities

The Director of Finance and Transformation is responsible for the preparation of the authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with the *CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24* ('the code').

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Director of Finance and Transformation has:

- ❖ selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- ❖ made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent; and
- ❖ complied with the code.

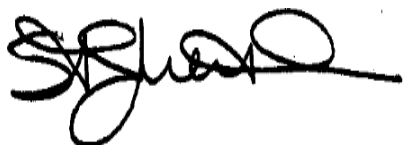
The Director of Finance and Transformation has also:

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

By signing the Statement of Accounts the Director of Finance and Transformation is stating that the Accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024.

This Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue by the Director of Finance and Transformation at the date given below.

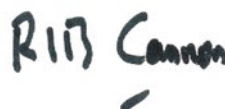
Signed



Sharon Shelton BSc (Hons) FCPFA
Director of Finance and Transformation

Dated 14 January 2025

Signed



Councillor Robert Cannon
Chair of the Audit Committee

Dated 14 January 2025

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

2022/23			Notes	2023/24			
Gross Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net Exp £'000		Gross Exp £'000	Income £'000	Net Exp £'000	
Continuing Operations							
4,413	369	4,044	Corporate Services	2,417	422	1,995	
1,757	773	984	Chief Executive	1,970	902	1,068	
1,384	689	695	Director of Central Services	1,522	765	757	
26,851	26,140	711	Director of Finance & Transformation	27,200	25,754	1,446	
9,549	4,621	4,928	Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	11,442	4,585	6,857	
13,795	5,113	8,682	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	15,079	5,884	9,195	
57,749	37,705	20,044	Cost of Services	59,630	38,312	21,318	
Other Operating Expenditure							
	105	(105)	Gain on Sale of Non-Current Assets	8	121	0	121
3,555		3,555	Parish Council Precepts		3,731	0	3,731
461		461	Drainage Board Levies		484	0	484
			Exceptional Item	6	0	2,042	(2,042)
Financing & Investing Income & Expenditure							
133	364	(231)	Trading Undertakings	10	133	383	(250)
	346	(346)	Interest & Investment Income	11		3,362	(3,362)
1,476		1,476	Net Interest on Defined Benefit Liability	12	365	0	365
42	205	(163)	(Gain) / Loss Arising from Changes in the Fair Value of Investment Properties	8	293	912	(619)
Taxation & Non-Specific Grant Income & Expenditure							
72	15,442	(15,370)	Council Tax	13	52	16,004	(15,952)
27,359	27,506	(147)	National Non-Domestic Rates	13	26,262	26,938	(676)
	5,055	(5,055)	General Government Grants	14	0	6,096	(6,096)
	829	(829)	Capital Grants & Contributions	14	0	284	(284)
90,847	87,557	3,290	(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services		91,071	94,333	(3,262)
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure							
		(4,361)	(Surplus) / Deficit Arising on Revaluation of Non-Current Assets	8			(3,896)
		(51,084)	Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Pensions)	12			(1,782)
(52,155) TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE							(8,940)

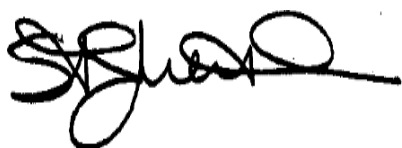
MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

2022/23							2023/24						
General Fund & Reserve Balances	Contrib's Unapplied	Usable Capital Receipts	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves		General Fund & Reserve Balances	Contrib's Unapplied	Usable Capital Receipts	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves	
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	Notes	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
34,906	456	685	36,047	25,309	61,356	BALANCE AT 1 APRIL	29,338	352	247	29,937	83,574	113,511	
(3,290)			(3,290)	55,445	52,155	Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	3,262	0	0	3,262	5,678	8,940	
						Adjustments Between Accounting Basis & Funding Basis Under Regulations							
						Depreciation & Amortisation of N-C							
2,754			2,754	(2,754)	0	Assets	8	2,514	0	0	2,514	(2,514)	0
(9)			(9)	9	0	Impairment of Non-Current Assets	8	996	0	0	996	(996)	0
(163)			(163)	163	0	Fair Value of Investment Properties	8	(619)	0	0	(619)	619	0
(826)	(104)		(930)	930	0	Grants & Contributions		(122)	5	0	(117)	117	0
						Net Charges made for Retirement							
2,098			2,098	(2,098)	0	Benefits	12	(1,366)	0	0	(1,366)	1,366	0
						Gain on Disposal of Non-Current							
(105)		105	0	0	0	Assets	8	121	0	0	121	(121)	0
						Council Tax / NNDR - Actual Surplus /							
(7,260)			(7,260)	7,260	0	Deficit	13	(232)	0	0	(232)	232	0
						Employee Benefits - Accrued Annual							
(60)			(60)	60	0	Leave	15	(69)	0	0	(69)	69	0
						Capital Exp. Charged to the General							
(126)			(126)	126	0	Fund		(666)	0	0	(666)	666	0
						Unrealised Gains / Losses on Long							
1,419			1,419	(1,419)	0	Term Inv Funds		264	0	0	264	(264)	0
0		(543)	(543)	543	0	Capital Receipts	16	0	0	(247)	(247)	247	0
(5,568)	(104)	(438)	(6,110)	58,265	52,155	Net Increase / (Decrease) in Reserves		4,083	5	(247)	3,841	5,099	8,940
29,338	352	247	29,937	83,574	113,511	BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	33,421	357	0	33,778	88,673	122,451	

BALANCE SHEET

At 31 March 2023			At 31 March 2024		
£'000	£'000		Notes	£'000	£'000
		Long Term Assets			
	70,960	Property, Plant & Equipment	8	69,719	
	16,902	Heritage Assets	8	19,424	
	4,906	Investment Properties	8	5,525	
	85	Intangible Assets	8	95	
100,964	8,111	Long Term Investments	11	7,848	102,611
		Current Assets			
	23,357	Short Term Investments	11	32,805	
	13	Inventories		16	
	4,819	Short Term Debtors	18	6,520	
51,227	23,038	Cash & Cash Equivalents	19	14,205	53,546
		Current Liabilities			
(18,942)	(18,942)	Short Term Creditors	20	(16,447)	(16,447)
		Long Term Liabilities			
	(5,147)	Provisions	21	(5,210)	
	(9,275)	Pensions Liability	12	(6,127)	
(19,738)	(5,316)	Grants & Contributions in Advance	22	(5,922)	(17,259)
113,511		NET ASSETS			122,451
		Reserves			
		Usable Reserves			
	28,088	Reserves	17	32,171	
	1,250	General Fund		1,250	
	352	Grants & Contributions Unapplied	22	357	
29,937	247	Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	16	0	33,778
		Unusable Reserves			
	43,601	Capital Adjustment Account	23	42,768	
	49,247	Revaluation Reserve	24	51,994	
	(1,183)	Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment A/c	11	(1,447)	
	1,386	Collection Fund Adjustment Account	13	1,617	
	(202)	Employee Benefits - Accrued Leave	15	(132)	
83,574	(9,275)	Pensions Reserve	12	(6,127)	88,673
113,511		TOTAL RESERVES			122,451

I certify that this Statement of accounts provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2024 and its Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement for the year then ended.



Sharon Shelton BSc (Hons) FCPFA
Director of Finance and Transformation

The Audit Committee will consider the Statement for approval on 13 January 2025.

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

2022/23		2023/24	
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
3,290	NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES		(3,262)
	Adjust Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements		
(2,754)	Depreciation & Amortisation	(2,514)	
9	Impairment & Downward Valuations	(996)	
1	Increase / (Decrease) in Inventories	3	
(23)	Increase / (Decrease) in Debtors	3,755	
(192)	(Increase) / Decrease in Impairment for Bad Debts	(225)	
8,226	(Increase) / Decrease in Creditors	3,097	
(2,098)	Movement in Pension Liability	1,366	
0	Carrying Amount of Non-Current Assets Sold or Derecognised	(121)	
(4,033)	Other Non-Cash Items Charged to the Net Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	(78)	
(864)			4,287
	Adjust for Items Included in the Net (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing & Financing Activities		
105	Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant & Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	0	
829	Any Other Items for Which the Cash Effects are Investing or Financing Cash Flows	285	
934			285
3,360	NET CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES		1,310
	INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
1,580	Purchase of Property, Plant & Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	957	
49,000	Purchase of Short-Term & Long-Term Investments	29,000	
(105)	Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant & Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	0	
(47,000)	Proceeds from Short-Term & Long-Term Investments	(20,000)	
(181)	Other Receipts from Investing Activities	(209)	
3,294	NET CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		9,748
	FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
(4,267)	Other Payments for Financing Activities	(2,225)	
(4,267)	NET CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		(2,225)
2,387	NET (INCREASE) / DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		8,833
25,425	Cash & cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		23,038
23,038	Cash & cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		14,205

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, 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. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2022/23				2023/24		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund & Reserve Balances £'000	Adjustments Between the Funding & Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement £'000		Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund & Reserve Balances £'000	Adjustments Between the Funding & Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement £'000
3,232	812	4,044	Corporate Services	3,433	(1,438)	1,995
984	0	984	Chief Executive	1,068	0	1,068
682	13	695	Director of Central Services	744	12	756
711	0	711	Director of Finance & Transformation	1,446	0	1,446
4,867	61	4,928	Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	5,867	990	6,857
6,258	2,424	8,682	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	6,888	2,307	9,195
16,734	3,310	20,044	Net Cost of Services	19,446	1,871	21,317
4,016	(105)	3,911	Other Operating Expenditure	2,173	122	2,294
(1,870)	2,606	736	Financing & Investing Income & Expenditure	(3,208)	(657)	(3,865)
(13,312)	(8,089)	(21,401)	Taxation & Non-Specific Grant Income & Expenditure	(22,493)	(516)	(23,008)
5,568	(2,278)	3,290	(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT ON PROVISION OF SERVICES	(4,082)	820	(3,262)
34,906			OPENING GENERAL FUND & RESERVE BALANCES	29,339		
5,568			(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	(4,082)		
29,338			CLOSING GENERAL FUND & RESERVE BALANCES	33,421		

Further information on the adjustments between the funding and accounting basis can be found in the [Movement in Reserves Statement](#).

2. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

a) General

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year and its position at the year-end. The Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the *Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24*. The Code is based on levels of approved accounting standards:

- International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) approved by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB).
- International Accounting Standards (IAS) approved by the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC).
- Interpretations originating from the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC).
- Interpretations originating from the Standing Interpretations Committee (SIC).
- International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) approved by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSASB).
- Financial Reporting Standards (FRS) approved by the Accounting Standards Board (ASB).
- Statements of Standard Accounting Practice (SSAP) approved by the Accounting Standards Committee (ASC).
- Urgent Issues Task Force's (UITF) Abstracts.

The accounting convention adopted for the preparation of these Accounts is an historical cost basis modified for the revaluation of certain categories of assets.

b) Qualitative Characteristics of Financial Information

- Relevance - in accordance with IAS 8 (Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors) the objective of the principal statements is to provide information on the Council's financial performance that is useful for assessing the stewardship of public funds and for making economic decisions.
- Reliability - the financial information can be depended upon to represent accurately the substance of the transactions that have taken place. The Accounts are unbiased, free from material error, have been prepared in a prudent manner and have included all issues that would assist users to make adequate decisions on the Council's financial standing.
- Comparability - the Accounts contain comparative information about the Council so that performance may be compared with a prior period.
- Understandability - although a reasonable knowledge of accounting and local government is required, all efforts have been made in the preparation of the financial statements to ensure that they are as easy to understand as possible.
- Materiality - an item of information is material to the Accounts if its misstatement or omission might reasonably be expected to influence assessments of the Council's stewardship and economic decisions.

c) Accounting Concepts

- Going concern – it is assumed that the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and accordingly the Accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis.
- Accruals - the financial statements, other than the Cash Flow Statement, have been prepared on an accruals basis. The accruals basis requires the non-cash effects of transactions to be reflected in the financial statements for the accounting period in which those effects are experienced and not in the period in which any cash is received or paid.

- Primacy of legislation - local authorities derive their power from statute and their financial and accounting framework is closely controlled by legislation. Where there is conflict between a legal requirement and an accounting standard, the legal requirement will take precedence.

d) Accruals and Revenue Recognition

Income and expenditure is accrued to ensure that it is accounted for in the year to which it relates, not when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies 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 inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- 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.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue in financing and investment income and expenditure for the income that might not be collected.
- There is a de-minimis limit for revenue accruals of £1,000 and there is a de-minimis limit of £10,000 for capital scheme accruals (this can be made up of multiple invoices). Transactions below this limit are not generally accrued for as they are deemed immaterial to the understanding of the accounts. There will be exceptions where accruals are raised below these limits, depending on the nature of the transaction.
- Revenue relating to council tax and business rates will be recorded at the full amount receivable, net of any impairment losses. These transactions are deemed to be of a non-contractual, non-exchange nature in that there is no difference between the delivery of services and the payment of the debt raised.
- Income from garden waste customers is apportioned between years to account for the service that they have paid for in the current and following financial years.

Where income or expenditure has been recognised within the income and expenditure account, but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the amount stated will be recorded on the Balance Sheet. Where debts raised may not be settled, the balance of debtors will be adjusted by an impairment adjustment charged to the revenue account.

Exceptions to these principles are electricity, gas and similar periodical payments (excluding council offices) which are charged at the date of meter reading rather than being apportioned between financial years; and penalty charge notices, income from car parks, land charges income, licensing fees and planning application and building control fees which are accounted for on the day of receipt. This policy is consistently applied each year and its effect on the Accounts is not considered to be material.

e) Assets Held for Sale

Non-current assets that have been identified for sale by the Council will be reclassified as current assets when the asset is being actively marketed and has a high probability of sale within twelve months of the Balance Sheet date.

f) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Internally managed investments of three months or less from the date of acquisition will be recognised as cash equivalents (short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value). Externally Managed funds normally comprise of investments that cannot be easily realised and are excluded from this heading.

g) Council Tax and National Non-Domestic (Business) Rates

The Council is a billing authority which is required to bill local residents and businesses for Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates respectively. The Council acts as an agent for Kent County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent and Kent Fire and Rescue in respect of Council Tax and as such the Accounts show the amount owed by and to taxpayers in respect of our proportion of the Council Tax and the major precepting authorities as a net debtor or creditor.

Similarly, the Council acts as an agent for the Government, Kent County Council and Kent Fire and Rescue in respect of Business Rates and as such the Accounts show the amount owed by and to taxpayers in respect of our proportion of the Business Rates and the other bodies covered by the Business Rates Retention scheme as a net debtor or creditor.

In addition, included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is our share of the Collection Fund surplus/deficit for the year in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates, which is subsequently reversed within the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account in the Balance Sheet.

h) Contingent Assets and Liabilities

Contingent assets should not be recognised in the accounting statements, they should be disclosed by way of notes if the inflow of a receipt or economic benefit is probable. Such disclosures should indicate the nature of the contingent asset and an estimate of its financial effect.

Contingent liabilities should not be recognised in the accounting statements, they should be disclosed by way of notes if there is a possible obligation which may require a payment or a transfer of economic benefits. For each class of contingent liability the Council should disclose the nature of the contingency, a brief description, an estimate of its financial effect, an indication of the uncertainties relating to the amount or timing of any outflow and the possibility of any reimbursement.

i) Debt Write-Off

The Director of Finance and Transformation approves and or recommends the write-off of debt where efforts to collect the sums have failed and any further action would be uneconomic or impractical or in the opinion of the Director of Finance and Transformation there is a valid reason for not pursuing the debt. In order to mitigate the financial impact of write-offs the Director of Finance and Transformation makes an impairment allowance taking into account the size and age of the debt outstanding and the likelihood of recovery.

j) Employee Benefits

Under the Code employee benefits are accounted for when the Council is committed to pay an employee. Employee benefits are split into three categories.

Benefits Payable during Employment

This covers:

- Short-term employee benefits, such as salaries and wages, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees.

- Benefits earned by current employees, but payable twelve months or more after the end of the reporting period (e.g. long-service awards).

Termination Benefits

This covers costs that are 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. They are often lump-sum payments, but also include enhancement of retirement benefits; and salary until the end of a specified notice period if the employee renders no further service that provides economic benefits to the entity.

In the event of notice of termination being served on an employee the known liability is recognised at the earlier of when the authority can no longer withdraw the offer of these benefits or when the authority recognises the costs of a restructure will involve the payment of termination benefits, any enhanced retirement benefits paid by the employer are accounted for on a cash basis.

Post-Employment Benefits

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Council offers retirement benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that needs to be disclosed at the time employees earn their future entitlement. The Local Government Pension Scheme is administered locally by Kent County Council – this is a defined benefit statutory scheme administered in accordance with the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2014, is contracted out of the State Second Pension and currently provides benefits based on career average revalued salary and length of service on retirement, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets.

Under IAS 19, the employer recognises as an asset or liability the surplus / deficit in a pension scheme. The surplus / deficit in a pension scheme is the excess / shortfall of the value of assets when compared to the present value of the scheme liabilities. A prerequisite of the introduction of IAS 19 was that it did not impact on taxation requirements. Where the contributions paid to the pension scheme do not match the change in the Council's recognised liability for the year, the recognised cost of pensions will not match the amount required to be raised in taxation. Any such mismatch is to be dealt with by an equivalent appropriation to or from a pension reserve. The Balance Sheet will show the net pension asset or liability and an equivalent pension reserve balance.

Contributions to the pension scheme are determined by the Fund's actuary on a triennial basis. The most recent actuarial valuation was on 31 March 2022 and will determine contribution rates for the three-year period from April 2023 to March 2026.

k) Events After the Balance Sheet Date

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Accounts are authorised for issue.

The authorised for issue date is:

- When the Accounts are signed by the Council's Section 151 Officer for approval by Members and published with the audit opinion and certificate which should be by no later than 30 September 2024.

Events arising after the Balance Sheet date and before either of the two dates above will be reflected in the Accounts if they provide additional evidence of conditions that existed at the Balance Sheet date and materially affect the amounts to be included (adjusting events). Such events:

- could materially alter an estimate of, for example, debtors, creditors or an impairment allowance previously identified in the accounting processes;
- could substitute a materially different actual figure for an estimate; or

- could reflect a permanent impairment or betterment in the financial position, but only where the originating event took place prior to the year-end and the amounts are considered material to the Accounts.

l) Exceptional Items and Prior Period Adjustments

Exceptional items, when they occur, are included in the cost of the service to which they relate or on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement if that degree of prominence is necessary in order to give a fair presentation of the Accounts. A description of any exceptional items will be given within the notes to the Accounts.

Prior period adjustments arise from corrections and adjustments that are the natural result of estimates inherent in the accounting process. Such adjustments constitute normal transactions for the year in which they are identified and are accounted for accordingly. Material adjustments applicable to prior periods arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors are accounted for by restating the comparative figures for the preceding period and adjusting the appropriate opening balances for the cumulative effect.

m) Financial Instruments

Financial instruments are broken down between financial assets (cash, investments and some categories of debtors) and financial liabilities (loans payable and some categories of creditors).

Although there are three classifications for the valuation of financial instruments, only two are relevant to the types of investments held by the Council, being either amortised cost or fair value through profit and loss (Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Debtors and creditors are measured at fair value and are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

Investments are broken down in two ways. Firstly, by maturity, in that any investment with a maturity date of more than 364 days after the Balance Sheet date will be classed as long-term and less than as short-term; and secondly by class of asset such as amortised cost or fair value through profit and loss.

Loans and receivables are assets that have fixed or determinable payments, but are not quoted in an active market, these are measured at fair value and are carried on the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

Assets classified as fair value through profit and loss have a quoted active market price and do not have fixed or determinable payments. These are measured and carried on the Balance Sheet at fair value through profit and loss.

Accrued interest is shown as part of the investment balance. This is a departure from the Code which requires accrued interest to be shown as part of the debtors balance. Accrued interest receivable within 364 days of the Balance Sheet date will be recognised as part of the short-term investment balance on the Balance Sheet, irrespective of the date of maturity of the investment.

Gains and losses in relation to investments are recognised within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under interest and investment income. Statute however requires unrealised gains and losses on investments classified as fair value through profit and loss to be subsequently transferred via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Balance Sheet.

n) Foreign Currency Transactions

Any gains or losses arising from exchange rate fluctuations will be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year of payment or receipt.

o) Government Grants and Other Contributions

Revenue grants received are accrued and credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the same period as the related expenditure was incurred.

Grants specific to a service will be shown against that service expenditure line. General grant, e.g. Revenue Support Grant and New Homes Bonus are credited and disclosed separately in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under taxation and non-specific grant income.

Capital grants and contributions (such as Section 106 developer contributions) received will be credited in full to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on receipt where there are no conditions attached to its use and in the year that the capital expenditure is incurred where there are conditions attached to its use.

p) Inventories

Inventories are valued at the latest price paid. This is a departure from the requirements of the Code and IAS 2 (Inventories), which require stocks to be shown at actual cost or net realisable value, if lower. The difference in value is not considered to be material.

q) Leases

A lease is an agreement whereby the lessor conveys to the lessee in return for a payment or series of payments the right to use an asset for an agreed period of time.

A finance lease is a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of an asset. Title may or may not eventually be transferred. An operating lease is a lease other than a finance lease. A definition of a lease includes hire purchase arrangements.

Finance Leases

The Council currently has no finance lease arrangements where it is the lessor or where it is a lessee.

Operating Leases

Lease payments under an operating lease shall be recognised as income or an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term unless another systematic basis is more representative of the benefits received by the Council where the Council is a lessor or lessee respectively.

r) Non-Current Assets

The Council has set a de-minimis level of £10,000 for the purposes of capital expenditure. In the case where the individual value of an item, e.g. IT equipment is below the de-minimis level, but the aggregate value of similar items purchased in the year exceed the de-minimis level the expenditure may be treated as capital expenditure.

Property, Plant and Equipment

Property, plant and equipment are tangible assets (i.e. assets with physical substance) that are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services or for administrative purposes and expected to be used during more than one period.

Property, plant and equipment is split into five classes as described below.

Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Infrastructure Assets
Community Assets	Assets Under Construction	

The policy for each type of asset is explained as follows.

Land and Buildings

The Borough Council has a policy of revaluing its property assets on a rolling programme such that the intervals between valuations do not exceed 5 years. The programme is as follows:

Asset Category	Year of Valuation	
Properties for Community Use	2018/19	Completed
Public Conveniences	2019/20	Completed
Council Offices	2020/21	Completed
Car Parks	2021/22	Completed
Leisure Premises	2022/23	Completed
Properties for Community Use	2023/24	Completed

In addition to the valuation of the asset category above the Code requires the Council to consider material changes in other assets not due for revaluation in year under the five year rolling programme. The Council's external valuers will also undertake interim valuations of the Council's three main Leisure facilities. The Council's external valuers will also advise annually on any further work required to identify material changes in asset valuations.

The valuations reviews are carried out by a qualified surveyor in accordance with the latest guidance issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and based on the market value for existing use or where a market value cannot be determined as the property is of a specialist nature the depreciated replacement cost. The method used on the current year's valuation will be explained in the notes to the Accounts. Items of plant that are integral to the operation of a building are included in the valuation for that building.

All buildings are subject to straight line depreciation over their estimated useful lives which range between 15 and 125 years depending on the building. In accordance with the Code land is not depreciated.

The Note to the Core Financial Statements in respect of Non-Current Assets provides details of the asset class, Land and Buildings, rather than for each of the categories listed above that make up that asset class. This departure from the requirements of the Code has no financial impact and is not considered to detract from the message being given to the reader of the accounts.

Under the Code, the Council is required to consider componentisation of significant parts of an asset, where they are of a material financial nature or have significantly differing life expectancies. The Council, following a review of the property, plant and equipment asset registers has decided that the Council's offices and major leisure facilities will be the subject of componentisation if the replacement value of the component is significant in relation to the gross book value of the asset.

Vehicles, Plant and Equipment

Vehicles, Plant and Equipment, other than plant that is integral to the operation of a building, are recognised in the Balance Sheet at historic cost and are subject to straight line depreciation over a period of between 2 and 30 years.

Infrastructure Assets

These are non-current assets that are inalienable, expenditure on which is recoverable only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of Infrastructure Assets are street furniture, footpaths and signage.

These assets are carried on the Balance Sheet at historic cost.

These assets are subject to straight line depreciation over a period of between 3 and 40 years.

Community Assets

These are non-current assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life, and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of Community Assets are parks and open spaces.

These assets are carried on the Balance Sheet at historic cost and are not subject to revaluation or depreciation.

Assets under Construction

This covers assets not yet ready for operational use, but expected to be operational within twelve months of the Balance Sheet date. Assets under Construction are not subject to revaluation or depreciation.

Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are defined as historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge or culture.

Heritage assets where the Council holds information on their cost or value are to be recognised on the Balance Sheet which will normally be its insured value. Where the Council does not hold information on the cost or value and it is considered that the cost of obtaining this information outweighs the benefit to the reader of the accounts such details as the Council holds are to be included in the notes to the financial statements.

Heritage assets are not subject to depreciation.

Investment Property

Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals 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, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. The fair value of these assets can be attributed in three ways.

- Level 1 - Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets/liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date.
- Level 2 - Inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly.
- Level 3 - Unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

For the purposes of investment property, fair value will be determined at level 2 using market knowledge and indices on market values of compatible properties.

Properties are subject to revaluation on an annual basis in accordance with 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 income 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 the Capital Receipts Reserve.

Investment properties are not subject to depreciation.

Intangible Assets

These are non-current assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and controlled by the Council through custody or legal rights. Intangible Assets held by this Council currently consist of IT software and associated costs.

Intangible Assets are recognised on the Balance Sheet at historic cost, are not subject to revaluation, but are amortised over their useful economic life assessed to be 5 years for IT software and associated costs.

Impairment of Non-Current Assets

A review for impairment of a non-current asset whether carried at historical cost or valuation should be carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying amount of the non-current asset may not be recoverable. Examples of events and changes in circumstances that indicate impairment may have been incurred include:

- a significant decline in a non-current asset's market value during the period.
- evidence of obsolescence or physical damage to the non-current asset.
- a significant adverse change in the statutory or other regulatory environment in which the Council operates; and
- a commitment by the Council to undertake a significant reorganisation.

In the event that impairment is identified the value will either be written off to the revaluation reserve, where sufficient reserve levels for that asset exist or written off to revenue through the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any impairment at the Balance Sheet date is shown in the notes to the core financial statements, along with the name, designation and qualifications of the officer assessing the value of the impairment.

Gains or Losses on Disposal of Non-Current Assets

When an asset is disposed of or de-commissioned, the net book value of the asset and the receipt from the sale are both charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement which could result in a net gain or loss on disposal.

Receipts in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The receipt is required to be credited to the usable capital receipts reserve and can only be used to finance capital expenditure. Receipts below £10,000 are considered de-minimis and treated as revenue.

The net gain or loss on disposals has no impact on taxation requirements as the financing of non-current assets is provided for under separate arrangements.

s) Overheads

The majority of management and administrative expenses, including buildings, are allocated to Services. Costs of Support Services are allocated on the basis of estimated time spent by officers on Services and costs of buildings are apportioned on a floor area basis.

t) Provisions

The Council sets aside provisions for liabilities or losses that are either likely to, or certain to be incurred, but uncertain as to the amount or the date on which they will arise. Provisions are recognised when:

- the Council has a present obligation (legal or constructive) as a result of a past event;

- it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation; and
- a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

u) Reserves

The Council maintains both general and earmarked reserves. General reserves are to meet general rather than specific future expenditure and earmarked reserves, such as the building repairs reserve are for specific purposes. No expenditure is charged directly to a reserve, but is charged to the service revenue account within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, this is then offset by a reserve appropriation within the Movement in Reserves Statement.

v) Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute

This is expenditure of a capital nature on non-current assets not owned by the Council, for example house renovation grants. Under the Code this is revenue expenditure and as such the expenditure is charged in full to the relevant service revenue account in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year it is incurred. Statute, however, allows such expenditure to be funded from capital resources. In our case such expenditure is mainly funded from revenue or reserves.

w) Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT is included within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, whether of a capital or revenue nature, only to the extent that it is irrecoverable.

3. COVID-19 AND ENERGY SUPPORT MEASURES GRANT FUNDING

Over recent years the Council has received funds from Central Government to assist with the effects of Covid 19 and Energy price increases. During 2023/24 the council received a grant for alternative energy support the amount paid to Taxpayers was £68,400, the total grant received from central Government amounted to £518,720 and the unspent balance of £450,320 was returned to Central Government in the accounting year.

4. ACCOUNTING STANDARDS ISSUED, NOT ADOPTED

International Accounting Standard 8 requires the Council to disclose the expected impact of new standards that have been issued, but not yet adopted.

- IFRS 16 leases, this will be applicable to those authorities who have decided to voluntarily implement the standard, which the Council has decided not to implement at this stage.
- Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1) issued in January 2020
- Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16) issued in September 2022
- Non-current Liabilities with Covenants (Amendments to IAS 1) issued in October 2022
- International Tax Reform: Pillar Two Model Rules (Amendments to IAS 12) issued in May 2023
- Supplier Finance Arrangements (Amendments to IAS 7 and IFRS 7) issued in May 2023

None of the above standards, when adopted, are expected to have a material impact on the Council's financial statements.

5. CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS AND ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out at [Note 2](#) the authority has to make judgements and estimates about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. 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 critical judgements made in preparing the Council's 2023/24 accounts are as follows:

- The Council is acting as guarantor for the pension liability of Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust. If the Trust fails to meet its obligations to the Fund, the Council will be called upon to cover these liabilities. As at the 31 March 2024 these liabilities, calculated under FRS 102, amounted to £0.3m (31 March 2023: £0.6m) however, as the Trust remains a going concern recourse to such a guarantee is considered remote; and is not one and the same as the actual liability if the guarantee was to be called on. An indicative cessation report of the estimated liability is obtained at each triennial valuation, the most recent being £756,000 as at March 2022 and if required would be funded from reserves. In arriving at this conclusion, the Authority has used two Barnett Waddingham Actuarial reports for the Leisure Trust that had been supplied by the Pensions Team at Kent County Council, these reports provide the details of the FRS 102 liability and the liability assessed for Pension Contributions. Furthermore, Council Officers regularly meet with the Trust and are advised of their financial position.
- In respect of valuations for the Council's car parks, the Council's valuer has concluded that those car parks where no charges are made for the duration of the stay should be valued as de-minimus and recorded on the Council's balance sheet at a nil value. It is considered that in existing use and existing restrictions, placed via the Council's Parking Order, there is no active market for sale for these car parks. In the event that the Parking Order is changed or revoked, allowing the charging or sale of a car park, giving rise to a change in values, a revaluation would take place at that point.

In addition to this as part of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement, the three Statutory Officers and all Service Directors are asked to complete Service Assurance Statements that ask for details of any issues that could cause impact on to the Council's Accounts or future financial stability. All reported no issues.

Estimation Uncertainty

There will be numerous issues that will impact on the finances of local authorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the current global economic conditions and cost of living crisis. Specific areas within the financial statements include:

- Property Plant and Equipment - The valuations for Angel East and West Car Parks being reported within Land and Buildings includes the use of a government subsidy for the loss of income in 2020/21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Consumer behavior has evolved in recent years and the post-pandemic requirement for car parking needs is yet to settle down. This will provide a level of uncertainty surrounding the appetite for the use of the Council's car parks which may take several years.

- Short Term Debtors, collectability of debt – It is prudent to establish a provision (impairment allowance) for non-payment of debt. The impact of the current global economic conditions and 'cost of living crisis' could potentially have an adverse impact on collectability of debt and will be the subject of ongoing review. That being said, the Council has an excellent collection rate for debt recovery on Council Tax and NNDR and the levels of provision held accounts for a significant proportion of the total debt outstanding as at 31st March 2024.

In arriving at these conclusions, the following has been considered:

The cost-of-living crisis continues to have an effect on the nation as a whole. As part of the Council's financial monitoring collection rates for the main income to the Council covering major income streams, Council Tax and NNDR are monitored monthly. At the present time, current rates of collection, on Council Tax and NNDR are in line with prior year expectations and therefore it is felt there is no significant reason to review these estimates at this stage. Outstanding debt and provisions are shown in note 18 and note 6 to the Collection fund shows that the Council holds significant proportions a provision for Bad Debt and therefore any additional adjustments would be considered remote.

6. EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS AND EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

The Council received a VAT repayment in 2023/24 for £2,042,496. This relates to an historic VAT Claim for overpaid VAT in relation to Sports & Leisure Services.

In preparing these accounts the Council is required to consider events that may have an impact on the accounting statements since 31 March 2024. In respect of the Councils Long Term Investments, Lothbury Property Trust have taken the decision to wind up the fund during 2024/25, this will involve the sale of the property assets and funds will be repaid upon the completion of these sales. Due to the current property market it cannot be anticipated what values the properties will be sold for and therefore any losses or gains will be recognised upon the full surrender of invested funds.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council is aware of the 'Virgin Media Ltd v NTL Pension Trustees II Ltd (and others)' case and considers that there is potential for the outcome of this case to have an impact on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. The case affects defined benefit schemes that provided contracted-out benefits before 6 April 2016 based on meeting the reference scheme test. Where scheme rules were amended, potentially impacting benefits accrued from 6 April 1997 to 5 April 2016, schemes needed the actuary to confirm that the reference scheme test was still being met by providing written confirmation under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. In the Virgin Media case the judge ruled that alterations to the scheme rules were void and ineffective because of the absence of written actuarial confirmation required under Section 37 of the Pension Schemes Act 1993. The case was taken to The Court of Appeal in June 2024 and the original ruling was upheld.

As a result, there may be a further liability to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's share of the Kent Pension Fund for benefits that were reduced by previous amendments, if those amendments prove invalid (i.e. were made without obtaining s37 confirmation). The Government Actuary's Department is currently undertaking a review to confirm whether such changes occurred in Local Government Pension Schemes. At this point it is not possible to estimate the potential impact, if any, on Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and thus the obligation and liability shown in Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's accounts.

7. SEGMENT REPORTING

The Council is required to present information on reportable segments. Reporting segments are to be based on an authority's internal management reporting arrangements.

Corporate Services: Services under this heading include democratic representation including payments

to members and corporate management.

Chief Executive: Services under this heading include elections and economic development.

Director of Central Services: Services under this heading include local land charges and licences.

Director of Finance and Transformation: Services under this heading include housing benefits and local council tax support.

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health: Services under this heading include planning and building control, homelessness, housing advice and environmental protection.

Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services: Services under this heading include refuse collection and recycling, amenity and street cleansing, leisure centres, parks and open spaces and on and off-street parking.

The following tables provide an analysis of the Council's revenue income and expenditure on a segmental reporting basis and reconciliations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Service Analysis

2022/23							2023/24							
Corporate Services	Chief Executive	Director of Central Services	Director of Finance & Transformation	Director of Planning, Housing & Env Health	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	Total		Corporate Services	Chief Executive	Director of Central Services	Director of Finance & Transformation	Director of Planning, Housing & Env Health	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	Total
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
							Income							
283	681	1,009	1,129	2,844	5,114	11,060	Fees, Charges & Other Service Income	351	562	1,057	873	2,543	5,849	11,235
			1,765			1,765	Interest & Investment Income	0	0	0	3,626	0	0	3,626
19	92	44	29,839	1,777		31,771	Grants & Contributions	0	340	91	24,970	2,042	79	27,522
302	773	1,053	32,733	4,621	5,114	44,596	Total Income	351	902	1,148	29,469	4,585	5,928	42,383
							Expenditure							
5,606	383	756	940	3,944	1,766	13,395	Employee Expenses	6,015	422	841	988	4,236	1,844	14,346
649		145		13	1,432	2,239	Premises	674	23	169	0	66	2,033	2,965
143				1	39	183	Transport	142	0	0	0	1	34	177
2,125	1,060	138	5,653	3,472	1,104	13,552	Supplies & Services	2,310	1,194	143	807	3,981	1,216	9,651
2				75	5,787	5,864	Third Party Payments	2	0	0	0	118	6,488	6,608
			461			461	Precepts & Levies	0	0	0	484	0	0	484
			126	65	71	262	Provisions for Bad Debts	0	0	0	47	30	(29)	48
			24,053			24,053	Housing Benefits	0	0	0	24,487	0	0	24,487
(4,989)	315	465	1,116	1,918	1,174	(1)	Support Service Recharges	(5,240)	331	489	1,170	2020	1,230	0
250		13		61	2,421	2,745	Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	244	0	13	0	990	2,263	3,510
3,786	1,758	1,517	32,349	9,549	13,794	62,753	Total Expenditure	4,147	1,970	1,655	27,983	11,442	15,079	62,276
3,484	985	464	(384)	4,928	8,680	18,157	COST OF SERVICES	3,796	1,068	507	(1,486)	6,857	9,151	19,893

Detailed information on the Council's income and expenditure for the year at a service budget level can be found in the Revenue and Capital Outturn booklet on the Council's [website](#).

Reconciliation to Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

The table below reconciles the Cost of Services above to the Cost of Services shown within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Cost of Services in Service Analysis	18,157	19,893
add Amounts not Reported to Management		
Pension Adjustments	622	(1,731)
Accrued Annual Leave	(60)	(70)
Miscellaneous Income and Expenditure	(210)	(166)
less Items Included in Other Operating Expenditure		
Drainage Board Levies	(461)	(484)
less Items Included in Financing & Investment		
Trading Undertakings	231	250
Interest & Investment Income	1,765	3,625
NET COST OF SERVICES IN THE COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT	20,044	21,317

Reconciliation to (Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services in Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (Subjective Analysis)

The table below reconciles the Cost of Services above to the (Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services shown within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2022/23					2023/24				
Service Analysis	Not Reported to Management	Not Included in Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Corporate Amounts	Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	Service Analysis	Not Reported to Management	Not Included in Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	Corporate Amounts	Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Income									
11,060	278			11,338	Fees, Charges & Other Service Income	11,235	236		11,471
1,765	(1,419)			346	Interest & Investment Income	3,626	(265)		3,361
			15,442	15,442	Council Tax			16,004	16,004
			27,506	27,506	National Non-Domestic Rates			26,938	26,938
31,771	(2)	(5,038)	5,884	32,615	Grants & Contributions	27,522	(299)	6,380	33,603
					Exceptional Item - VAT			2,043	2,043
			105	105	Disposal of Non-Current Assets				0
			205	205	Fair Value of Investment Properties			912	912
44,596	(1,143)	(5,038)	49,142	87,557	Total Income	42,383	(29)	(299)	52,277
Expenditure									
13,395	622		1,476	15,493	Employee Expenses	14,346	(1,731)	365	12,980
2,239				2,239	Premises	2,965			2,965
183				183	Transport	177			177
13,552	6	(5,038)		8,520	Supplies & Services	9,651	(299)		9,352
5,864				5,864	Third Party Payments	6,608			6,608
461			3,555	4,016	Precepts & Levies	484		3,731	4,215
262				262	Provisions for Bad Debts	48			48
24,053				24,053	Housing Benefits	24,487			24,487
(1)				(1)	Support Service Recharges	0			0
2,745				2,745	Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment	3,510			3,510
			72	72	Council Tax			52	52
			27,359	27,359	National Non-Domestic Rates			26,262	26,262
				0	Disposal of Non-Current Assets			122	122
			42	42	Fair Value of Investment Properties			293	293
62,753	628	(5,038)	32,504	90,847	Total Expenditure	62,276	(1,731)	(299)	30,825
18,157	1,771	0	(16,638)	3,290	TOTAL	19,893	(1,702)	0	(3,261)

8. NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Movements in non-current assets during the year were as follows.

	PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT					TOTAL PPE	HERITAGE ASSETS	INVESTM'T PROP	INTAN-GIBLE ASSETS	TOTAL
	Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infra-Structure Assets	Comm-unity Assets	Assets under Const'ion					
NET BOOK VALUE AT 1 APRIL 2022	62,663	2,839	1,059	2,047	515	69,123	15,659	4,533	161	89,476
Cost or Valuation										
At 1 April 2022	69,222	9,031	3,458	2,047	515	84,273	15,659	4,533	453	104,918
Additions	251	697	5	0	436	1,389	0	210	0	1,599
Derecognition - Disposals	0	(92)	0	0	0	(92)	0	0	0	(92)
Reclassification	951	0	0	0	(951)	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluation Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	3,118	0	0	0	0	3,118	1,243	0	0	4,361
Impairment Recognised in Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	9	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	9
Net Gains / (Losses) from Fair Value Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	163	0	163
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	(7,939)	0	0	0		(7,939)				(7,939)
At 31 March 2023	65,612	9,636	3,463	2,047	0	80,758	16,902	4,906	453	103,019
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment										
At 1 April 2022	(6,558)	(6,193)	(2,399)	0	0	(15,150)	0	0	(292)	(15,442)
Depreciation & Amortisation Written out to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(1,933)	(637)	(108)	0	0	(2,678)	0	0	(76)	(2,754)
Derecognition - Disposals	0	92	0	0	0	92	0	0	0	92
Reclassification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Movements in Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	7,938	0	0	0	0	7,938	0	0	0	7,938
At 31 March 2023	(553)	(6,738)	(2,507)	0	0	(9,798)	0	0	(368)	(10,166)
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2023	65,059	2,898	956	2,047	0	70,960	16,902	4,906	85	92,853
NATURE OF ASSET HOLDINGS										
Owned	65,059	2,898	956	2,047	0	70,960	16,902	4,906	85	92,853

	PROPERTY, PLANT & EQUIPMENT					TOTAL PPE	HERITAGE ASSETS	INVESTM'T PROP	INTAN-GIBLE ASSETS	TOTAL
	Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Infra-Structure Assets	Comm-unity Assets	Assets under Const'ion					
NET BOOK VALUE AT 1 APRIL 2023	65,059	2,898	956	2,047	0	70,960	16,902	4,906	85	92,853
Cost or Valuation										
At 1 April 2023	65,611	9,637	3,463	2,047	0	80,758	16,902	4,906	453	103,019
Additions	296	608	74	0	0	978	0	0	49	1,027
Derecognition - Disposals	(144)	(53)	0	0	0	(197)	0	0	0	(197)
Reclassification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revaluation Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	1,374	0	0	0	0	1,374	2,522	0	0	3,896
Impairment Recognised in Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(994)	(3)	0	0	0	(997)	0	0	0	(997)
Net Gains / (Losses) from Fair Value Adjustments	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	619	0	619
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	(1,704)	0	0	0	0	(1,704)	0	0	0	(1,704)
At 31 March 2024	64,439	10,189	3,537	2,047	0	80,212	19,424	5,525	502	105,663
Depreciation, Amortisation & Impairment										
At 1 April 2023	(552)	(6,738)	(2,507)	0	0	(9,797)	0	0	(368)	(10,165)
Depreciation & Amortisation Written out to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(1,893)	(496)	(87)	0	0	(2,476)	0	0	(39)	(2,515)
Derecognition - Disposals	23	53	0	0	0	76	0	0	0	76
Reclassification	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Movements in Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	1,704	0	0	0	0	1,704	0	0	0	1,704
At 31 March 2024	(718)	(7,181)	(2,594)	0	0	(10,493)	0	0	(407)	(10,900)
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2024	63,721	3,008	943	2,047	0	69,719	19,424	5,525	95	94,763
NATURE OF ASSET HOLDINGS										
Owned	63,721	3,008	943	2,047	0	69,719	19,424	5,525	95	94,763

Depreciation and Amortisation

The depreciation and amortisation methods and useful lives used in the preparation of the accounts have been specified within the accounting policies.

The amortisation and impairment of intangible assets shown above is included within cost of services under the Corporate Services heading £38,800 (£76,000 2022/23).

Non-Current Asset Valuation

The Council has a policy of revaluing its property assets on a rolling programme, such that the intervals between valuations do not exceed 5 years as detailed in the accounting policies on page 26.

In accordance with the rolling programme properties for community use were the subject of revaluation.

Wilks Head & Eve were appointed to carry out the valuations and in doing so made the following assumptions:

- That the valuations given are based on existing use values or, where this cannot be assessed because there is no market for the subject asset, the depreciated replacement cost.
- That the properties are repaired and maintained to a reasonable standard.
- That no significant Planning or Highways applications exist that could affect the value.
- The Code requires the Council to consider material changes in other assets not due for revaluation in the current year under the five-year rolling programme.

Heritage asset values have been reviewed and uplifted to reflect the insured value of the asset. The resulting revaluation was a net gain of £2,902,000, of which £3,896,000 is recognised in the revaluation reserve and losses of £994,000 recognised in the (surplus) / deficit on provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

In assessing fair value of Investment Properties Wilks Head & Eve has determined a market value given the sites location and likelihood of achieving such values. The resulting increase in asset values of £619,000 is primarily as a result of improved rental income assumptions. The gain has been recognised in the (surplus) / deficit on provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Under the standard the higher of the valuations is reported within the statements.

Wilks Head & Eve undertook a Market Review and determined that no other property asset class required revaluation because of a notable change in value.

The freehold and leasehold properties which comprise the Council's portfolio have been assessed as at each review date, being 31 March each year, by Wilks Head & Eve, an independent property consultancy, in accordance with the *Global Standards 2020 incorporating the International Valuation Standards, and the UK National Supplement of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors*.

Plant and machinery is included in the valuation of the buildings.

Valuations of Non-Current Assets carried at current / fair value

	Land & Buildings £'000	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £'000	Heritage Assets £'000	Investment Properties £'000	Total £'000
Valued at current/fair value in:	<----- at Current Value ----->			at Fair Value	
2023/24	38,143	3,008	19,394	5,525	66,070
2022/23	15,493				15,493
2021/22	7,230				7,230
2020/21	702				702
2019/20	2,153				2,153
Prior Years	0		30		30
TOTAL	63,721	3,008	19,424	5,525	91,678

Land and buildings include assets under construction where relevant. For vehicles, plant and equipment, depreciated historic cost is used as a proxy of current value due to the short term nature of the majority of assets held in this class. Assets revalued in 2023/24 are reflected in the figures for that year rather than the year of previous valuation.

Heritage Assets

Heritage assets where the Council holds information on their cost or value have been recognised on the Balance Sheet and are detailed in the table below. Heritage assets, where the Council does not hold information on the cost or value and it is considered that the cost of obtaining this information outweighs the benefit to the reader of the accounts, comprise Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse exhibits; Tonbridge Castle curtain wall; cannons; and war memorials.

	At 31 March 2023 £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse	16,686	19,189
Civic Regalia	87	96
Paintings	72	79
Sculptures	57	60
TOTAL	16,902	19,424

The main items of capital expenditure during the year were: -

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Decarbonising the Council Assets	0	118
Waste Collection Containers	322	116
Capital Renewals	206	508
Flood Defence	125	131
Sports Grounds	102	116

The Capital Expenditure was financed as follows: -

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	0	0
Capital Investment		
Purchase of Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant & Equipment	1,389	978
Investment Property	210	0
Intangible Assets	0	49
Total	1,599	1,027
Sources of Finance		
Revenue	(126)	(668)
Capital Grants & Contributions	(930)	(112)
Capital Receipts	(543)	(247)
Total	(1,599)	(1,027)
CLOSING CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT	0	0

The capital financing requirement reflects the extent to which the Council had to borrow to support its capital programme.

Outstanding Capital Commitments

As at 31 March 2024 no major capital commitments were outstanding.

(Gain) / Loss on Disposal of Non-Current Assets

	2022/23			2023/24		
	Net Book Value £'000	Sale Proceeds £'000	Net (Gain) / Loss £'000	Net Book Value £'000	Sale Proceeds £'000	Net (Gain) / Loss £'000
Hadlow Public Conveniences	0	(77)	(77)	0	0	0
Land at Rear of Hythe Lane	0	(28)	(28)	0	0	0
West Malling Public Conveniences	0	0	0	121	0	121
TOTAL	0	(105)	(105)	121	0	121

9. REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE

Represents capital expenditure on non-current assets not owned by the Council. The Code considers this to be revenue expenditure and as such the expenditure is charged in full to the relevant service revenue account in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year it is incurred. Statute allows the expenditure to be funded from capital resources but this Council funds the expenditure entirely from reserves or revenue resources.

	2022/23		2023/24	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure				
House Renovation Grants	889		1,000	
Land Drainage & Flood Defence	125		131	
Other	10	1,024	294	1,425
Grants & Contributions Received				
Better Care Fund	(831)		(943)	
Housing Assistance Grant Repaid	(44)		(48)	
Disabled Facilities Grant Repaid	(23)		(15)	
Other Funding	(10)	(908)	(294)	(1,300)
TOTAL		116		125

10. LEASES

Lessor – Operating Lease

The Council owns a number of properties which are leased out under the terms of an operating lease. A projection of the current rental income, based on existing leases, is provided in the table below.

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	2028/29 £'000	2029/30 £'000
Rental Income Due	441	395	311	304	260	250	228

The Council lease out property under an operating lease for the following purposes:

- for the provision of community services, such as sports facilities, tourism and community centres; and
- for economic development purposes to provide suitable affordable accommodation for local businesses.

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

Leases Expiring :	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2024 £'000
Not later than one year	0	69
Later than one year and not later than five years	726	386
Later than five years and not later than fifty years	1,818	2,223
Later than fifty years	7,136	7,211
	9,680	9,889

Trading Undertakings

The majority of these properties are treated as Trading Undertakings within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the financial results of which are given below.

Commercial Properties and Industrial Estates	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Income	(364)	(383)
Expenditure	133	133
TOTAL	(231)	(250)

The Balance Sheet value of these properties at the 31 March 2024 was £6,439,000 (£5,525,000 Investment Properties and £914,000 Land and Buildings). There are no restrictions on the Authority's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Authority's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal.

Lessor – Finance Lease

The Council does not lease out assets under a finance lease.

Lessee – Finance Lease

The Council does not normally lease assets under a finance lease. The Council's policy is to purchase operational vehicles and equipment from capital renewals within the Capital Plan. These purchases are funded from capital receipts or revenue reserves.

11. INTEREST AND INVESTMENTS

Interest and Investment Income Earned

	Income £'000	2022/23 Unrealised (Gains) / Losses £'000	Total £'000	Income £'000	2023/24 Unrealised (Gains) / Losses £'000	Total £'000
Property Investment Funds	(172)	1,012	840	(179)	325	146
Multi-Asset Diversified Income Funds	(174)	407	233	(210)	(62)	(272)
Certificates of Deposit	(518)		(518)	(857)		(857)
Fixed Interest Deposits	(91)		(91)	(632)		(632)
Call Accounts	(810)		(810)	(1,718)		(1,718)
Miscellaneous Interest	(0)		0	(29)		(29)
TOTAL	(1,765)	1,419	(346)	(3,625)	263	(3,362)

Interest and Investment Income Received

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Interest and Investment Income Earned	(346)	(3,362)
Increase / (Decrease) in Debtors	53	58
Increase / (Decrease) in Accrued Interest	319	449
Unrealised Gains / (Losses) on Property Investment Funds / Multi-Asset Funds	(1,419)	(264)
TOTAL	(1,393)	(3,119)

Interest and investment income received is included within net cash flows from operating activities in the Cash Flow Statement.

Long Term Investments

	At 31 March 2023				At 31 March 2024			
	Capital £'000	Gain / (Loss) £'000	Accrued Interest £'000	Total £'000	Capital £'000	Gain / (Loss) £'000	Accrued Interest £'000	Total £'000
Property Investment Funds								
Hermes Property Unit Trust	1,000	(49)	9	960	1,000	(108)	6	898
Local Authorities' Property Fund	2,000	(208)	20	1,812	2,000	(278)	23	1,745
Lothbury Property Trust	2,000	(376)	13	1,637	2,000	(573)	13	1,441
Total	5,000	(633)	42	4,409	5,000	(959)	42	4,084
Multi-Asset Diversified Income Funds								
Aegon Diversified Income Fund	1,750	(232)	0	1,518	1,750	(151)	0	1,599
Fidelity Multi-Asset Income Fund	1,000	(197)	2	805	1,000	(204)	3	798
Ninety-One Diversified Income Fund	1,500	(121)	0	1,379	1,500	(133)	0	1367
Total	4,250	(550)	2	3,702	4,250	(488)	3	3,764
TOTAL	9,250	(1,183)	44	8,111	9,250	(1,447)	45	7,848

The amount shown on the Pooled Investment Funds Adjustment Account represents unrealised gains/losses.

In respect of the long term investments held by the Council, the capital value has dropped in recent months as result of high levels of inflation in the UK. Fund values will fluctuate from year to year depending upon economic conditions and any losses or gains associated with the fund values will only be recognised on the sale of the investments.

Short Term Investments

	At 31 March 2023			At 31 March 2024		
	Capital £'000	Accrued Interest £'000	Total £'000	Capital £'000	Accrued Interest £'000	Total £'000
Certificates of Deposit						
Bank of Montreal	2,000	36	2,036	0		0
Goldman Sachs	2,000	52	2,052	5,000	230	5,230
Lloyds Bank	6,000	56	6,056	6,000	211	6,211
National Westminster Bank	0		0	3,000	24	3,024
Royal Bank of Canada	3,000	78	3,078	0		0
Rabobank				6,000	166	6,166
Toronto Dominion	4,000	70	4,070	6,000	130	6,130
Total	17,000	292	17,292	26,000	761	26,761
Fixed Interest Deposits						
Close Brothers	0		0	3,000	15	3,015
Handelsbanken	3,000	25	3,025	3,000	29	3,029
Rabobank	3,000	40	3,040	0		0
Total	6,000	65	6,065	6,000	44	6,044
TOTAL	23,000	357	23,357	32,000	805	32,805

Cash Equivalents ([Note 19](#) refers)

Investments which are considered to be of a 'liquid' nature are to be included under the category of cash and cash equivalents. Under the Council's accounting policies any internally managed investments of three months or less from the date of acquisition will be recognised as cash equivalents (short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value).

Financial Instruments Disclosures

Investments are classified as financial assets and as such require additional disclosures on:

- Class of investment.
- Interest earned by class of investment.
- Market valuation of each type of investment as at 31 March 2024.
- Management of risk.

Investment Classification

The Council's investments are classified as either amortised cost or fair value through profit and loss as detailed in the table below.

	At 31 March 2023			At 31 March 2024		
	Amortised Cost £'000	Fair Value Through Profit & Loss £'000	Total £'000	Amortised Cost £'000	Fair Value Through Profit & Loss £'000	Total £'000
Long Term		8,111	8,111		7,848	7,848
Short Term	23,357		23,357	32,805		32,805
TOTAL	23,357	8,111	31,468	32,805	7,848	40,653

Interest Earned

Interest earned by class of investment is detailed in the table below.

	Amortised Cost	2022/23 Fair Value Through Profit & Loss	Total	Amortised Cost	2023/24 Fair Value Through Profit & Loss	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest & Investment Income						
Income	(608)	(347)	(955)	(1,489)	(389)	(1,878)
Unrealised (Gains) / Losses		1,419	1,419		264	264
TOTAL	(608)	1,072	464	(1,489)	(125)	(1,614)

Market Valuation

The accounts are required to show the 'fair value' of the financial assets held by the Council. Fair value is defined as the amount for which an asset could be exchanged assuming that the transaction was negotiated between parties knowledgeable about the market in which they are dealing and willing to buy/sell at an appropriate price, with no other motive in their negotiations other than to secure a fair price. Our property investment and multi-asset diversified income funds are an actively quoted value per share on the market, which is described as a level 1 type investment, and have been valued in accordance with the closing value at year end. Other deposits, which are described as level 2 type investments, are held on effective interest method, being the value of deposit plus any interest due to the end of the financial year, no significant active market exists for these types of bank deposits.

The fair value of investments is shown in the table below.

	At 31 March 2023 Carrying Amount	At 31 March 2023 Carrying Amount	At 31 March 2024 Carrying Amount	At 31 March 2024 Fair Value
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property Investment Funds	4,409	4,409	4,083	4,083
Multi-Asset Diversified Income Funds	3,702	3,702	3,764	3,764
Deposits with Banks & Building Societies	23,357	23,357	32,805	32,805
TOTAL	31,468	31,468	40,652	40,652

Management of Risk

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions. The Council's Investment Strategy sets out the approach the Council will take to the management of risk both in terms of the security, longevity and liquidity of its investments and as at 31 March 2024 the risk of default is considered remote.

Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate movements will clearly have an impact on investment returns. To put this into context the investments held on March 2024 were invested at rates between 4.7% and 6.75% for Deposits and 4% for Fund investments. An increase in interest rates of 1% would currently generate investment income of about £407,000 (2022/23: £315,000).

Liquidity Risk

The Council manages its investments on a daily basis using a combination of current market information and predicted income and expenditure based upon an annual cashflow for the authority. It therefore considers that liquidity risk would be low due to the daily monitoring of the cashflow arrangements.

12. PENSION COSTS

Employees of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council may participate in the Kent County Council Pension Fund, part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), a defined benefit statutory scheme.

The LGPS is a national scheme that is administered locally – all employees have the right to join and the Council cannot prevent this. The scheme is a career average one, with the pension benefits being determined by career average salary and length of service. Employee contribution rates are set by Government and range from 5.5% to 12.5% and the fund actuary, Barnett Waddingham LLP, sets the employer's contribution rate. This is a funded defined benefit 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 fund provides index linked pensions and other retirement benefits based upon employees' career average salary and length of service. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The KCC pension scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the LGPS and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Superannuation Committee of KCC. This Committee is responsible for: setting investment strategy; appointing professional fund managers; carrying out regular reviews; monitoring of investments; monitoring the administration of the pension scheme; and determining pension fund policy in regard to employer admission arrangements. The Committee consists of 12 members with voting rights (nine from KCC and three from district councils) and 5 other members without voting rights. Policy is determined in accordance with the *Local Government Pensions Fund Regulations 1997* as amended.

The pension costs charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 are given below.

Transactions Relating to Retirement Benefits

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Amounts Charged to Income and Expenditure Statement		
Net Cost of Services		
Current Service Costs	3,596	1,568
Past Service Costs (Change in Benefit)	0	0
Administration Expenses	63	92
Net Operating Expenditure		
Net Interest on the Defined Liability (Asset)	1,476	365
Net Charge to the Income and Expenditure Statement	5,135	2,025
Movement in Reserves Statement		
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19	(5,135)	(2,025)
Actual Amount Charged to the General Fund for Pensions in the Year		
Employers' contributions payable to scheme	3,037	3,391
CONTRIBUTION (FROM) / TO PENSIONS RESERVE	(2,098)	1,366

As required under IAS 19 the valuation method used is the projected unit method of valuation. With this method where the age profile of the active membership is rising the current service cost will increase as the members of the scheme approach retirement.

In addition, an actuarial gain of £1,782,000 in 2023/24 (2022/23: gain of £51,084,000) is included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The cumulative amounts of actuarial gains and losses are detailed later in this note.

Assets and Liabilities in Relation to Retirement Benefits

The table below summarises the reconciliation of the present value of scheme liabilities.

Reconciliation of the Present Value of Scheme Liabilities	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Balance at 1 April - Defined Benefit Obligation	161,181	111,338
Current Service Costs	3,596	1,568
Past Service Costs	0	0
Contributions from Scheme Participants	564	593
Interest Cost	4,137	5,243
Change in Financial Assumptions	(59,119)	(1,570)
Change in Demographic Assumptions	(4,493)	(1,604)
Experience Loss / (Gain) on Defined Benefit Obligation	10,232	332
Benefits Paid	(4,558)	(4,661)
Unfunded Pension Payments	(202)	(210)
CLOSING BALANCE AT 31 MARCH - DEFINED BENEFIT OBLIGATION	111,338	111,029

The liability shows the underlying commitment that the Council has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, and estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc.

The table below summarises the reconciliation of the present value of scheme assets.

Reconciliation of the Fair Value of Scheme Assets	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Opening Balance at 1 April - Fair Value of Scheme Assets	102,920	102,063
Interest on Assets	2,661	4,878
Return on Assets Less Interest	(1,329)	(1,060)
Other Actuarial Gains / (Losses)	(967)	0
Employers' Contributions	3,037	3,391
Contributions from Scheme Participants	564	593
Benefits Paid	(4,760)	(4,871)
Administration Expenses	(63)	(92)
CLOSING BALANCE AT 31 MARCH - FAIR VALUE OF SCHEME ASSETS	102,063	104,902

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets.

The actual return on scheme assets in the year: gain of £3,818,000 (2022/23: gain of £1,332,000).

Net Liabilities in Relation to Retirement Benefits

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Present value of funded obligation	109,649	109,507
Fair value of scheme assets (bid price)	102,063	104,902
Sub-total	7,586	4,605
Present value of unfunded obligation	1,689	1,522
NET PENSION LIABILITY	9,275	6,127

The change in the pension fund deficit over the year is mainly dependent on asset returns, corporate bond yields and market expectations of inflation which when taken together has resulted in a decrease in the pension fund deficit compared to the previous year.

The figures presented are prepared only for the purpose of IAS 19. They are not relevant for calculations undertaken for funding purposes. IAS 19 does not have any impact on the actual level of employer contributions paid to Kent County Council Pension Fund. Employers' levels of contribution are determined by triennial actuarial valuations which are based on the Fund's actual investment strategy (rather than being based on corporate bond yields).

Reconciliation of Opening & Closing Surplus / Deficit

The table below reconciles the opening and closing deficit on the scheme.

Surplus / (Deficit)	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	(58,261)	(9,275)
Current Service Costs	(3,596)	(1,568)
Past Service Costs	0	0
Actuarial Gains / (Losses)	51,084	1,782
Employer's Contributions	3,037	3,391
Administration Expenses	(63)	(92)
Other Finance Income	(1,476)	(365)
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	(9,275)	(6,127)

Breakdown of Assets Held by Pension Fund shown at Fair Value

Assets are valued at fair value, principally market value for investments. The fair values of the attributable assets and expected rates of return are given below.

Assets	At 31 March 2023		At 31 March 2024	
	Fund Value £'000	Percentage of Fund %	Fund Value £'000	Percentage of Fund %
Bonds	13,405	13	15,104	14
Cash	1,831	2	1,670	2
Equities	65,128	64	61,027	58
Gilts	559	1	7,686	7
Property	10,187	10	9,412	9
Target Return Portfolio	7,476	7	5,300	5
Infrastructure	3,477	3	4,703	5
TOTAL	102,063	100	104,902	100

Scheme History

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Present Value of Liabilities	(135,092)	(163,240)	(161,181)	(111,338)	(111,029)
Fair Value of Assets	79,865	102,067	102,920	102,063	104,902
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) IN THE SCHEME	(55,227)	(61,173)	(58,261)	(9,275)	(6,127)
Experience Gains / (Losses) on Assets	289	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Assets	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Experience Gains / (Losses) on Liabilities	(1,009)	1,963	(322)	10,232	332
Percentage of Liabilities	(0.7%)	1.2%	(0.2%)	9.2%	(0.3%)

Actuarial Gains and Losses

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Actuarial Gains / (Losses) recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	3,484	(4,906)	5,092	51,084	1,782
CUMULATIVE ACTUARIAL GAINS / (LOSSES)	(31,636)	(36,542)	(31,450)	19,634	21,416

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

The scheme has been assessed by Barnett Waddingham LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, on behalf of Kent County Council based upon the full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2022.

The financial assumptions used for the purposes of IAS 19 calculations are given below.

	2022/23	2023/24
Mortality assumptions:		
Life expectancy from age 65 (years)		
Retiring today:		
Men	21.1 Years	20.8 Years
Women	23.5 Years	23.3 Years
Retiring in 20 years:		
Men	22.3 Years	22.0 Years
Women	25.0 Years	24.7 Years
Salary Increases	3.90%	3.90%
Pension Increases (CPI)	2.90%	2.90%
Discount Rate	4.80%	4.90%

It has also been assumed that members will exchange half of their commutable pension for cash at retirement.

Sensitivity Analysis

The following table sets out the impact of a small change in the discount rate; salary increase; pension increase; and mortality assumptions on the defined benefit obligation and projected service cost.

	£'000 +0.5%	£'000 +0.1%	£'000 0.0%	£'000 -0.1%	£'000 -0.5%
Adjustment to discount rate					
Present Value of Total Obligation	103,741	109,503	111,029	112,591	119,225
Projected Service Cost	1,262	1,444	1,493	1,544	1,764
Adjustment to Long Term Salary Increase					
Present Value of Total Obligation	111,779	111,176	111,029	110,882	110,307
Projected Service Cost	1,498	1,494	1,493	1,492	1,488
Adjustment to Pensions Increase and Deferred Revaluation					
Present Value of Total Obligation	118,601	112,472	111,029	109,619	104,295
Projected Service Cost	1,771	1,544	1,493	1,443	1,255
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption					
		+1 Year	None	-1 Year	
Present Value of Total Obligation		116,084	111,029	106,220	
Projected Service Cost		1,552	1,493	1,436	

Projected Pension Expense for the Year to 31 March 2025

These projections are based on the Actuary's assumptions as at 31 March 2024.

	2024/25 Projection £'000
Service Cost	1,493
Net Interest on the defined liability (asset)	217
Administration Expenses	91
Total	1,801
Employers' Contributions	3,214

Information can also be found in Kent County Council's Superannuation Fund Annual Report via the following link [Report and Accounts - Kent Pension Fund](#)

13. COUNCIL TAX AND NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC (BUSINESS) RATES INCOME

Council Tax	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Borough Council's Council Tax	(11,729)	(12,187)
Parish Councils' Council Tax	(3,555)	(3,732)
Prior Year's Estimated Accumulated Council Tax (Surplus) / Deficit	(158)	(85)
Council Tax (Surplus) / Deficit	72	52
TOTAL	(15,370)	(15,952)

National Non-Domestic Rates	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Share of National Non-Domestic Rates	(20,174)	(25,455)
Tariff / (Top-Up)	21,310	25,884
Levy / Safety Net/ Business Rates Pool	234	377
Prior Year's Estimated Accumulated Non-Domestic Rates (Surplus) / Deficit	5,815	(1,199)
National Non-Domestic Rates (Surplus) / Deficit	(7,332)	(283)
TOTAL	(147)	(676)

	Balance at 31 March 2022	2022/23 Surplus / (Deficit)	Balance at 31 March 2023	2023/24 Surplus / (Deficit)	Balance at 31 March 2024
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Council Tax	134	(72)	62	(52)	10
National Non-Domestic Rates	(6,008)	7,332	1,324	283	1,607
TOTAL	(5,874)	7,260	1,386	231	1,617

14. GRANT INCOME

The following grants and contributions were credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Credited to Taxation & Non-Specific Grant Income & Expenditure

	2022/23		2023/24	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Government Grants				
Funding Guarantee	0		(1,762)	
Covid-19 Business Rate Relief	(1,233)		(1,831)	
New Homes Bonus	(1,194)		(611)	
Small Business & Empty Property Rate Relief Grant	(1,118)		(1,153)	
Lower Tier Services Grant	(1,006)		0	
Under Indexing Multiplier Grant	(283)		(496)	
Revenue Support Grant	0		(137)	
Services Grant	(159)		(93)	
Other	(62)	(5,055)	(13)	(6,096)
Revenue Grants & Contributions				
Peter's Village Wouldham (S106 Contribution)	0		(118)	
Other	(199)	(199)	(44)	(162)
Capital Grants & Contributions				
Sainsbury's Contribution	(97)		(112)	
Oakhill House Developer Contribution	(354)		0	
Yates Yard Developer Contribution	(179)		0	
Other	0	(630)	(10)	(122)
Total Non-Government Grants & Contributions		(829)		(284)
TOTAL		(5,884)		(6,380)

The Council has also received a number of developer contributions which as yet have not been applied to revenue and capital projects ([Note 22](#) refers).

Credited to Services

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Rent Allowance Subsidy	(22,697)	(23,133)
Better Care Fund	(917)	(1,033)
Non-HRA Rent Rebate Subsidy	(669)	(710)
Homelessness Prevention Grant	(392)	(398)
Rough Sleeping Initiative Grant	(307)	(302)
Benefits Administration Grant	(256)	(170)
NNDR Cost of Collection Allowance	(155)	(160)
Discretionary Housing Payment Contribution	(152)	(159)
Local Council Tax Support Administration Grant	(117)	(64)
Other	(1,072)	(1,094)
TOTAL	(26,734)	(27,223)

15. OFFICERS' EMOLUMENTS, ACCRUED ANNUAL LEAVE AND EXIT PACKAGES

Emoluments

Employee remuneration is defined as all amounts paid to or receivable by an employee, and includes sums due by way of expenses allowance (so far as those sums are chargeable to United Kingdom income tax) and the estimated money value of any other benefits received by an employee otherwise than in cash. The number of employees, whose remuneration, including exit packages, but excluding employers' pension contributions, was £50,000 or more in bands of £5,000 is given in the table below.

Remuneration Band	No. Of Employees	
	2022/23	2023/24
£50,000 - £54,999	13	9
£55,000 - £59,999	8	10
£60,000 - £64,999	3	6
£65,000 - £69,999	2	4
£70,000 - £74,999	1	1
£75,000 - £79,999	4	3
£80,000 - £84,999	-	3
£85,000 - £89,999	-	-
£90,000 - £94,999	-	-
£95,000 - £99,999	-	-
£100,000 - £104,999	3	-
£105,000 - £109,999	1	2
£110,000 - £114,999	-	1
£115,000 - £119,999	-	-
£120,000 - £124,999	-	1
£125,000 - £129,999	1	-
£130,000 - £134,999	-	-
£135,000 - £139,999	-	-
£140,000 - £144,999	-	-
£145,000 - £149,999	-	-
£150,000 - £154,999	-	1
TOTAL	36	41

The numbers above include no employees within the exit packages table for 2023/24 (2022/23: no employees).

Senior Officer Remuneration

We are also required to disclose additional information about the remuneration of senior officers as set out below, together with the value of the employers' pension contribution for the financial year. The employees shown in the table below are also included within the banding table.

		Salary, Fees & All'ces	Exp's	Comp for Loss of Office	Benefits in Kind	Total Excl Pension	Pension Contrib's	Total Inc Pension
	Post Title	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
2022/23	Chief Executive	126	2			128	24	152
	Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive	101	7			108	19	127
	Director of Finance & Transformation	98	6			104	18	122
	Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	98	6			104	18	122
	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	98	6			104	18	122
	TOTAL	521	27	0	0	548	97	645
2023/24	Chief Executive (note 1)	116	35			151	24	175
	Director of Central Services & Deputy Chief Executive (note 1)	113	8			121	24	145
	Director of Finance & Transformation (note 1)	106	7			113	22	135
	Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	103	7			110	22	132
	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	103	7			110	22	132
	TOTAL	541	64	0	0	605	112	719

The figures included in the above tables include the remuneration paid to the Returning Officer and her Deputies for work undertaken in the Borough Election in 2023.

At 31 March 2024 the Council employed 261 permanent staff (31 March 2023: 250) or 230 full-time equivalents (31 March 2023: 220).

Accrued Annual Leave

The Council is required to accrue for annual leave not taken by staff at the end of the accounting period. At the end of 2023/24 this was estimated to be £132,000 (2022/23: £202,000).

Exit Packages

Exit packages include compulsory and voluntary redundancy payments, added-years pension contributions, ex-gratia payments and other departure costs. The number of employees receiving exit packages in bands of £20,000 is given in the table below.

	2022/23		2023/24	
	Number of Employees	Total Cost £'000	Number of Employees	Total Cost £'000
Compulsory Redundancies				
£0 - £19,999	-	-	-	-
£20,000 - £39,999	1	29	-	-
£40,000 - £59,999	-	-	-	-
£60,000 - £79,999	-	-	-	-
Other Agreed Departures				
£0 - £19,999	-	-	-	-
£20,000 - £39,999	-	-	-	-
£40,000 - £59,999	-	-	-	-
£60,000 - £79,999	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	1	29	0	0

16. CAPITAL RECEIPTS

Usable Capital Receipts

These are proceeds from the sale of capital assets that have not yet been used to finance new capital expenditure. Capital receipts are as defined in the *Local Government Act 2003* and the *Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003*.

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at 1 April	685	247
Usable Capital Receipts Received	105	0
Disposal Costs	0	0
	790	247
less Usable Capital Receipts Applied		
Purchase of Non-Current Assets	543	247
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	247	0

17. RESERVES

	Balance at 1 April £'000	Contribution to Reserve £'000	Contribution from Reserve £'000	Balance at 31 March £'000
2022/23				
Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes	6,825	1,298	(241)	7,882
General Revenue Reserve	7,661	950	0	8,611
Building Repairs Reserve	1,031	1,050	(781)	1,300
Property Investment Fund Reserve	3,250	0	0	3,250
Earmarked Reserves				
Budget Stabilisation	3,000	0	(869)	2,131
Planning Services	1,433	107	(424)	1,116
Homelessness Reduction	727	681	(723)	685
Climate Change	780	0	(179)	601
Business Rates Retention Scheme	7,269	0	(6,736)	533
Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust	200	249	0	449
Transformation	251	222	(39)	434
Housing Assistance	360	0	0	360
Election	174	25	(38)	161
Invest to Save	221	0	(79)	142
Special Projects	237	68	(69)	236
Other Earmarked Reserves	237	35	(75)	197
	33,656	4,685	(10,253)	28,088
2023/24				
Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes	7,882	2,382	(828)	9,436
General Revenue Reserve	8,611	1,304	0	9,915
Building Repairs Reserve	1,300	1,063	(1,241)	1,122
Property Investment Fund Reserve	3,250	0	0	3,250
Earmarked Reserves				
Budget Stabilisation	2,131	1,200	(834)	2,497
Planning Services	1,116	480	(521)	1,075
Regeneration of Tonbridge	0	650	0	650
Homelessness Reduction	685	922	(1,098)	509
Climate Change	601	618	(340)	879
Business Rates Retention Scheme	533	549	(167)	915
Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust	449	0	(80)	369
Transformation	434	68	(70)	432
Housing Assistance	360	0	(1)	359
Election	161	35	(85)	111
Invest to Save	141	0	0	141
Special Projects	236	77	(97)	216
Other Earmarked Reserves	198	109	(12)	295
	28,088	9,457	(5,374)	32,171

Reserve

Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes

General Revenue Reserve

Building Repairs Reserve

Property Investment Fund Reserve

Budget Stabilisation

Planning Services

Homelessness Reduction

Climate Change

Business Rates Retention Scheme

Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust

Transformation

Housing Assistance

Election

Invest to Save

Special Projects

Regeneration of Tonbridge

Other Earmarked Reserves

Purpose of the Reserve

Established to finance future capital expenditure.

The Council maintain a financial cushion should something unexpected happen that leads to significant unplanned expenditure or reduced income. The General Revenue Reserve is also intrinsically linked to the objectives of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Established to finance general repairs and maintenance expenditure to Council owned buildings.

Established to recognise proceeds from the sale of Council owned assets and other funds set aside for long term investment with the aim of generating a higher rate of return.

Established to manage risk and or assist in meeting future savings and transformation contributions.

Established to meet costs in respect of planning services related work including the Local Plan.

Established to meet costs associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Established to fund initiatives in support of the Climate Change Strategy.

Established, in the main, to take account of accounting arrangements

Established to meet obligations on the Council as part of the agreement with the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust.

Established to fund initiatives that deliver operational efficiencies.

Established to smooth the cost of discretionary housing assistance grant funding between years.

Established to meet the costs of administering borough council elections which are held once every four years.

Established to meet costs associated with service reviews with the aim of identifying savings opportunities.

Established to enhance or progress specific projects or activities within the Council.

Established to fund the Regeneration of the Town Centre and the assets within it.

Other earmarked reserves established to enhance or progress specific projects or activities within the Council.

18. DEBTORS

Short Term Debtors

	At 31 March 2023			At 31 March 2024		
	Gross Value £'000	Impairm't Allow'ce £'000	Net Value £'000	Gross Value £'000	Impairm't Allow'ce £'000	Net Value £'000
General Fund						
Central Government	736	0	736	524	0	524
Local Authorities	620	0	620	1,151		1,151
Housing Benefit Claimants (current & former)	2,742	(2,377)	365	2,558	(2,432)	126
Payments in Advance	255	0	255	515		515
Other Debtors	792	(345)	447	1,176	(303)	873
	5,145	(2,722)	2,423	5,924	(2,735)	3,189
Collection Fund						
Council Tax Payers (Borough Council's share)	1,629	(453)	1,176	1,857	(517)	1,340
Local Authorities	785		785	1,315	0	1,315
NNDR Payers (Borough Council's share)	677	(252)	425	1,076	(400)	676
Central Government	10		10	0	0	0
	3,101	(705)	2,396	4,248	(917)	3,331
TOTAL	8,246	(3,427)	4,819	10,172	(3,652)	6,520

Impairment Allowance

	Housing Benefit Claimants £'000	Homeless Debtors £'000	Garden Waste Debtors £'000	General Debtors £'000	Council Taxpayers £'000	NNDR Payers £'000	Total £'000
2022/23							
Balance at 1 April	2,350	118	18	119	406	224	3,235
Write-Offs	(102)	(29)	(15)	(4)	(17)	(27)	(194)
Contribution to Allowance	126	65	57	15	64	55	382
Receipts/Adjustments	3	1	0	0	0	0	4
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	2,377	155	60	130	453	252	3,427
2023/24							
Balance at 1 April	2,377	155	60	130	453	252	3,427
Write-Offs	0	(28)	0	(10)	(28)	(66)	(204)
Contribution to/from Allowance	54	30	(30)	(7)	92	214	425
Receipts/Adjustments	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	2,432	158	30	115	517	400	3,652

The impairment allowance in respect of council tax and national non-domestic rates represent the Borough Council's share only. The total impairment allowance in respect of council tax and national non-domestic rates can be found in [Note 3](#) to the Collection Fund Accounts.

The levels held within the impairment allowance will be reviewed by the Director of Finance and Transformation on an annual basis and will take into account the effect of the prevailing economic climate when calculating the required provision.

Financial Instruments Disclosures

Some debtors meet the definition of financial instruments. The council considers these to be debtors of a contractual nature rather than statutory debt or debts with other public sector bodies. These debtors are all classified as amortised cost financial instruments. The carrying amount is deemed to be the fair value (being the amount that the market is willing to exchange assets). For these debtors' additional disclosures are required on the age profile and collectability of the debt.

Age of Debt

An analysis of the age profile of debtors which fall under financial assets is given in the table below.

Age of Debt	At 31 March 2023				At 31 March 2024			
	General Debtors £'000	Garden Waste £'000	Homeless ness £'000	Total £'000	General Debtors £'000	Garden Waste £'000	Homeless ness £'000	Total £'000
< 1 month	239	67	19	325	502	48	35	585
1 - 3 months	16	42	14	72	78	4	38	120
3 - 6 months	10		8	18	40	115	29	184
6 - 12 months	6	65	16	87	19	2	27	48
1 year +	162		128	290	98	1	141	240
TOTAL	433	174	185	792	737	170	270	1,177

Collectability of Debt

The Council does not generally allow credit for customers, however it is prudent to establish a provision for non-payment of debt. This calculation is based upon the type of debtor and the size and age of the debt adjusting for individual cases where appropriate. The Council's potential maximum exposure to default and uncollectability of the debt based on experience over the last five financial years is shown in the table below.

	Amounts as at 31 March 2024	Historical Experience of Default	Historical Experience Adjusted for Market Conditions as at 31 March 2024	Estimated Maximum Exposure to Default and Uncollectability
	£'000	%	%	£'000
Debtors				
General Debtors	737	0.6	15.6	115
Garden Waste	170	2.7	17.6	30
Homelessness	270	27.7	58.5	158
TOTAL	1,177			303

The variation between the historical experience and the adjustment for market conditions is due to the nature and age of the debt outstanding which can take several years to recover prior to any write-off action being taken.

19. CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS

Investments which are considered to be of a 'liquid' nature are to be included under the category of cash and cash equivalents. Under the Council's accounting policies any internally managed investments of three months or less from the date of acquisition will be recognised as cash equivalents (short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value).

	At 31 March 2023 £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
Short Term Deposits		
Barclays Bank	3,000	3,000
Blackrock	7,999	0
BNP Paribas	1,264	0
CCLA	4,307	0
Federated	0	7,866
HSBC	6,000	3,000
National Westminster Bank	50	50
	22,620	13,916
Cash in Hand	418	289
TOTAL	23,038	14,205

20. CREDITORS

Short Term Creditors

	At 31 March 2023 £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Fund		
Central Government	(3,990)	(1,107)
Receipts in Advance	(1,541)	(1,362)
Local Authorities	(461)	(948)
Employees	(202)	(133)
Other Creditors	(1,354)	(1,717)
	(7,548)	(5,267)
Collection Fund		
Central Government	(8,505)	(8,257)
Local Authorities	(1,701)	(1,652)
NNDR Payers (Borough Council's share)	(831)	(536)
NNDR Pool	0	(346)
Council Tax Payers (Borough Council's share)	(357)	(389)
	(11,394)	(11,180)
TOTAL	(18,942)	(16,447)

Financial Instruments Disclosures

Creditors meeting the definition of financial instruments are disclosed below. The council considers these creditors to be of a contractual nature rather than statutory creditors or creditors with other public sector bodies. For these creditors the carrying amount is also deemed to be the fair value (being the amount that the market is willing to settle liabilities).

	At 31 March 2023 £'000	At 31 March 2024 £'000
General Fund		
Other Creditors	(1,354)	(1,803)
TOTAL	(1,354)	(1,803)

All liabilities are paid as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.

21. PROVISIONS

Provisions are required for liabilities or losses that are likely to be incurred, or certain to be incurred, but uncertain as to the amount or the date on which they will arise. They are charges to the appropriate revenue account and when the expenditure occurs it is charged to the provision. They should only be used for the purpose for which they were established.

		Balance at 1 April £'000	Additions in Year £'000	Expenditure In Year £'000	Reversal £'000	Balance at 31 March £'000
2022/23	NNDR Appeals	(4,991)	(891)	830		(5,052)
	Adoption of Amenity Areas	(93)	(2)			(95)
	TOTAL	(5,084)	(893)	830	0	(5,147)
2023/24	NNDR Appeals	(5,052)	(1,153)	1,095		(5,110)
	Adoption of Amenity Areas	(95)	(5)			(100)
	TOTAL	(5,147)	(1,158)	1,095	0	(5,210)

- **NNDR Appeals** – business ratepayers can appeal against the rateable value applied to the property by the Valuation Office. This provision represents the Authorities share of the cost arising from successful appeals. Due to the appeals being heard by an external party the Council is unable to determine the likely settlement date of any appeal, therefore the provision is recognised as long term rather than short term. See [Note 4](#) to the Collection Fund Accounts for further details.
- **Adoption of Amenity Areas** – repairs to a banked area of the M20 slip road at Junction 4.

22. GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN ADVANCE AND GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS UNAPPLIED

These are grants and contributions received but which as yet have not been applied to revenue and capital projects. Those with conditions are treated as receipts in advance under long term liabilities and those without conditions are held in a reserve.

Transactions in the Year in respect of Grants and Contributions in Advance

	Balance at 1 April £'000	Receipts £'000	Interest £'000	Transfer to Third Parties £'000	Applied to Capital £'000	Applied to Revenue £'000	Balance at 31 March £'000
Aylesford Newsprint	(849)	(395)	(25)	100	0	0	(1,169)
Better Care Fund	(906)	(1,078)	0	0	0	831	(1,153)
Carpenters Lane	0	(130)	(3)	0	0	0	(133)
Clare Park Estate	0	(283)	(1)	0	0	0	(284)
Kings Hill Avenue	0	(1,247)	(18)	0	0	0	(1,265)
Oakhill House	(428)	0	(2)	0	354	0	(76)
Peter's Pit	(267)	0	(6)	0	0	0	(273)
Sportsmans' Bungalow	0	(647)	(8)	0	28	0	(627)
Other	(481)	(44)	(7)	103	87	6	(336)
TOTAL	(2,931)	(3,824)	(70)	203	469	837	(5,316)
Aylesford Newsprint	(1,169)	(111)	(49)	568	0	0	(761)
Better Care Fund	(1,153)	(338)	0	0	0	0	(1,491)
Carpenters Lane	(133)	0	(7)	19	0	0	(121)
Clare Park Estate	(284)	0	(16)	0	0	0	(300)
Kings Hill Avenue	(1,265)	0	(70)	204	0	0	(1,131)
Oakhill House	(76)	(338)	(4)	0	0	0	(418)
Peter's Pit	(273)	0	0	123	0	150	0
Sportsmans' Bungalow	(627)	0	(34)	57	0	0	(603)
Other	(336)	(1,117)	(35)	99	292	0	(1,096)
TOTAL	(5,316)	(1,904)	(215)	1,070	292	150	(5,921)

Transactions in the Year in respect of Grants and Contributions Unapplied

	Balance at 1 April £'000	Receipts £'000	Applied to Capital £'000	Applied to Revenue £'000	Balance at 31 March £'000
2022/23	Leybourne Lakes	269	(269)		0
	Yates Yard	0	179		179
	Other	187	28	(39)	173
	TOTAL	456	207	(308)	352
2023/24	Yates Yard	179	0	0	179
	Other	173	49	(44)	178
	TOTAL	352	49	(44)	357

23. CAPITAL ADJUSTMENT ACCOUNT

The capital adjustment account provides a balancing mechanism between the different rates at which assets are depreciated under the Code and are financed through the capital controls system. The account is credited with the amounts set aside to finance the cost of acquiring/enhancing non-current assets. It is debited with the cost of acquisition/enhancement as the assets are depreciated/impaired to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The account also contains accumulated gains/losses on investment properties and operational land and buildings pre-dating 1 April 2007.

	2022/23		2023/24	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April		43,507		43,601
Capital Financing applied in year				
Revenue	126		667	
Capital Grants & Contributions	930		117	
Capital Receipts	<u>543</u>	1,599	<u>246</u>	1,030
Reversal of items charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement				
Depreciation & Amortisation of Non-Current Assets	(2,754)		(2,514)	
Impairment of Non-Current Assets	9		(996)	
Net Book Value of Assets Disposed	<u>0</u>	(2,745)	<u>(121)</u>	(3,631)
Amounts Written-out of the Revaluation Reserve				
Difference between fair value & historical cost depreciation	1,077		1,061	
Accumulated Gains / (Loss) on Assets Disposed	<u>0</u>	1,077	<u>88</u>	1,149
Movement in the Fair Value of Investment Properties		163		619
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH		43,601		42,768

24. REVALUATION RESERVE

The revaluation reserve records unrealised revaluation gains arising since 1 April 2007 from holding operational land and buildings. The balance on the reserve is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are revalued downwards or impaired and the gains lost; used in the provision of services and the gains consumed through depreciation; disposed and the gains realised. Accumulated gains pre-dating 1 April 2007 were transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

	2022/23		2023/24	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April		45,963		49,247
Surplus / (Deficit) on Revaluation not posted to the (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services				
Upward revaluations	7,285		4,896	
Downward revaluations / impairments	<u>(2,924)</u>	4,361	<u>(1,000)</u>	3,896
Amounts Written-Off to the Capital Adjustment Account				
Difference between fair value & historical cost depreciation	(1,077)		(1,061)	
Accumulated gains / (loss) on assets sold or scrapped	<u>0</u>	(1,077)	<u>(88)</u>	(1,149)
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH		49,247		51,994

25. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Authority 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.

United Kingdom Central Government

United Kingdom Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority 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 are included in the subjective analysis in [Note 7](#) on segmental reporting and in the analysis of grant income in [Note 14](#).

Members and Chief Officers

All Members and Chief Officers of the Council are required to disclose where they or any member of their family or household has an interest in a company, partnership or trust that has had transactions with the Council. Disclosures of these transactions allow readers to assess the extent to which the Council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Council.

When completing the disclosure both Members and Chief Officers are asked to confirm that their register of interests held by the Council's Monitoring Officer

<https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr> is up to date.

The Council make a number of appointments of Councillors to local outside bodies to act as the Council's representatives. During 2023/24 the Council funded some of these organisations, the total sum of £878,000 (2022/23: £866,000).

In addition, under the Council's Code of Conduct for Members

(<https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/services/council-and-democracy/councillors,-democracy-and-elections/council-constitution/articles/standards-committee>) they are required to declare at Council meetings any interest they may have in an item on the agenda. If it is considered that the interest is prejudicial the Member is required to leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or decision.

Returns were received from all but 2 non-executive members of 44 Councillors elected as at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, and all Chief Officers and there were no transactions considered of material significance to warrant separate disclosure in the Accounts.

26. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The total paid in Members' allowances, including travel and subsistence expenses, is shown in the table below.

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Basic Allowance	277	232
Special Responsibility Allowance	116	108
Travel & Subsistence Expenses	1	2
Mayor's & Deputy Mayor's Allowance	7	7
Members' National Insurance Contributions	9	8
TOTAL	410	357

The Council also produce a statement, in accordance with provision 1021 15(3) of the *Local Authorities (Members Allowance) (England) Regulations 2003*, giving details of allowances paid to individual Members for the year. The statement may be seen on the Council's [website](#) and on notice boards at the Council's Kings Hill and Tonbridge Castle offices.

27. EXTERNAL AUDIT FEES

The Council's auditors are Grant Thornton UK LLP. The Council incurred the following fees relating to external audit carried out during 2023/24.

	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
External audit services	61	147
Prior year audit fees	11	0
Certification of grant claims and returns	12	30
TOTAL	84	177

All work undertaken by the external auditors was carried out under the Code requirements. No non-audit work was undertaken by the external auditors.

28. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The Council has identified three contingent liabilities and one offsetting contingent asset that it considers the readers of these account should be made aware of.

Private Finance Initiative

In 2007/08 the Council entered into a partnership arrangement with Kent County Council and nine other district councils within Kent to provide new homes for vulnerable people. The scheme's assets are shown on Kent County Council's Balance Sheet and are being funded by Private Finance Initiative credits paid to the County Council over a thirty-year period. In the event of the scheme ceasing due to force majeure the Council will be liable for an estimated £0.78 million, as at year 20 of the scheme. However, the risk of this occurring as at 31 March 2024 was considered remote.

Planning Appeal

In March 2023, the High Court awarded a judgment against the Council in respect of the planning application on the area of Bushey Wood, Eccles. As of the 31st March 2024, the costs awarded were still being compiled by the claimant. In addition to this the Council has instructed its own solicitors to undertake a review of this claim, when received, to ensure that Taxpayers funds are safeguarded. Therefore, at the time of preparing the accounts an accurate assessment of the costs cannot be significantly ascertained to provide a provision for such a claim and therefore the Council have decided to treat the liability as contingent in the 2023/24 Accounts. Once the claim has been agreed and settled the actual figure will be reported into the 2024/25 Financial Statements.

Contractor Vehicles

During 2023/24 both this Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council made some changes to the Contractual Arrangements with the Company providing Refuse, Recycling and Street Cleansing Services to both Boroughs.

The change involved the alteration of refuse rounds and the replacement of the vehicles used to collect waste from households. The replacement vehicles are now being leased through to 2031, beyond the end of the current contract period which ends in March 2027. At the end of the contract period the lease arrangements will be transferred to the new contract and both the assets and the financing responsibilities for these leases will be, either the responsibility of the Councils, or the new service provider.

Work on the commissioning for the new service arrangements are due to commence during 2024/25 and as such, it is yet to be determined on who any remaining asset and liability values would fall to, therefore, the decision has been taken to include these as contingent assets and liabilities in the financial

statements for 2023/24. Once the contractual terms and conditions have been agreed for the contract commencing in April 2027, further consideration will be made on the effect in future financial statements.

COLLECTION FUND

This account reflects the statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain a separate Collection Fund, which shows the transactions of the billing authority in relation to council tax and non-domestic rates and illustrates the way in which these have been distributed to central government, precepting authorities and the General Fund as appropriate. The Collection Fund is consolidated with the other accounts of the billing authority.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

2022/23				2023/24		
Council Tax £'000	NNDR £'000	Total £'000		Council Tax £'000	NNDR £'000	Total £'000
			Income			
108,880	54,662	163,542	Billed to Tax Payers	115,086	62,495	177,581
	14,537	14,537	Contribution towards Previous Years' Collection Fund Deficit			0
108,880	69,199	178,079	Total Income	115,086	62,495	177,581
			Expenditure			
			Precepts and Demands			
77,136	4,539	81,675	Kent County Council	80,864	5,727	86,591
12,043		12,043	Police & Crime Commissioner for Kent	12,816		12,816
4,347	504	4,851	Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority	4,601	636	5,237
11,729	20,174	31,903	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	12,187	25,455	37,642
3,555		3,555	Parish Councils	3,731		3,731
	25,218	25,218	Central Government		31,819	31,819
	(10)	(10)	Transitional Protection		(5,689)	(5,689)
158		158	Contribution towards Previous Years' Collection Fund Surplus	601	2,998	3,599
119	67	186	Amounts Written-Off	198	166	364
297	70	367	Provision for Non-Payment	450	370	820
	2,227	2,227	Provision for Appeals not Paid		2,883	2,883
	(2,074)	(2,074)	Appeals Paid in Year		(2,739)	(2,739)
	155	155	Cost of Collection Allowance		160	160
109,384	50,870	160,254	Total Expenditure	115,448	61,786	177,234
(504)	18,329	17,825	Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	(362)	709	347
941	(15,020)	(14,079)	Balance B/fwd at 1 April	437	3,309	3,746
437	3,309	3,746	Balance C/fwd at 31 March	75	4,018	4,093

NOTES TO THE COLLECTION FUND

1. COUNCIL TAX

Council Tax income derives from charges raised according to the value of residential properties, which have been classified into eight valuation bands estimated at 1 April 1991 values, for this specific purpose. The property valuations are carried out by the Valuation Office Agency. Individual charges are calculated by estimating the amount of income required to be taken from the Collection Fund by Kent County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Borough Council and dividing this by the Council Tax Base.

Precepts

Authorities who made a precept on the Collection Fund are:

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Kent County Council	76,345,362	80,863,571
Police & Crime Commissioner for Kent	11,920,146	12,815,534
Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority	4,302,538	4,601,259
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	11,729,399	12,187,271
	104,297,445	110,467,635
Parish Councils	3,554,738	3,731,383
TOTAL	107,852,183	114,199,018

Council Tax Base

The Council Tax base, i.e. the number of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band (adjusted where discounts apply) converted into an equivalent number of Band D dwellings was calculated as follows:

Band	2022/23			2023/24		
	Estimated no of Properties	Multiplier	Band D Equivalent Dwellings	Estimated no of Properties	Multiplier	Band D Equivalent Dwellings
Disabled A	4.50	5/9ths	2.50	3.50	5/9ths	1.95
A	974.00	6/9ths	649.33	984.64	6/9ths	656.44
B	2,764.17	7/9ths	2,149.91	2773.05	7/9ths	2,156.84
C	12,895.94	8/9ths	11,463.06	13,014.73	8/9ths	11,568.64
D	12,315.45	9/9ths	12,315.45	12,462.71	9/9ths	12,462.71
E	8,704.46	11/9ths	10,638.79	8,714.47	11/9ths	10,651.02
F	5,072.36	13/9ths	7,326.74	5,116.10	13/9ths	7,389.93
G	4,652.85	15/9ths	7,754.75	4,714.33	15/9ths	7,857.21
H	425.00	18/9ths	850.00	436.50	18/9ths	873.00
			53,150.53			53,617.74
Estimated Collection Rate			98.30%			98.3%
COUNCIL TAX BASE			52,246.97			52,706.29

Band D Council Tax

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Kent County Council	1,461.24	1,534.23
Police & Crime Commissioner for Kent	228.15	243.15
Kent & Medway Fire & Rescue Authority	82.35	87.30
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	205.72	210.71
	1,977.46	2,075.39
Special Expenses (average)	18.78	20.52
Parish Councils (average)	68.04	70.80
TOTAL	2,064.28	2,166.71

This basic amount of council tax for a Band D property of £2,075.39 for 2023/24 (2022/23: £1,977.46) is multiplied by the proportion specified within the *Local Government Finance Act 1992* for the particular band to give an individual amount due. In addition to this, charges are made specifically in relation to special expenses and the precepts of Parish Councils as appropriate.

2. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR)

Non-domestic rates are organised on a national basis. The Government specified a “rate poundage” of 51.2p (2022/23: 51.2p) for large businesses or 49.9p (2022/23: 49.9p) for small businesses in 2023/24 and, subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by that amount.

Business rates income after taking into account tariffs and top-ups collected above or below a pre-determined baseline funding level will be shared between central government, the billing authority and other major precepting authorities covered by the Business Rates Retention scheme subject to safety net and levy arrangements.

The NNDR income after relief and provisions of £68,184,000 for 2023/24 (2022/23: £54,672,000) is based on the total rateable value for the Council’s area which at the year-end was £171,890,667 (2022/23: £139,734,842). The increase is as a result of the Valuations Office Revaluation of Business Rate Premises.

3. IMPAIRMENT ALLOWANCE

	2022/23			2023/24		
	Council Tax £'000	NNDR £'000	Total £'000	Council Tax £'000	NNDR £'000	Total £'000
Balance at 1 April	2,856	560	3,416	3,190	630	3,820
Write-Offs	(119)	(67)	(186)	(198)	(166)	(364)
Receipts	36	1	37	0	0	0
Contribution to Allowance	417	136	553	648	536	1,184
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH	3,190	630	3,820	3,640	1,000	4,640

4. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES PROVISION FOR VALUATION APPEALS

An assessment has been made of the potential liability of valuation appeals arising from business rate premises in respect of monies received by the Council up to 31 March 2024. This provision has been based upon information received from the Valuation Office Agency for appeals lodged up to 31 March 2024 and an element for appeals in respect of monies received in 2023/24 but no appeal has yet been lodged. The total amounts are shown in the table under [Note 6](#) below.

5. COLLECTION FUND SURPLUSES AND DEFICITS

The Borough Council is required to estimate the amount of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund for the financial year in respect of council tax and national non-domestic rates. The estimated surplus or deficit is then shared between the Kent County Council, Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, Central Government and the Borough Council as appropriate. The estimated surplus for 2023/24 in respect of council tax was £601,183 and the estimated surplus 2023/24 in respect of NNDR was £2,998,325. The actual surplus of £74,409 in respect of council tax and the actual surplus of £4,017,437 in respect of NNDR at 31 March 2024 will be taken into account when estimating the surplus/deficit for 2024/25.

6. ALLOCATION OF ARREARS, PREPAYMENTS AND OTHER BALANCES

Each of the bodies' share of the arrears, pre-payments / refunds and other balances for both council tax and NNDR is shown in the table below.

	KCC £'000	PCC £'000	KMFRA £'000	Gov't £'000	TMBC £'000	Total £'000
At 31 March 2023						
Council Tax Arrears	5,003	769	283		1,629	7,684
Council Tax Provision for Bad Debts	(2,261)	(348)	(128)		(453)	(3,190)
Council Tax Prepayments & Refunds	(1,784)	(274)	(101)		(357)	(2,516)
Council Tax Cash	(649)	(99)	(37)		(756)	(1,541)
Council Tax (Surplus) / Deficit	(309)	(48)	(17)		(63)	(437)
NNDR Arrears	147		16	819	679	1,661
NNDR Provision for Bad Debts	(57)		(6)	(315)	(252)	(630)
NNDR Provision for Appeals	(1,137)		(126)	(6,316)	(5,052)	(12,631)
NNDR Prepayments & Refunds	(187)		(21)	(1,039)	(831)	(2,078)
NNDR Cash	1,532		170	8,505	6,780	16,987
NNDR (Surplus) / Deficit	(298)		(33)	(1,654)	(1,324)	(3,309)
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
At 31 March 2024						
Council Tax Arrears	5,647	887	320		1,857	8,711
Council Tax Provision for Bad Debts	(2,573)	(404)	(146)		(517)	(3,640)
Council Tax Prepayments & Refunds	(1,936)	(304)	(110)		(389)	(2,739)
Council Tax Cash	(1,085)	(171)	(61)		(941)	(2,258)
Council Tax (Surplus) / Deficit	(53)	(8)	(3)		(10)	(74)
NNDR Arrears	236		26	1,309	1,075	2,646
NNDR Provision for Bad Debts	(90)		(10)	(500)	(400)	(1,000)
NNDR Provision for Appeals	(1,150)		(127)	(6,388)	(5,110)	(12,775)
NNDR Prepayments & Refunds	(121)		(13)	(670)	(536)	(1,340)
NNDR Cash	1,487		164	8,258	6,578	16,487
NNDR (Surplus) / Deficit	(362)		(40)	(2,009)	(1,607)	(4,018)
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Purpose of this Statement

The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to assess and demonstrate that there is a sound system of corporate governance throughout the organisation.

Scope of responsibility

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards covering local authority activities, and that 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 carried out, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council has approved and adopted a Local Code of Corporate Governance which has been developed in consideration of the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. A copy of the authority's Code can be obtained from the Legal team. This statement explains how the Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

The purpose of the governance framework

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

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

The governance framework has been in place at Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of this statement.

The governance framework

The Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance sets out the arrangements in place to govern the Council's activities under seven main headings.

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law

Standards of conduct among Members and Officers are governed through the Council's Members' Code of Conduct and Officer Code of Conduct. Effective communication between Members and Officers is ensured through the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations documented within the Constitution. Arrangements are in place ensuring both Members and Officers declare any interests that may impact on the Council's decision making process. Such interests are recorded on a register which is maintained and monitored by the Monitoring Officer and the register of Members' Interests published on the Council's website.

The Members' Code of Conduct is based around ethical behaviour and requires objective and impartial decision making. The Code is communicated to all new Members on induction. Upholding standards of Member conduct is the responsibility of the Joint Standards Committee. The Committee are also responsible for ensuring Members receive suitable induction and ongoing training and support in respect of ethical standards.

All staff are required to read and understand the Officer Code of Conduct available through the Council's intranet and are bound by it, as detailed in employee contracts. The Council has an appraisal scheme in place for all staff that seeks to ensure staff achieve agreed levels of performance and the monitoring and management of performance is the responsibility of line managers. In addition, the Council's statutory Officers are subject to Continuing Professional Development through their respective Professional Organisations.

The Council's duty to ensure that all activities undertaken are in accordance with the law is discharged in part by the Council's Constitution including its Financial Procedure Rules and Contracts Procedure Rules and supported by strategies/policies relevant to Council activities that are made available to staff and the public via the Council's intranet and internet sites respectively. Where it is appropriate, strategies/policies are allocated to a lead Officer who is responsible for their periodic review and updating.

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

The decision-making framework of the Council is set out in the Constitution including statutory functions and the scheme of delegation of responsibilities. The Constitution is kept under review by the Monitoring Officer and Management Team with any proposed changes presented to the Council for adoption where not delegated to the Monitoring Officer. Notices of Key Decisions are published in advance via the Council's website. All Member meetings held by the Council are open to the public and live streamed on You Tube, unless the items being discussed are considered to be confidential (Executive meetings) or otherwise exempt under the Local Government Act 1972 (all meetings); these will include staffing and legal matters and those of a contractual nature.

The Council's Constitution details the roles and responsibilities that are delegated to Members and Officers and specifies which decisions may be made by individuals and which are reserved for Committee, Cabinet or Council. The Constitution includes the Council's Financial and Contracts Procedure Rules setting out the Council's standing orders and financial regulations. The specific roles and responsibilities of Officers are set out through the scheme of delegation including the specific responsibilities of the Chief Executive (as Head of Paid Service), the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of these functions.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet and/or Committees and Council Officers. Decisions made by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member can be subjected to scrutiny via a call-in procedure allowing challenge within five working days of the decision being taken. In addition to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council also has three Scrutiny Select Committees which have the power to investigate any matters they consider relevant to their work area, and to make recommendations to the Council, the executive or any committee of the Council as they see fit.

The Council has established arrangements to communicate and consult with stakeholders on the Council's work and key policy changes and this consultation allows the development of strategic priorities and the Corporate Strategy. In addition, the Council uses its complaints procedure to understand where services can be improved.

Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

The Council's current Corporate Strategy was approved by Full Council in the Summer of 2023.

The strategy covers the period 2023 to 2027 and sets out our vision: *"To be an innovative and forward-thinking council, that leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future."*

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covers both revenue and capital budgets, and it is this strategy that underpins the budget setting process for the forthcoming year and over the strategy period. The aim of the MTFS is to give us a realistic and sustainable plan that reflects the Council's priorities and takes us into the future. Alongside the MTFS sits a Savings and Transformation Strategy. Its purpose, to provide structure, focus and direction in addressing the significant financial challenge that lies ahead.

Value for money considerations are set out in all Member reports where relevant. The social impact of decisions is considered throughout the decision making process, including the carrying out of an Equalities Impact Assessment. Where relevant, policies are subject to a Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment prior to adoption.

Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Decision making mechanisms are set out in detail in the Council's Constitution. Whether a decision is at Council, Cabinet or Committee level it is informed by a report encompassing advice from relevant services across the Council. Where relevant, alternative options are provided within Member reports, with an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of those options.

The Corporate Strategy provides a reference point for the actions we take to maintain and improve the services which are most important to the local community whilst taking into account a much reduced level of funding. The delivery of the Corporate Strategy and addendum is supported by operational plans prepared by individual services, which in turn are fed down to team and individual objectives through performance management arrangements.

Performance of the Council and its partners in achieving its objectives is monitored and measured by services and their respective Service Management Teams and subsequently Members. Individual services are accountable to the Corporate Management Team for operational performance monitoring and measurement and are responsible for taking action to correct any adverse performance, in the first instance, as appropriate.

Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

The Council works towards improving value for money through exploration of innovative ways of working including IT related solutions; potential for joint working and shared services; robust budgeting and financial monitoring arrangements including detailed reviews of budgets and potential savings opportunities and the work of internal and external audit.

The Council has a training programme for Members and holds regular training sessions (both on a programmed and ad hoc basis) on a variety of topics including induction training for all new Members and Committee specific training, e.g. Audit Committee, Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Council has an extensive training programme for officers including mandatory and voluntary training. Staff have access to appropriate induction training, and ongoing training (both on a programmed and ad-hoc basis) relevant to their roles. The annual appraisal process reviews staff performance and also identifies training needs.

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

The core functions of an audit committee as defined by CIPFA's *Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities* is fulfilled by the Council's Audit Committee. The Council's Constitution sets out the responsibility of the Audit Committee to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and associated control environment. To do so, the Audit Committee has adopted a Risk Management Strategy that sets out the roles of Members and Officers in the identification and minimisation of risk.

Risk management practices are embedded within the organisation through the annual service and strategic planning processes, which is used to develop the Council's vision and objectives. This ensures that risks to the achievement of the Council's objectives are identified and managed appropriately. Risks identified are scored on the basis of their likelihood and impact and existing controls and required actions to further mitigate risks are captured in risk registers and a risk management escalation process in place. The framework sets out the responsibility of Officers leading on areas with partnership arrangements to ensure that the partner has an adequate risk management strategy and sufficient insurance cover to protect the interests of the Council.

Specific issues that required continuing corporate ownership, action and monitoring in 2023/24 and identified several high risk areas on the Strategic Risk Register, these risks were monitored reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and reported to the Audit Committee.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent inflationary pressures have had a profound impact across service areas, businesses and the wider community and continue to do so. We will not know the full extent of the impact for some time. In looking forward it is assumed that the reductions in income and increased costs seen as a result of the pandemic in large will return to pre Covid-19 levels in the short to medium term. The extent and speed of the recovery will need to be closely monitored and to take corrective action if this is proved not to be the case.

The Council's standard report template requires Members and Officers to carry out a risk assessment of the action recommended in the report ensuring risk is considered in all decision-making of the authority. This assessment also covers legal, financial and value for money considerations and equality issues where relevant.

The Council has an effective Internal Audit function. The Internal Audit function is provided by Kent County Council under delegation and operates in line with proper practices which is governed by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the CIPFA application note to the Standards. The Chief Audit Executive role meets the requirements as set out in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations. The Audit Committee are responsible for the Council's anti-fraud, bribery and corruption arrangements including whistleblowing recommending its adoption to the General Purposes Committee. The Chief Audit Executive is responsible for the maintenance of the Council's Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy and Whistleblowing Policy and has arrangements and resources in place to investigate any allegations made under either document.

The Council's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government and the Financial Management Code. The Council's financial information and reporting arrangements are sound and the external auditor

following the 2022/23 audit identified two significant weaknesses in regard to performance management and procurement under the heading of 'Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness'. These matters were reported to the Audit Committee along with the management response in September 2023. The actions within the management response have been progressed since the committee.

Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability

The Council has implemented the mandatory and (where cost effective) recommended principles set out in the Local Government Transparency Code.

All reports (save those which are exempt) for both historic and prospective meetings of the Council and its Committees and Boards are made available to the public through the Council's website. Where possible, reports are written in a public-facing and non-technical manner.

The annual Statement of Accounts reports the Council's financial performance and is prepared in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK and is subject to external audit. Included within the Accounts is an opinion given by the Council's external auditors on value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of resources.

The Review of Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit for the year 2022/23 concluded that a good system of internal audit is in place within the Council.

Review of effectiveness

Tonbridge & Malling Borough 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 managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Audit Executive's Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditor and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements has been evaluated through a self-assessment against the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE document, *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016*.

It should be noted that no significant governance issues were identified in the Annual Governance Review and no other areas were identified for further enhancement. A change was made in year to the legal implications section of Member reports to make it clear where the commentary had been vetted by the Legal team. For completeness no audit reports received a 'no assurance' opinion.

Signed



Interim Chief Executive

Dated 31st May 2024

Signed



Leader of the Council

Dated 31st May 2024

Independent auditor's report to the members of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements.

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2024, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the Collection Fund Income and Expenditure Account. 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 2023/24.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2024 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2024) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

In our evaluation of the Director of Finance and Transformation's conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 that the Authority's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the Authority. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2022) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the Authority and the Authority's disclosures over the going concern period.

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

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

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Director of Finance and Transformation with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Director of Finance and Transformation is responsible for the other information. 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.

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 themselves. 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.

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in November 2024 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of the Authority and the Director of Finance and Transformation

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the statement of accounts, the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Director of Finance and Transformation. The Director of Finance and Transformation 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 2023/24, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Director of Finance and Transformation determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Director of Finance and Transformation is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless they have been informed by the relevant national body of the intention to dissolve the Authority without the transfer of its services to another public sector entity.

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. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements are those related to the reporting frameworks, the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Government Act 2003, Local Government Act 1972, and Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012).

We enquired of management and the Audit Committee, concerning the Authority's policies and procedures relating to:

- the identification, evaluation and compliance with laws and regulations;
- the detection and response to the risks of fraud; and
- the establishment of internal controls to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.

We enquired of management, internal audit and the Audit Committee, whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or whether they had any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud.

We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating management's incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls. We determined that the principal risks were in relation to unusual journals, management estimates and transactions outside the course of business. We considered where there was any potential management bias in accounting estimates or any significant transactions with related parties which could give rise to an indication of management override. Our audit procedures involved:

- evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that management has in place to prevent and detect fraud;
- journal entry testing, with a focus on unusual journal entries using criteria developed based on our knowledge of the Authority, use of data analytics and other risk factors identified;
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of the valuation of other land and buildings and pension fund liability; and
- assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.

These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.

We communicated relevant laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members, including potential for fraud in revenue and expenditure recognition, and the significant accounting estimates related to the valuation of other land and buildings and pension fund net liability. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, throughout the audit.

Our assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the engagement team included consideration of the engagement team's:

- understanding of, and practical experience with audit engagements of a similar nature and complexity through appropriate training and participation;
- knowledge of the local government sector; and
- understanding of the legal and regulatory requirements specific to the Authority including:
 - the provisions of the applicable legislation
 - guidance issued by CIPFA/LASAAC and SOLACE
 - the applicable statutory provisions.

In assessing the potential risks of material misstatement, we obtained an understanding of:

- the Authority's operations, including the nature of its income and expenditure and its services and of its objectives and strategies to understand the classes of transactions, account balances, expected financial statement disclosures and business risks that may result in risks of material misstatement.
- the Authority's control environment, including the policies and procedures implemented by the Authority to ensure compliance with the requirements of the financial reporting framework.

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.

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

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2024.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter, except in the 2022-23 financial year, we identified and reported a significant weakness in the Authority's arrangements for improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This was in relation to the Council's Procurement Strategy and Contract Standing Orders being outdated and the Council being without an intelligent client function for procurement and contract manager, without a specialist trained officer to lead procurement or contract management, and no regular procurement or contract management training provided to officers or Members. We recommended that the Council updates its Procurement Strategy and Contract Standing Orders and have a suitably trained client lead for procurement and contract management.

The recommendations made are in progress, yet to be fully addressed. Therefore, the significant weakness remains in place.

Responsibilities of the Authority

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

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

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

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

- Financial sustainability: how the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;

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

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

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

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate for Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice until we have completed the work necessary in relation to consolidation returns, including Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), and the National Audit Office has concluded their work in respect of WGA for the year ended 31 March 2024. We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the Members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 85 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's Members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's Members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Sophia Brown

Sophia Brown, Key Audit Partner
for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor London

15 January 2025

TMBC.GOV.UK

Serving our community

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4LZ