

**AGENDA FOR
AUDIT COMMITTEE**



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To: All Members of Audit Committee

Councillors : R Bernstein, D Berry, I Gartside, M Hayes, J Hook, G McGill, E Moss (Chair), M Rahimov, M Rubinstein.

Mr B Thomas – Independent Member
Mr D Webster – Independent Member

Dear Member/Colleague

Audit Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Audit Committee which will be held as follows:-

Date:	Tuesday, 17 February 2026
Place:	Town Hall – Meeting Room A & B
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Audit Committee are asked to consider whether they have an interest in any of the matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING *(Pages 5 - 14)*

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Audit Committee held on

4 MATTERS ARISING

5 COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PLAN *(Pages 15 - 28)*

Report from S.151 Officer attached

6 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2024/25 *(Pages 29 - 286)*

Report from the Director of Finance attached
Appendix 1 – 2024/25 Audit Strategy and Completion Report – Report from Forvis Mazars attached

Appendix 2 - 2025/25 Audited Statement of Accounts - attached
Appendix 3 – 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement - attached

7 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT *(Pages 287 - 312)*

Report from S.151 Officer attached
Appendix A Attached
Appendix B Attached
Appendix C Attached

8 TERMS OF REFERENCE *(Pages 313 - 324)*

Report attached
Draft Terms of Reference attached

9 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider passing the appropriate resolution under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business since they involve the likely disclosure of the exempt information stated.

10 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS & FOLLOW UPS *(Pages 325 - 334)*

Report from the S.151 Officer attached

11 INTERNAL AUDIT - INVESTIGATIONS *(Pages 335 - 340)*

Report from the S.151 Officer attached

Minutes of: **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 8 December 2025

Present: Councillor E Moss (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, D Berry, I Gartside, M Hayes, J Hook,
G McGill, M Rahimov and M Rubinstein

Mr Ben Thomas – Independent Member
Mr David Webster – Independent Member

Also in attendance:

Adrian Blackshaw – Senior Auditor
Helen Corbishley – Head of Performance & Delivery – Data
Protection Officer
Jacqui Dennis – Monitoring Officer
Emma Hamer - Senior Corporate Fraud Officer
Neil Kissock – S.151 Officer
Stefan Mann – Senior Corporate Fraud Officer
Karen Murray – Forvis Mazars
Osama Rathore – Forvis Mazars
Judith Smith – Senior Auditor

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence:

AU.106 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

AU.107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

AU.108 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 20 October be approved subject to the following amendments: -

Minute AU.98 Council Improvement Plan,
In reference to Financial Resilience, the S.151 Officer reported that the matter would be considered at the December Meeting and not the November meeting as stated in the report.

Minute AU.99 2024/2025 Draft Accounts
Councillor Moss referred to the Narrative of both the Annual Governance Statement section of the Draft Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement which included the Head of Audit Opinion of Limited Assurance. Councillor Moss stated that as there

were a large number of limited assurance audits with a high number of recommendations attached, the narrative in both the AGS and Draft Accounts statement should include this more prominently to reflect the seriousness.

The S.151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer had agreed that this would be done.

Mr Thomas, Independent Member referred to external providers in relation to the accounts process such as the GMPF and asked how their work was monitored and challenged if needed, and how they could be held to account.

AU.101 External Audit Progress Report.

Mr Webster referred the 24/25 Financial Statements Audit the 2024/2025 being disclaimed and asked whether there was a plan or timetable in place in relation to the 24/25 accounts.

AU.109 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

AU.110 EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

Karen Murray and Osama Rathore presented the Draft Auditor's Annual report summarising the work Forvis Mazars have undertaken as the auditor for Bury Council ('the Council') for the year ended 31 March 2025.

It was reported that the Council did not meet the statutory publication date of 30 June 2025 for its unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2025. The draft statements were not published until 15 October 2025.

Forvis Mazars have not commenced work on the financial statements and it was explained that they expect to complete the work and issue their opinion on the financial statements in February 2026. Forvis Mazars expect to issue a disclaimed audit report.

It was also reported that that the external auditors had considered there was a significant risk the weaknesses they had previously identified had not been addressed. The risks had been reported, and the work they planned to do to address them, to the Council. However, they have been unable to complete the work planned as the Council had not yet provided evidence to support the improvements in all areas.

A more thorough report will be presented to the Audit Committee at its next meeting in February 2026.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Hook referred to the statement that council evidence had not been provided and asked whether this was more to do with timing and capacity.

The external auditor explained that it was both, the council could have provided some information in certain areas as the auditors had been requesting it since June. There had been a lack of engagement.

The S.151 Officer explained that there was some budget work that needed completing before sharing and capacity had been an issue.

- Councillor Moss referred to VFM comments last year in relation to Childrens Services and asked about progress made.

The S.151 Officer explained that this was in relation to project safety valve. There had not been as much progress made in relation to this as the Council would have liked but it was a national issue and the council were awaiting further information from the DfE.

The External Auditor explained that the Council had been slow at providing a response and they had hoped that the changes which had been implemented would have helped the S.151 Officer and his team to provide the information requested.

The S.151 Officer explained that governance arrangements had seen the implementation of six assurance groups that meet every Month in relation to the weaknesses identified. The progress made is reported to the Audit Committee at each meeting.

- Mr Webster stated that on page 15 of the External Auditor's report it referred to the issue of the statutory recommendation in December 2025, Mr Webster asked if this should have read 2024.
- Mr Webster asked if any questions had been received during the public inspection period and asked if there was a timetable of work to February in place.

The External Auditor reported that no questions had been received and explained that the work would come together in the next 3 – 4 months.

- Councillor Bernstein referred to the outcome set out in the report in relation to the draft Annual Governance Statement and arrangements not being in place for 2024/2025. Councillor Bernstein stated that it wasn't clear when some arrangements had been put in place.
- Councillor Hook asked if the requests for information from External Audit went to a specific board.

The S.151 Officer reported that each board included elements from the improvement plan and the Improvement Plan update which will be presented at the February 2026 meeting will set out progress made to that point.

- Councillor Gartside referred to paragraph 3 on page 9 of the report and asked if any of the recommendations had shown strengthening of areas.

The External Auditor stated that the Head of Internal Audit suggested that there was still some improvement required.

- Mr Thomas referred to the timetable of work and asked if the Council were to provide requests in a timely manner could the External Audit team complete the work required.

It was explained that in relation to the VFM work if the information was provided before the Christmas break the work would be completed in time to present at the February meeting of the Committee.

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

AU.111 RISK REGISTER

The Head of Performance and Delivery presented a report providing an updated position with regards to the risks identified and assessed on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

27 risks were currently present on the Corporate Risk Register and have been identified as those that have the potential to disrupt the Council's strategic objectives and service delivery.

The report presents all relevant information and scoring of these risks, an overview being:

17 risks are currently rated as Significant (risk score 15-25)
7 risks are currently rated as High (risk score 8-12)
3 risk is currently rated as Moderate (risk score 4-6)

3 have increased in score
4 have decreased in score
20 have remained static
1 has been newly introduced
2 are proposed for closure
The following points were raised:

- Councillor Hook asked a narrative could be included in the report.
- Councillor Bernstein referred to CR.30 Staff Safety and stated that Member Safety should also be included as a risk.

It was stated that the S.151 Officer would pick this issue up with the relevant Executive Director.

It was also reported that the Member Development group were looking to update Member Safety Guidance to incorporate Operation Bridger and Operation Ford guidance.

- Councillor Gartside referred to CR.9 Workforce Skills and Capability and asked how confident the Council was that the shortage of social workers would be addressed before May 2026.

The S.151 Officer reported that there were positive moves to recruit to permanent posts. He advised that he would seek an update from the Executive Director of Children and Young People.

- Councillor Gartside referred to 63% rating significant and asked if this was a high number historically and whether there were targets to reduce to.

It was explained that the average for 2023/2024 was 65%. A suitable target would be considered.

- Councillor Rubinstein referred to risks that weren't included such as highways and potholes where accidents could happen and asked if there should be a risk in this area.

The S.151 Officer explained that there also departmental and service risk registers and stated that he would consult with the Director of Place to see which register these risks were included within.

- David Webster stated that there was a typing error on page 33 – All risks have not been reviewed? Should this be all risks have been reviewed?

It was stated that yes, all risks had been reviewed.

- David Webster referred to CR.11 H & S target score of 20 and asked if this should be lower and CR 23 having a target score of 12 but the score in the report at 10 and asked if this was the wrong way round.

It was explained that with regards to CR.11, Health and Safety have a sub group who report into the Health and Safety Group, two new staff have also been appointed within the team and actions were ongoing to reduce the score and target.

With regard to CR.23 it was reported that the CQC inspection had fed into the risk and reduced the score which was at 10 and now below the target score of 12.

It was agreed:

1. That the report be noted
2. That the Committee approve the closure of CR33 – Housing Services Transition, CR34 – Sure Maintenance Contract

AU.112 INTERNAL AUDIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2025 -2026 UPDATE

The Section 151 Officer submitted a report outlining the work undertaken to implement the improvement actions identified from the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) review which was presented to the Audit Committee on 8 April 2025. The

improvements are contained within a development plan which outlines the action and the timescales for implementation.

The report and Appendix A enable Members to see the progress with implementation and to raise any questions on outstanding actions.

It was explained that following some changes within the team there were some areas of work that would be reallocated and that the GIAS self-assessment will also highlight any gaps where training might be required. This information will be updated at the April meeting.

- Councillor Moss referred to his request for an update report of the Internal Audit Resource availability and asked when this information would be provided.

The S.151 Officer explained that due to changes within the staffing of the team the work had been delayed. A report would be brought to the April meeting of the Committee.

Action 11 within the Development Plan requires the production of Audit Committee Terms of Reference which is attached for Members consideration.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Mr Webster referred to 65 of the Terms of Reference where it stated Council and Cabinet, he asked if this should just be Council. It was confirmed that this was the case.
- Councillor Moss referred to the number of Members required for the Committee to be quorate as he felt that 3 members was a low number.

It was explained that every Council Committee had 3 as a quorum.

- Councillor Moss referred to 29 where it stated 'an officer'. He asked which officer?

It was explained that there were a number of officers from heads of service up to Executive Director.

- Councillor Moss asked that this be changed to 'most relevant'.

It was agreed:

That subject to the suggested amendments and following further input from the Monitoring Officer, the draft Terms of Reference be brought back to the next meeting of the Audit Committee before being submitted to Council for inclusion in the Council Constitution.

AU.113 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Head of Performance and Delivery and Data Protection Officer presented a report updating the Audit Committee on the Council's Information Governance activity from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025. The report highlighted improvements in training compliance, performance at responding to requests for information and dealing with data breaches.

The report set out the number of Subject Access Requests (SAR) and SAR reviews received including open and overdue, Freedom of Information (FOI) requests including open and overdue and information in relation to data breaches.

The report also referred to the proposed procurement of case management software to increase capacity to respond to SAR requests and procure software to support FOVEIR and SAR processes.

- Councillor Moss noted that there had been an increase in figures since the previous year and asked if the process was costly.

It was confirmed that the numbers of FOIs and SARs received had increased in the past 12 months. It was also explained that the Council can refuse to respond if it would take 18 hours or more to produce and answer.

- Councillor Hook asked whether there was a limit on the number of requests a person could submit.

It was explained that a person can submit unlimited requests.

The report also updated Members on GDPR training and no compliance.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Hayes referred to the proposed new software and stated that this would be a positive addition to the work of the team.
- Councillor Hayes asked for clarification in relation to repeat request for information.

It was explained that if a number of requests were submitted in relation to a specific subject the information would be published on the council website so that it was accessible and the questioners would be directed to its location.

- Councillor Berry referred to 20% of staff in one department not being compliant in GDPR training and stated that this figure seemed quite high.

It was explained that there were staff off on long term sick who may have lapsed and they would be included but it was also due to the fact that it was a rolling programme and therefore a snapshot in time.

- Councillor Moss asked whether agency staff were required to complete the training.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that all agency staff were required to complete the training and new starters were required to complete as one of their first tasks. It was also reported that the Council were looking to ask new starters to have completed the training prior to starting their new roles.

It was agreed:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That an update report is presented to Audit Committee every 6 months.

AU.114 ANTI FRAUD & CORRUPTION STRATEGY 2025/2027

The Section 151 Officer submitted a report providing an overview of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, the Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy, the Fraud & Corruption Prosecution Policy, Anti Bribery Policy and Anti Money Laundering Policy.

The Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and associated policies, available on the internet, are dated 2023. This report brought to Audit Committee presents the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy and the revised associated policies and seeks approval of these documents.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were raised.

- Councillor Hayes referred to reducing the risk of fraud through an education programme to staff and residents and asked how this would be done?

It was explained that residents have the opportunity to report fraud through the council website. It was also explained that by publicising successful cases that have led to prosecution will educate and encourage people to report.

- Councillor Hook asked why the suppliers in schools had been removed from the anti-bribery policy.

It was explained that schools should have their own policies and strategies and this should be included within them. It was also explained that the majority of schools in Bury were now or soon would be academies.

- Mr Webster referred to the whistleblowing and the employees suspicion of fraud where it stated what employees should do. He asked if a section on what employees shouldn't do should be included to stop employees from carrying out their own investigations.

It was confirmed that this would be included and would state that it is not an exhaustive list.

- Mr Webster referred to the newly introduced Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act and asked if this should be referenced.

It was confirmed that this would be included.

- Councillor Moss referred to the Whistleblowing where it states that employees living in Bury could contact 'their' local Councillor.

It was explained that this reference was being removed on the advice of the legal department.

- Councillor Moss referred to the date on the Strategy as 2025 – 2027 and stated that the Strategy would not be implemented until 2026 so should be dated as 2026 – 2027.

It was stated that the date on the strategy would be removed.

It was also explained that reference on how to contact the Comptroller and Auditor General would be included and all references to Mazars would be changed to 'Forvis Mazars'

It was agreed;

That subject to the amendments and additions highlighted in the comments,

- The Audit Committee approve the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy
- The Audit Committee approve the Whistleblowing (Confidential Reporting) Policy
- The Audit Committee approve the Fraud and Corruption Prosecution Policy
- The Audit Committee approve the Anti Bribery Policy
- The Audit Committee approve the Anti Money Laundering Policy

AU.115 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was agreed:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item

AU.116 COUNTER FRAUD TEAM MID YEAR REPORT 25/26

A report from the S.151 Officer was presented to the Committee.

The report provided an update on the Annual Counter Fraud Plan 2025/26 and the work undertaken by the Counter Fraud Team during the period 1st April 2025 and 31st October 2025.

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

COUNCILLOR E MOSS
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.20 pm)



Classification: Open	Decision Type: Non-Key
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Report to:	Audit Committee	Date: 17 February 2026
Subject:	Progress Update from the Council to the Statutory Recommendation received from the External Auditor under schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014	
Report of	Director of Finance S151 Officer	

Summary

1. The Council's external Auditors, Forvis Mazars, presented the outcome of their audit work in relation to their judgements in the area of the Council's Value for Money arrangements for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years to the December Audit Committee meeting. They identified three significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements. These weaknesses are across all three reporting criteria that they are required to consider under the Code of Audit Practise, namely; financial sustainability, governance and for improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services.
2. Forvis Mazars determined that use of their statutory reporting powers under the Local Audit Accountability Act 2014 was necessary and issued a statutory recommendation formally to the Chief Executive on 12 December 2024. They recommended that:

"The Council should, as a matter of urgency, develop a comprehensive Council wide improvement plan to reflect the transformation and cultural change needed across all departments, to ensure the Council can deliver the range, level and quality of services that it deems appropriate and within its statutory responsibilities in a financially sustainable way. Appropriate management and member oversight is required to ensure the improvement plan is delivering changes that are embedded into the organisation."

A response was provided by the Council to the January 2025 Audit Committee meeting which included the publication and approval of an improvement action plan which was also subsequently approved at Council.

This report provides the third update on activity and delivery against this action plan with the previous updates being brought in April and July 2025 and highlights the improvement work that has been carried out by the Assurance Boards. In addition to the work carried out by the Boards there have been Council wide briefings, Senior Management sessions and Executive Leadership Team engagement with the improvement work and compliance sprints.

This update provides the latest position against the wider Improvement Work Plan and Audit recommendations.

Recommendation(s)

3. The Audit Committee is asked to:
 - a. Note the progress detailed in the action plan update.
 - b. Endorse the proposal for future governance and monitoring of the improvement plan as outlined in the report.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

This report provides assurance of delivery and progress so far against the improvement plan that was developed in response to the statutory recommendation. In addition, it proposes robust new arrangements for governance and monitoring of delivery going forward which aligns with Corporate Performance reporting.

Alternative options considered and rejected

4. n/a

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Neil Kissock-
Position: Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
Department: Corporate Core Department
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Background

5. This report provides a fourth progress update on the Improvement Action Plan which was agreed by Audit Committee in January 2025. The last update was provided to the Audit Committee in October 2025. This report therefore contains a full year update on improvement activity.

Improvement Action Plan Progress

6. There continues to be progress made within expected target dates across some of the plan. The plan in Appendix 1 was split into the following areas:
 - a. **Financial Resilience (including financial strategy):** All actions are on track or complete. The Finance Board continues to be run monthly overseeing the key milestones in the Improvement work plan. The Finance Board has overseen the approach and assumptions that underpin the 2026/27 proposed revenue budget and capital programme, medium term financial strategy and related other budget papers. The report has built on the proposals included within the December Cabinet report, reports on the outcome of the public budget consultation and has updated for the latest available information including the provisional local government finance settlement that was received on 17 December. The revenue budget proposed for 2026/27 includes a significantly lower contribution from reserves than in previous years but an increasing

funding gap in future years within the current medium term financial strategy and therefore outlines the approach to be undertaken early in the new financial year to identify further proposals that will ultimately enable a budget to set without recourse from reserves in future years.

- b. **Finance Capacity and Transformation (actions in relation to the finance restructure):** With regard to Phase One, following a successful recruitment and interview process appointments have been made to the Strategic Finance Lead roles with those appointed working their notice periods and with formal start dates confirmed for all in March and April. The Council is currently also out to advert for the next tier Senior Finance Business Partner and Corporate Accountancy Manager roles. The Phase Two consultation will begin on 11 February and complete in early March when any subsequent changes to the draft structure and approach to appointing will be confirmed.
- c. **Governance and Compliance including Estate Management and Leadership and Governance Arrangements:** All of these actions are now complete. The Board has now moved to a programme of compliance activity across the Council in line with the improvement action plan.

Progress of the Six Assurance Boards

The below provides a recent summary of some Improvement Work Plan activity (in addition to above) by each Board. As the first year of the work of the Boards comes to end the majority of recovery actions are complete and the following activity has become business as usual activity:

Commercial

- Support with agreement for fit out and lease for Flexi Hall operator.
- Reviewed operating plans for opening of New Radcliffe Hub.
- Plans developed for a robust review of traded services.

Finance

- Delivered budget setting proposals for 2026/27 and delivered budget consultation
- Procurement and Contract Management new operating model invest to save business case developed and ultimately approved by Cabinet. The approved investment also includes the implementation of new systems including Scanmarket which is the process of being implemented and rolled out and will both digitise the contracts register but also hold real-term performance and management information, A procurement continuous improvement group is in place providing assurance to the Finance Board, chaired by the Head of Procurement and with senior cross-Directorate representation.
- Plans developed for improved capital programme monitoring and governance processes through the implementation of new Verto software and a capital sub-group set-up reporting through to the Finance Board as part of the more robust capital gateway arrangements going forward.

- Various business cases received for finance approval as part of governance process and included within the MTFs.
- In depth monthly review of Adults and Children's forecast revenue outturn position and the development and monitoring of the mitigations to address the forecast spending pressures in both service areas.

Governance and Assurance

- Regular updates received from the Health and Safety Subgroup
- Monthly performance updates through the Compliance Dashboard:
 - FOIs completed within timescale: Jan 2025 50.4% - Jan 2026 – 79.0%
 - SARs – in April-July 2025 the number of SARs completed outside of timescale on a monthly basis ranged from 4-14. From August onwards this was no more than 2.
- The Improvement Workplan is now monitored for progress on a monthly basis
- 96% of Business Continuity Plans have been finalised for services for 2025/26.
- The annual report on ombudsman complaints showed an increase in complaints and enquiries in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24 of 100 from 78. However, less of these were upheld by the ombudsman 10 compared to 23. For Bury, 71% of complaints investigated were upheld compared to an average of 81% in similar authorities.
- A targeted piece of work is planned for February to explore remaining non-compliance with GDPR training. The suite of training for GDPR is being reviewed to tailor the courses to meet the needs of both new starters to the organisation and annual refreshers for existing staff.
- The Board have agreed and put in place new business planning processes for 2026/27 to align with corporate planning. This will define timescales around service planning and employee reviews creating a new compliance measurement for all employee reviews to be complete in March in advance of the planning year. The key performance indicator will be developed to monitor this and is expected to show increased compliance in this area.
- The Board provides forward plans for Members Assurance Group, tracking large scale projects and financial sustainability.

Performance, Delivery and Transformation

- Information@Work document retention upgrade project has been completed and the retention module now fully implemented.
- The 2025/26 Corporate Plan continues to be monitored for delivery and plans in development for the 2026/27 Corporate Plan are near approval for the new reporting year.
- The new Workforce Strategy has had initial sign off by the Employment Panel in November.
- A new Digital Strategy has been developed and shared ready for next steps of implementation.
- There is now a Digital Board in place as a subgroup dedicated to the implementation of digital projects.

- Business cases received and approved where required for presentation at Finance Board.

Property and Estates

- Roll-out of the Corporate Landlord model continues and the development of an estates strategy for the council is in development.
- The Board is supporting changes in the national agenda regarding SEND provision and overseeing the provision of new inclusion spaces.
- Building compliance continues to be monitored by the Board through the delivery of FAGELL team.
- Sites being added to Concerto asset register as per planned activity.
- CBRE work completed.

Regeneration

- Delivery of Radcliffe Hub and Market Chambers is on schedule for soft launch later this year.
- The Flexi Hall is ahead of schedule for opening later this year.
- Prestwich Village: Phase 1a Travel Hub works complete and on track for delivery.
- Western Access project as part of Northern gateway being supported and monitored by the board

Priorities for the year ahead and governance going forward

Further review of the Improvement Plan and Assurance Boards has taken place in advance of the organisation's planning round for 2026/27. The Assurance Boards have provided an improved and robust level of governance throughout the past year which makes decision making more transparent and collaborative. Actions from the Boards are reported to Executive Leadership Team and Members Assurance Group with escalations where required and an audit trail recorded through highlight reporting. Alongside this overall delivery updates on the Improvement Workplan are also provided which are also reported at this Audit Committee.

Alongside the planning for the delivery of the Corporate Plan for 2026/27 the continued priorities for delivery through the Improvement Plan have also been considered. A draft plan on a page has been developed alongside the draft Corporate Plan on page (which is currently subject to final approval and sign off). It is proposed to align the reporting process of the Improvement Plan alongside the current established process of the Corporate Plan, where in-quarter issues would be monitored through the Performance, Delivery and Transformation Board and Governance and Assurance Board where required additionally. A full quarterly update on delivery and performance of both the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan would be published at Cabinet using the current governance and reporting methods for the Corporate Plan.

The Corporate Plan with associated improvement activity will in addition be taken to Overview and Scrutiny as per the usual performance processes.

In development of the Improvement Plan for 2026/27, the following draft delivery priorities have been proposed across 5 boards. These have a focus on financial

sustainability and in addition core improvement actions. It is proposed that Regeneration Board will be monitored through the usual Corporate Planning process as through the year this has been seen as a duplication of assurance. The activities for that Board will be the key regeneration projects set out in the Corporate Plan.

Finance Board:

- Monitoring delivery of the approved revenue budget and capital delivery including delivery of agreed savings.
- Updating of the MTFs and oversee the budget process to identify future revenue budget proposals and changes to the capital programme.
- Further development of spend controls and mitigations in-year to support financial sustainability.
- Continued delivery of the Unit 4 upgrade programme and ensure that the benefits identified in original business case are achieved.
- Oversee implementation of the new Procurement and Contract Management Operating Model and service transformation including delivery of agreed contract savings.

Property and Estates Board:

- Production of an Estates Strategy to include delivery of:
 - Commercial lease reviews
 - Rationalisation of administration buildings
 - Ongoing building disposal strategy
 - Robust Facilities Management Function
 - Implementation of Corporate Landlord

Performance, Delivery and Transformation Board:

- Transformation Delivery including:
 - Digital Strategy (including key system upgrades such as QL, LCS, Unit 4, Controcc and business as usual systems development)
 - AI assessment and roll out
 - Internal productivity strategy
- Corporate Plan delivery
- Improvement Plan delivery
- Regulator Readiness

Governance and Assurance Board:

- Policy and Statutory Compliance monitoring
- Further support and compliance monitoring for Health & Safety including updates from the Health & Safety subgroup
- Compliance monitoring of mandatory training, complaints, risk, PDRs, audit, H&S, IG (FOIs, SARs, EIRs, data breaches)
- Continued monitoring of audit recommendations

Commercial Board:

- Review of council commercial arrangements and development of a commercial strategy.
- Overview of traded services

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

The production and publication of the Statement of Accounts and value for money opinion provides valuable information to the residents of the Council and to its suppliers. Responding and providing assurance to our external auditors reaffirms that a strong financially sustainable Council is essential to the delivery of the Let's do it Strategy.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows: A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act. (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Internal Audit provide assurance to Committee Members and the public that the organisation is delivering services in line with agreed policies and procedures which have considered the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

n/a no decision required

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Reputational risk	This update response to our improvement plan provides assurance as to the delivery of the improvements required

Legal Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

7. This is an update on the progress of the improvement plan pursuant to auditors recommendations. Audit Committee agreed the actions would be reviewed by Members with Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committee receiving regular reports on the Council's progress

Financial Implications:

To be completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

8. The annual production and audit of the statement of accounts and review of value for money arrangements are an essential part of any organisation and represent the financial position of the business for that particular financial year. For public sector organisations they are statutory and give the public and central government assurance that taxpayers money is being expended in an economic and efficient way. Approval of the improvement plan and the ongoing review of its delivery will provide assurance that the issues identified by the external auditors are addressed.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Improvement Plan Activity Tracker

Background papers:

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
MAG	Members Assurance Group
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
RAAC	Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete

Appendix 1: Improvement Plan Activity Tracker

Improvement Theme	Improvement Action	Council Response	Timescale	Officer	Member	RAG	Comments
Financial Resilience	Financial Strategy	The S151 to chair a monthly strategic finance board, made up of senior officers from all of the service directorates, with responsibility for monitoring delivery of the in-year revenue budget and capital delivery programme and production of the subsequent years' revenue budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy	Feb-25	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Financial Resilience	Financial Strategy	Detailed 2026/27 budget timetable agreed setting out the approach, workstreams and timelines supporting production of proposals to address the structural funding gap. This built on the agreed strategy and involved a zero based budget review of all council services being undertaken to identify proposals that will enable a balanced budget to be set without recourse to reserves over the length of the current medium term financial strategy. The timetable and approach included the identification of additional capacity requirements to support the budget work and was funded from the ongoing capital receipt flexibilities in place to support council and service transformation	Mar-25	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	COMPLETE	Now Complete.

Financial Resilience	Financial Strategy	<p>Development of budget proposals, involving the wider workforce, on a service basis through consideration of: The key cost drivers affecting their services, Current service performance levels including a productivity assessment and how they compare to benchmark councils and 'best in class', Current service standards being operated to and the scope for changes in those standards including any elements of the service that could be stopped or reduced, Consideration of different models of service delivery, Opportunities from implementing different ways of working, including self-service if appropriate, The impact of their proposals on other service areas i.e. either in requiring their input and support in delivering the change or in potentially increasing costs elsewhere, Opportunities for additional income generation, and consideration of the impact of their proposals on the customer.</p>	Feb-26	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	ON TRACK
		<p>Over £14m of new budget proposals were considered at December Cabinet and the approach identified with regard to further work being undertaken to reduce the £7.5m remaining funding gap. The revenue budget being proposed at February Cabinet will reduce the funding gap and level of support required from reserves to under £4m and identifies the approach to address the forecast increase in the forecast funding gap over the term of the current MTFS.</p>				

Finance Capacity and Transformation	Finance Restructure	Consult on phase 1 of new Finance Structure	Jan-25	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Finance Capacity and Transformation	Finance Restructure	Appointments made to the Strategic Finance Lead posts and will start in March and April following completion of their notice periods. Currently out to advert for the next tier Senior Finance Business Partners and Corporate Accountancy Manager roles	Mar-26	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	BEHIND	Appointments made to the Strategic Leads and recruitment to the other posts within phase 1 underway.
Finance Capacity and Transformation	Finance Restructure	Develop phase 2 of new Finance Structure for consultation informed by the Unit 4 upgrade transformation programme	Nov-25	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	BEHIND	Consultation on Phase 2 proposals to begin on 11 th Feb.
Finance Capacity and Transformation	Unit 4 ERP System Upgrade	Agree detailed programme plan, capacity requirements and governance arrangements to enable delivery of the upgraded system and planned benefits in April 2026	Feb-25	Director of Finance	Cllr Thorpe	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Estate Management	Completion of the remaining RAAC's surveys and any subsequent actions undertaken as may be required	Feb-25	Executive Director Place	Cllr Quinn	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Estate Management	Completion of single reconciled estate asset register	Apr-25	Executive Director Place	Cllr Quinn	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Estate Management	Consolidation of the council's property function within the new Place Directorate with responsibility for: Strategic Asset Management including delivery of the planned reduction in the size of the estate, Identification and delivery of planned and cyclical maintenance,	Apr-25	Executive Director Place	Cllr Quinn	COMPLETE	Now Complete.

		Property compliance and safety, Responsive repairs					
Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	Establishment of six new assurance boards with agreed terms of reference and 12 month forward plan, to ensure that there is a culture of compliance across the Council, the Boards will provide management oversight across Council activity, the work of the Boards will align to the corporate plan	Feb-25	Director of Law and Governance	Cllr Rafiq	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	Governance and Assurance Board will have responsibility for overseeing implementation of all outstanding recommendations from internal audit reports, which is currently the role of the corporate governance group.	Feb-25	Director of Law and Governance	Leader and Cabinet Members via MAG	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	Terms of reference (TOR) prepared for all Boards/Member Assurance group and revised TOR for ELT	Feb-25	Director of Law and Governance	Leader and Cabinet Members via MAG	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	The assurance reports will be formally received by a Members Assurance Group made up of Cabinet members.	Mar-25	Director of Law and Governance	Leader and Cabinet Members via MAG	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	Revised PDR and Induction processes and documentation to reflect updated compliance, control and management requirements and related management development needs.	Mar-25	Director of People and Inclusion	Cllr Rafiq	COMPLETE	Now Complete.

Governance and Compliance	Leadership and Governance Arrangements	Officer declarations of interest will now be held by the Director of Law & Governance, this will bring Officer declarations in line with the system currently in place for Members. This will be in addition to the existing conflict/declarations of gifts and hospitality reporting procedures	Dec-24	Director of Law and Governance	Cllr Rafiq	COMPLETE	Now Complete.
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Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Audit Committee	Date: 17 February 2026
Subject:	Statement of Accounts 2024/25	
Report of	Director of Finance	

Summary

- 1.1 In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) the 2024/25 Draft Unaudited Statement of Accounts were signed by the Director of Finance (S151 Officer) on 14 October 2025 and published on the Council's website as well as the Annual Governance Statement for the year on 15 October 2025. The 30-working day period for the Exercise of Public Rights commenced on 16 October 2025 and ended on 26 November 2025.
- 1.2 Forvis Mazars remains the Council's external auditors for the 2024/25 financial year up to 2028/29 based on their appointment by the PSAA.
- 1.3 The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force on the 30 September 2024, this legislated the statutory backstop dates, including the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts of 27 February 2026. To comply with the backstop date legislation the Council must publish accountability statements on the website by this backstop date, accountability statements need to include:
 - The Statement of Accounts together with the Audit Opinion and any certificate.
 - The Annual Governance Statement.
 - The Narrative Statement (the Council includes this within the Statement of Accounts)
- 1.4 The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 require those charged with governance to approve the final audited accountability statements prior to publication. Therefore, Audit Committee are asked to approve the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts (Appendix 2) and Annual Governance Statement (Appendix 3) and for the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Director of Finance to sign the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts at the meeting and delegate authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to sign-off the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Consider the 2024/25 Management Representation Letter.
- 2.2 Consider the 2024/25 External Audit Strategy and Completion Report.
- 2.3 Approve the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.4 For the Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to sign the 2024/25 Management Representation Letter at the meeting.
- 2.5 For the Chair of the Audit Committee and Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to sign-off the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts, and

- 2.6 To delegate authority to the Leader and Chief Executive to sign-off the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement.

Report Author and Contact Details:

Name: Neil Kissock
Position: Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
Department: Corporate Core Department
E-mail: n.kissock@bury.gov.uk

Background

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 preparation of the Council's accounts must follow proper practices, which includes compliance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.
- 3.2 The arrangements for preparing and publishing the Council's accounts are set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Under these regulations the Director of Finance (S151 Officer) is responsible for determining the Council's accounting systems, form of accounts and supporting accounting records.
- 3.3 The attached Combined Audit Strategy and Completion Report (Appendix 1) summarises Forvis Mazars audit findings from the audit of the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts and identifies any issues to be addressed.
- 3.4 Audit Committee is required to approve the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts (Appendix 2) and the 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement (Appendix 3) to conclude the audit process.
- 3.5 Audit Committee have previously been advised that the backstop and related disclaimed opinion would apply to the 2024/25 audit and accounts as a result of not having time to complete the audit work required.

Accounts and Audit Regulations

- 3.6 The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force on the 30 September 2024, this legislated the statutory backstop dates as follows:

Financial Year Accounts	Deadline
2024-25	27 February 2026
2025-26	31 January 2027
2026-27	30 November 2027
2027-28	30 November 2028

- 3.7 To comply with the backstop date legislation the Council must publish accountability statements on the website by the backstop date, accountability statements need to include:

- The Statement of Accounts together with the Audit Opinion and any certificate.
 - The Annual Governance Statement.
 - The Narrative Statement (the Council includes this within the Statement of Accounts)
- 3.8 Those charged with governance are required to approve the final audited accountability statements prior to publication.
- 3.9 Bodies that are exempt or have failed to comply with a backstop date will be required to publish an explanation and publish audited accountability statements as soon as practicable. The government intends to publish a list of bodies and auditors that do not meet the proposed backstop dates and are not exempt, those bodies will need to send a copy of the published explanation to the secretary of state.
- 3.10 To meet the ‘backstop dates’, some local authorities will need to publish financial accounts with less confidence than usual, while some auditors will need to issue audit opinions by the deadline, without obtaining the usual level of evidence.
- 3.11 As a result of the backstop dates, it is probable many council’s financial statements will be published with ‘modified’ opinions, which will vary depending on the extent to which the auditor lacked evidence or found material misstatements, and whether these issues were limited to specific areas or affected the accounts more broadly.

Audit Completion Report to Those Charged with Governance

- 3.12 The objective of the audit under auditing standards is to obtain sufficient evidence to conclude that there is reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement. Where an auditor is unable to gain enough evidence or is unable to reach this conclusion based on the evidence gathered, they are required to issue a modified opinion. Auditors will disclaim their opinion where they lack the evidence to support an opinion.
- 3.13 There are four opinions that an auditor may give on completion of their audit work. These are:

Audit Opinion	Description
Unmodified	This is the best possible outcome. It means the auditor obtains sufficient evidence to support a view that the financial statements are materially accurate and fairly represent the audited body’s financial situation.
Qualified	This is problematic. The auditor has material concerns either because of a lack of evidence or evidence which suggests material error. However, the effect on the financial statements is contained in specific areas and is not widespread.
Disclaimer of Opinion	This is potentially more problematic than being qualified, reflecting a lack of evidence which means that the auditor cannot provide an opinion. The possible effects on the financial statements of undetected misstatements could be both material and widespread.
Adverse Opinion	Normally considered the worst-case scenario. The auditor does have sufficient evidence, but it suggests that material misstatements exist that undermine the reliability of the financial statements as a whole.

3.14 The Combined Audit Strategy and Completion Report issued by Forvis Mazars for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration.

Value for Money (VFM) Report

3.15 On 1 April 2020, the National Audit Office issued a new Code of Audit Practice (the 2020 Code). Which introduced changes how local auditors were expected to approach and report their work on VFM arrangements that applied to the 2020/21 audits onwards.

3.16 The new approach from 2020/21 onwards re-focuses the work of local auditors to:

- promote more timely reporting of significant issues to local bodies.
- provide more meaningful and more accessible annual reporting on VFM arrangements issues in key areas.
- provide a sharper focus on reporting in the key areas of financial sustainability, governance, and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- provide clearer recommendations to help local bodies improve their arrangements.

3.17 For 2020/21 audits onwards, the key output from local audit work on arrangements to secure VFM is an annual commentary on arrangements, therefore not a VFM arrangements 'conclusion' or an 'opinion' in the same sense as the opinion on the financial statements themselves.

3.18 The commentary will enable auditors to explain the work they have undertaken during the year, and to highlight any significant weaknesses that they have identified and brought to the body's attention, along with their recommendations for improvement. The commentary will, however, also allow auditors to better reflect local context and draw attention to emerging or developing issues which may not represent significant weaknesses, but which may nevertheless require attention from the body itself.

3.19 The reporting criteria of the VFM Report are:

- **Financial sustainability** - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services.
- **Governance** - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.
- **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

3.20 The VFM Report issued by Forvis Mazars for 2024/25 are within the external auditor Combined Audit Strategy and Completion report at Appendix 1 for consideration.

Statement of Accounts

3.21 The format and content is defined in regulations and specified in the relevant sections of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice, and comprises:

- Narrative Statement
- Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts
- Core Financial Statements
- Expenditure and Funding Analysis
- Notes to the Core Financial Statements

- Supplementary Statements: Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Collection Fund
- Group Accounts
- Notes to the Group Accounts
- Glossary of Terms

3.22 The Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 2 for consideration and approval.

Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

3.23 A key role of Audit Committee is to oversee the Council's control environment and the associated system of internal controls and assurance processes. Audit Committee must satisfy itself that the Authority's assurance statements, in particular the AGS, properly reflects the risk environment and any actions needed to improve it.

3.24 The AGS therefore sets out the governance issues that are deemed significant and the actions that are being taken to address them. The Council is required to exercise judgment in deciding whether or not a particular issue should be deemed significant. Factors which are used in exercising that judgment include:

- Whether the issue seriously prejudiced or prevented achievement of a principal objective.
- Whether the issue has resulted in a requirement to seek additional funding to allow it to be resolved or has resulted in significant diversion of resources from another aspect of the business.
- Whether the external auditor regards it as having a material impact on the accounts.
- Whether the Audit Committee, or equivalent, advises it should be considered significant for this purpose.
- Whether the Head of Fraud, Audit, Insurance & Risk reports on it as significant, for this purpose, in the annual opinion on the internal control environment.
- Whether the issue, or its impact, has attracted significant public interest or has seriously damaged the reputation of the organisation.

3.25 The information provided in the AGS regarding significant governance issues may include a description of the weakness and its impact on the Council in order to improve disclosure and provide context for the actions taken. The Council is required to balance utility to the reader of the AGS against the need for discretion in such disclosure to avoid further adverse impacts or exploitation of the weakness.

3.26 The Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 3 for consideration and approval.

Management Representation Letter

3.27 The purpose of the Letter is for the Director of Finance (S151 Officer) to express an opinion:

- Whether these financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2025 and of the Council's expenditure and income for the year then ended.
- Whether the financial statements have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority.

3.28 The Management Representation Letter for 2024/25 are within the external auditor Combined Audit Strategy and Completion Report at Appendix 1 for consideration and approval.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

The production and publication of the Statement of Accounts provides valuable information to the residents of the Council and to its suppliers.

A strong financially sustainable Council is essential to the delivery of the Let's do it Strategy.

Equality Impact and Considerations:

The statement of Accounts is a record of past financial expenditure. It does not determine future resource allocation.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

There are no implications to an increased carbon impact of this decision.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a risk of misstatement	Accounts are reviewed by Mazars and their opinion of both set of accounts is independent to the Council

Legal Implications:

The localised accounts process was established pursuant to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the system ensures that the Councils accounts are independently verified by the Council's external auditors Mazars ensuring good governance and financial transparency.

This report is submitted to Audit committee in accordance with the financial regulations as set out in the Council constitution.

Financial Implications:

The statement of accounts are an essential part of any organisation and represent the financial position of the business for that particular financial year. For public sector organisations they are statutory and give the public and central government assurance that tax payers money is being expended in an economic and efficient way. These accounts not only report the in year position but also the future stability of the organisation through the strength of its balance sheet and cash flow.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Bury 2024/25 Combined Audit Strategy and Completion Report
- Appendix 2: Bury 2024/25 Audited Statement of Accounts

Appendix 3: Bury 2024/25 Annual Governance Statement

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning

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Audit Strategy and Completion Report

Bury Borough Council – Year ended 31 March 2025

February 2026

Members of the Audit Committee
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Knowsley Street
Bury
BL9 0SW

5 February 2025

Dear Audit Committee Members,

Audit Strategy and Completion Report – Year ended 31 March 2025

We are pleased to present our Audit Strategy and Completion Report for Bury Metropolitan Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2025. The purpose of this document is to summarise our audit and to explain how the statutory backstop arrangements introduced by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024, have affected the completion of our work and the reporting consequences. We consider two-way communication with you to be key to a successful audit and particularly important in the context of the backstop arrangements as it facilitates:

- reaching a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the responsibilities of each of us;
- sharing information to assist each of us to fulfil our respective responsibilities; and
- providing you with constructive observations arising from the audit process even though this has been curtailed by the backstop arrangements.

We would usually report the outcome of our planning work, including the significant risks identified and our planned procedures, in our Audit Strategy Memorandum. The results of our audit, including significant matters identified would usually be reported to you in our Audit Completion Report. As a result of the backstop arrangements, we have determined that the most appropriate way to communicate each of the matters required under auditing standards, in this single document, our Audit Strategy and Completion Report.

As it is a fundamental requirement that an auditor is, and is seen to be, independent of audited bodies, section 8 of this document summarises our considerations and conclusions on our independence as auditors.

We appreciate the courtesy and co-operation extended to us by Bury Council throughout our audit. We would be happy to discuss the contents of this report, or any other matters regarding our audit, with you in more detail.

We will continue to work closely with you and management to take the necessary steps to rebuild assurance over future accounting periods. At previous meetings of this Committee, we provided a summary of our plans to rebuild assurance in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office and endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council. We will provide more details as part of our 2025/26 Audit Strategy Memorandum. We would happy to discuss any questions you have in relation to rebuilding.

Yours faithfully

Karen Murray

Forvis Mazars LLP

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- 01** Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop
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- 06** Value for Money arrangements
- 07** Audit fees and other services
- 08** Confirmation of our independence

Appendices

- A** Draft management representation letter
- B** Key communication points

Our reports are prepared in the context of the 'Statement of Responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies' and the 'Appointing Person Terms of Appointment' issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Reports and letters prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to the Council are prepared for the sole use of the Council and we take no responsibility to any member or officer in their individual capacity or to any third party.

Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop

Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop

We are appointed to perform the external audit of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) for the year to 31 March 2025. The scope of our engagement is set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies, issued by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) available from the [PSAA website](#).

Our audit of the financial statements

The detailed scope of our work as your appointed auditor for 2024/25 is set out in the National Audit Office's (NAO) Code of Audit Practice ('the Code'). Our responsibilities and powers are derived from the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act').

We are appointed to audit the financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK). Under normal circumstances, our objectives would be to form and express an opinion on whether the financial statements present a true and fair view of the Council's financial affairs for the year and whether they have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

A range of factors have led to a backlog in financial reporting in recent years. Legislation passed by government in 2024 (the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024) addresses the backlog by introducing a 'backstop date' for the publication of financial statements, even if the audits had not been completed. This is intended to enable the sector to focus on the current financial position rather than historic information.

We issued a disclaimed opinion on your financial statements for the 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years. This meant we did not express an opinion on those financial statements, and as such we do not have assurance over the opening balances in the 2024/25 financial statements. Further information on the procedures we have undertaken in order to issue a disclaimed opinion in advance of the backstop date is provided in section 3.

The NAO published Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance (LARRIG) 06 in June 2025. This guidance sets out the procedures auditors may undertake to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence over opening balances when previous year's audits have been disclaimed. The guidance acknowledges that how long it will take to rebuild assurance will vary between audit engagements and according to each audit's particular circumstances.

It has not been possible to complete sufficient procedures as part of the current year's audit to enable us to issue a non-disclaimed opinion. For this reason, we will be issuing a disclaimed opinion in time for the Council to publish its financial statements by the backstop date of 27 February 2026 as required by the relevant legislation. We have included our proposed audit report in Appendix B.

When an opinion is disclaimed the auditor does not express an opinion on the financial statements and, consequently, no assurance is provided on the financial statements.

Responsibilities in respect of fraud and internal control

The responsibility for safeguarding assets and for the prevention and detection of fraud, error and non-compliance with law or regulations rests with both Those Charged With Governance and management. This includes establishing and maintaining internal controls over compliance with relevant laws and regulations, and the reliability of financial reporting. As part of our audit procedures in relation to fraud we are required to inquire of Those Charged with Governance and including key management and internal audit as to their knowledge of instances of fraud, the risk of fraud and their views on internal controls that mitigate the fraud risks.

Management is also responsible for such internal control as it determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Despite our intention to issue a disclaimed opinion, where matters come to our attention through the course of our audit, we may be required to report these to you. Section 5 sets out any internal control recommendations we have made and any misstatements identified in the draft financial statements and how these have been addressed by management.

Value for Money arrangements

The amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations do not affect our responsibilities in relation to the Council's Value for Money arrangements. We are responsible for forming a view on the arrangements that the Council has in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. We discuss our approach to Value for Money work and our findings further in section 6 of this report.

Our audit and the implications of the statutory backstop

Wider reporting and electors' rights

The 2014 Act requires us to give an elector, or any representative of the elector, the opportunity to question us about the accounts of the Council and consider objections made to the accounts. We also have a broad range of reporting responsibilities and powers under the 2014 Act. No such correspondence from electors has been received.

Whole of Government Accounts

As a result of the backstop arrangements and our intention to issue a disclaimer of opinion on the Council's financial statements, we anticipate reporting to the NAO that we are unable to complete the mandatory audit procedures specified in their Group Audit Instructions. We are awaiting confirmation of when and how this should be reported to the NAO.

Your audit team

Your audit team



Karen Murray

Engagement Partner

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Our audit approach

Our audit approach

Audit scope

Our audit is designed to comply with all professional requirements. Our audit of the financial statements has been conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), relevant ethical and professional standards, our own audit approach and in accordance with the terms of our engagement. We have also had regard to the Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance ('LARRIG') issued by the National Audit Office and endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council in delivering our audit in the context of the backstop arrangements introduced by the 2024 amendments to the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Our approach to the audit of the financial statements

In the absence of the backstop arrangements, our audit would be risk-based and primarily driven by the issues we consider lead to a higher risk of material misstatement of the accounts. After completing our detailed risk assessment work and developing our audit strategy, we would design and complete audit procedures in response to the risks identified.

The conditions created by the imposition of the backstop arrangements mean we have not carried out all of the work necessary to issue a detailed audit plan and to complete all the required audit procedures to provide an opinion on the financial statements. The approach we have taken to carrying out the Council's audit has been designed so that we can comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and issue our audit report to allow the Council to meet the backstop date of 27 February 2026 for publishing the financial statements and other relevant information.

We summarise below, the work we have undertaken to inform our audit strategy and our determination that it is necessary to issue a disclaimed opinion on the Council's financial statements. As we have not completed all our planning procedures, including all risk assessment work, we do not include a summary of significant and enhanced risks as part of this report.

Area of the audit	Summary of our procedures
Acceptance and continuance	We have carried out all acceptance and continuance procedures including consideration of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The financial reporting framework adopted by the Council and the existence of any unusual or controversial accounting policies• The form, timing and expected content of our communication with Those Charged with Governance• Any actual or potential threats to our independence• The existence of any other factors that indicate we should not continue as the Council's auditor
Understanding the entity	We have carried out audit procedures to understand and document our understanding of the Council across a range of areas, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Council's structure, including its wider group• Key accounting policies• Accounting estimates• The use of experts
Control environment assessment	We have documented our consideration of the Council's control environment. We carry out this work to inform both our work on the financial statements and as an element of our Value for Money arrangements risk assessment work.
Walkthroughs	We have undertaken walkthroughs in all relevant audit areas, with the exception of children's social care expenditure. This is because, despite numerous attempts, we were unable to secure officer time to complete this in line with the timing of our work. Note for the walkthroughs we have carried out, for a number of these we have not been provided with all of the required supporting evidence. We carry out this work to gain an understanding of the key controls in place and to ensure they are operating effectively.

Our audit approach

Area of the audit	Summary of our procedures
Fraud	We have carried out work on identifying potential fraud risks and made specific inquiries of management and Those Charged with Governance in respect of actual, potential or suspected fraud. We have not yet received a response to our inquiries. We are unable to sign the audit report until we receive these.
Materiality	We have considered the application of materiality for the audit of the Council's financial statements. Further details on the materiality thresholds determined, is included later in this section of our report.
Laws and regulations	We have obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Council and made specific inquiries with management and Those Charged with Governance in respect of any instances of noncompliance with laws and regulations. We have not yet received responses from our inquiries.
Written representations	We have requested certain written representations from management in accordance with ISA (UK) 580. The draft management letter of representation is provided in Appendix A.
Completion, review and reporting	<p>We have undertaken sufficient review procedures to ensure our audit complies with the requirements of ISA (UK) 230. This includes specific work to document our consideration of the implications of the backstop arrangements on our audit and the reporting implications.</p> <p>We have also considered whether any matters have come to our attention that we deem should be reported to Those Charged with Governance or that may be relevant to our auditor's report. Such matters may include misstatements identified in the draft financial statements or internal control recommendations.</p> <p>As we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion, additional quality and risk management processes have also been followed.</p>

Audit approach and risk summary

Overview of Group audit approach

You engaged us to audit the group financial statements of Bury Council. Based on our risk assessment and the financial information for the year ending 31 March 2025, we determined that certain components consolidated into the group financial statements should be subject to either a full scope audit or a specific scope audit, as set out in the table below.

The Council prepares Group accounts and consolidates the following bodies:

- Six Town Housing Ltd
- Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd
- The Persona group of companies (Persona Care and Support and Persona Group Ltd)
- Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP
- The Prestwich Regeneration LLP

Forvis Mazars UK are the appointed auditor for the Council only. As such we are the appointed auditor for 99% of the Group's total expenditure. We do not plan to obtain specific assurance from the component auditors of the Council's subsidiary companies.

Entity	Classification	Auditor
Six Town Housing Ltd	Non-significant	RSM UK Audit LLP
Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd	Non-significant	Horsfield & Smith
The Persona group of companies	Non-significant	Horsfield & Smith
Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP	Non-significant	Deloitte LLP
The Prestwich Regeneration LLP	Non-significant	N/a

Materiality

Materiality

Definitions

Materiality is an expression of the relative significance or importance of a particular matter in the context of the financial statements as a whole.

Misstatements in the financial statements are considered to be material if they could, individually or in aggregate, reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users based on the financial statements.

Our approach to determining materiality

Although we intend to issue a disclaimed opinion on the financial statements as a result of the backstop arrangements, we are required to determine materiality and communicate this to Those Charged with Governance.

We determine materiality for the financial statements as a whole (overall materiality) using a benchmark that, in our professional judgement, is most appropriate to entity. We also determine an amount less than materiality (performance materiality), which is applied when we carry out our audit procedures and is designed to reduce to an appropriately low level the probability that the aggregate of uncorrected and undetected misstatements exceeds overall materiality. Further, we set a threshold above which all misstatements we identify during our audit (adjusted and unadjusted) will be reported to the Audit Committee.

Judgements on materiality are made in light of surrounding circumstances and are affected by the size and nature of a misstatement, or a combination of both. Judgements about materiality are based on a consideration of the common financial information needs of users as a group and not on specific individual users.

An assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and is affected by our perception of the financial information needs of the users of the financial statements. In making our assessment we assume that users:

- Have a reasonable knowledge of business, economic activities, and accounts;
- Have a willingness to study the information in the financial statements with reasonable diligence;
- Understand that financial statements are prepared, presented, and audited to levels of materiality;
- Recognise the uncertainties inherent in the measurement of amounts based on the use of estimates, judgement, and consideration of future events; and
- Will make reasonable economic decisions based on the information in the financial statements.

We consider overall materiality and performance materiality while planning and performing our audit based on quantitative and qualitative factors. When planning our audit, we make judgements about the size of misstatements we consider to be material.

The overall materiality and performance materiality that we determine does not necessarily mean that uncorrected misstatements that are below materiality, individually or in aggregate, will be considered immaterial.

We revise materiality as our audit progresses should we become aware of information that would have caused us to determine a different amount had we been aware of that information at the planning stage.

Materiality

Our approach to determining materiality (continued)

For the group and single-entity financial statements, we consider that gross expenditure is the key focus of users of the financial statements and, as such, we base our materiality levels around this benchmark.

We expect to set a materiality threshold of 2% of gross expenditure for the group financial statements, and a materiality threshold of 2% of gross expenditure for the Council's single entity statements.

As set out in the tables alongside, based on the draft 2024/25 Statement of Accounts we anticipate overall materiality for the year ended 31 March 2025 to be in the region of £12m (£11.1m in the prior year), and performance materiality to be in the region of £6m (£7.7m in the prior year).

For the single entity statements, we anticipate overall materiality for the year ended 31 March 2025 to be in the region of £11.9m (£11m in the prior year), and performance materiality to be in the region of £5.9m (£7.7m in the prior year).

Group financial statements

	2023/24 £'000s	2024/25 £'000s
Overall materiality	£11,050	£11,979
Performance materiality	£7,735	£5,989
Clearly trivial	£331	£359
Specific materiality	N/A	N/A

Council/Authority's single-entity financial statements

	2023/24 £'000s	2024/25 £'000s
Overall materiality	£11,000	£11,950
Performance materiality	£7,700	£5,975
Clearly trivial	£330	£358
Specific materiality for Senior Officers Remuneration	£5	£5

Materiality and misstatements

Misstatements

We accumulate misstatements identified during our audit that are above our determined clearly trivial threshold.

We have set a clearly trivial threshold for individual misstatements we identify (a reporting threshold) for reporting to you and management that is consistent with a threshold where misstatements below that amount would not need to be accumulated because we expect that the accumulation of such amounts would not have a material effect on the financial statements.

Based on our assessment of overall materiality, our clearly trivial threshold is £359k, based on 3% of overall materiality. If you have any queries about this, please raise these with us.

We are required to report each misstatement above the reporting threshold that we identify. Misstatements can be classified as:

- **Adjusted:** Those misstatements that we identify and are corrected by management.
- **Unadjusted:** Those misstatements that we identify that are not corrected by management.

Reporting

Due to the backstop, we have not undertaken substantive testing procedures on any balances or transactions reported in the accounts. Consequently, there are no misstatements to report.

Significant findings

Significant findings

Background and modification of the audit opinion

As a result of the backstop arrangements, we have not been able to complete sufficient audit procedures to enable us to provide an unmodified opinion on the Council's financial statements. As we have determined that the effects, or potential effects on the financial statements of the lack of sufficient appropriate evidence are pervasive, we will be issuing a disclaimed opinion. This means we are expressing no opinion on the financial statements.

Appendix B sets out our draft audit report which explains the basis of our disclaimed opinion being the fact we will not have been able to rebuild assurance in respect of opening balances by 27 February 2026 after issuing a disclaimed opinions in previous year(s) as a result of the backstop arrangements.

Members will note the draft audit report does not report on other matters that would usually appear in an unmodified audit report. These include:

- the use of the going concern assumption in the preparation of the financial statements; and
- the consistency of the other information presented with the financial statements.

Although we are disclaiming our audit opinion, auditing standards require us to report matters to you that have come to our attention during the course of our audit, which we include in this section of this report.

Wider responsibilities

Our powers and responsibilities under the 2014 Act are broad and include the ability to:

- issue a report in the public interest;
- make statutory recommendations that must be considered and responded to publicly;
- apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law; and
- issue an advisory notice under schedule 8 of the 2014 Act.

We have not exercised any of these powers as part of our 2023/24 audit.

The 2014 Act also gives rights to local electors and other parties, such as the right to ask questions of the auditor and the right to make an objection to an item of account.

We have not received any such questions.

Significant matters discussed with management

During our audit we communicated the following significant matters to management:

- Delays in the preparation of the 2021/22 financial statements and difficulties in completing the audit work required due the poor quality of the draft accounts and supporting working papers, has had a knock on impact on the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 audits.

As part of our audit, we sought and obtained information from management in relation to actual or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, and any actual or suspected fraud which could materially impact upon the financial statements.

Based on our review of the information received, we have no matters to report in relation to fraud and the Council's compliance with laws and regulations. However, we have not yet received responses from management and those charged with governance on our inquiries in relation to fraud and compliance with laws and regulations.

We have not undertaken any further work in these areas and do not provide any assurance that the financial statements are free from material error .

Significant difficulties during the audit

During the course of the audit we did not encounter any significant difficulties. This reflects the limited work we have undertaken in respect of the financial statements audit.

We note the Council's accounts for the 31 March 2025 year end were not published until October 2025. The statutory deadline for publication was 30 June 2025. The delay in preparation of the accounts means that public inspection rights were delayed.

The Annual Governance Statement published in October 2025 was of poor quality. The document did not properly reflect the Council's overall position and the significance of the governance issues it needs to address. Furthermore, the document had not been fully updated, containing some incorrect year references and links to supporting evidence that did not work. The statement also had typographical errors. We reported this to the Council in November 2025 but have not yet received a revised draft.

However, as in previous years, and despite the full co-operation of Executive Leadership, we have struggled to secure timely engagement following our requests for information and meetings. At times, we have faced significant delays in receiving information. We remain concerned about the Council's ability to support our work in future years to support the rebuilding of assurance at the Council.

Summary of amendments to the financial statements

The Council's S151 Officer authorised the Council's draft financial statements for issue in October 2025.

Although we intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion, we still report any amendments which management have made to the draft financial statements, identified either through the audit procedures that we have undertaken, or separately by management.

This information is provided to the audit committee for information and to support it to discharge its responsibilities. It is important for members to note that, given we are issuing a disclaimer of opinion, we provide no assurance over the material accuracy of the amendments that have been made to the draft financial statements which are summarised in this section.

Amendments to the financial statements

There are no amendments to the financial statements to report.

Unadjusted misstatements

When we issue a disclaimed opinion as a result of the backstop arrangements, auditing standards require us to consider whether we are aware of any matter that would have otherwise required a modification to our opinion. Such matters may include, for example, material misstatements identified but which have not been amended by management in the final financial statements. We confirm no such matters have come to our attention.

Value for Money arrangements

Approach to Value for Money

We are required to form a view as to whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out in order to form our view and sets out the overall criterion and sub-criteria that we are required to consider.

This is the first audit year where we have undertaken our value for money (VFM) work under the full 2024 Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Our responsibility remains to be satisfied that the Council has proper arrangements in place, and to report in the auditor's report where we are not satisfied that arrangements are in place. Where we have issued a recommendation in relation to a significant weaknesses this indicates we are not satisfied that arrangements are in place. Separately we provide a commentary on the Council's arrangements in the Auditor's Annual Report.

A key change in the 2024 Code of Audit Practice is the requirement for us to issue our Auditor's Annual Report for the year ending 31st March 2025 to you in draft by the 30th November 2025. This is required whether our audit is complete or not. Should our work not be complete, we will report the status of our work and any findings to up to that point (and since the issue of our previous Auditor's Annual Report).

The Code requires us to structure our commentary to report under three specified criteria:

- **Financial sustainability** - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- **Governance** - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- **Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness** - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work to understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria and we identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements. Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest significant weaknesses in arrangements exist.

The table overleaf outlines the risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements that we have identified, the risk-based procedures we have undertaken, and the results of our work.

Where our risk-based procedures identify actual significant weaknesses in arrangements we are required to report these and make recommendations for improvement. Where such significant weaknesses are identified, we report these in the audit report by exception. We will also highlight emerging issues or other matters that do not represent significant weaknesses but still require attention from the Council.

The primary output of our work on the Council arrangements is the commentary on those arrangements that forms part of the Auditor's Annual Report. This commentary provides a summary of the work we have undertaken and our judgements against each of the specified reporting criteria.

Status of our work

We have completed our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2025 and have identified 3 significant weaknesses in arrangements and have made associated recommendations. We provide further details on the identified significant weaknesses and our recommendations later in this section of our report.

VFM arrangements

Overall Summary – Planning and Risk Assessment



VFM arrangements – Overall summary

Approach to Value for Money arrangements work

We are required to consider whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The NAO issues guidance to auditors that underpins the work we are required to carry out and sets out the reporting criteria that we are required to consider. The reporting criteria are:



Financial sustainability - How the Council plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services.



Governance - How the Council ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness - How the Council uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

Our work is carried out in three main phases.

Phase 1 - Planning and risk assessment

At the planning stage of the audit, we undertake work so we can understand the arrangements that the Council has in place under each of the reporting criteria; as part of this work we may identify risks of significant weaknesses in those arrangements.

We obtain our understanding of arrangements for each of the specified reporting criteria using a variety of information sources which may include:

- NAO guidance and supporting information
- Information from internal and external sources, including regulators
- Knowledge from previous audits and other audit work undertaken in the year
- Interviews and discussions with officers

Although we describe this work as planning work, we keep our understanding of arrangements under review and update our risk assessment throughout the audit to reflect emerging issues that may suggest there are further risks of significant weaknesses.

Phase 2 - Additional risk-based procedures and evaluation

Where we identify risks of significant weaknesses in arrangements, we design a programme of work to enable us to decide whether there are actual significant weaknesses in arrangements. We use our professional judgement and have regard to guidance issued by the NAO in determining the extent to which an identified weakness is significant.

We outline the risks that we have identified and the work we have done to address those risks on page 13.

Phase 3 - Reporting the outcomes of our work and our recommendations

We are required to provide a summary of the work we have undertaken and the judgments we have reached against each of the specified reporting criteria in this Auditor's Annual Report. We do this as part of our Commentary on VFM arrangements which we set out for each criteria later in this section.

We also make recommendations where we identify weaknesses in arrangements or other matters that require attention from the Council. We refer to two distinct types of recommendation through the remainder of this report:

- **Recommendations arising from significant weaknesses in arrangements** - we make these recommendations for improvement where we have identified a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. Where such significant weaknesses in arrangements are identified, we report these (and our associated recommendations) at any point during the course of the audit.
- **Other recommendations** - we make other recommendations when we identify areas for potential improvement or weaknesses in arrangements which we do not consider to be significant, but which still require action to be taken.

The table on the following page summarises the outcome of our work against each reporting criteria, including whether we have identified any significant weaknesses in arrangements, or made other recommendations.

VFM arrangements

Financial Sustainability

How the body plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services



VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria

Bury's operating environment

During 2024/25 the Council continued to face significant operational and financial challenges. Against a backdrop of an adverse national economy and a cost-of-living crisis, the Council continued to see significant increase in demand for its services, most notably for children and young people's services including education and social care.

In response to these pressures, it is essential the Council has timely and accurate financial reporting to members and senior management, and decision makers make prompt decisions to maintain the financial sustainability of the Council.

2024/25 Financial performance

We have undertaken a high level analysis of the financial statements for 2024/25, including the Movement in Reserves Statement and the Balance Sheet. The 2024/25 draft statements of account continues to show a declining financial position compared to prior years.

The most significant change in the balance sheet relates to movement in the Council's Property, Plant and Equipment balance, which increased mainly due to the revaluation gains recognised in the year. However, the revaluation gains do not represent a usable reserve the Council can access.

Although the Council's cash balance has increased by £0.7m from 31/03/24 to 31/03/25, the cash position is still much lower than previous years. Alongside this, borrowings have increased by £30m over the twelve-month period to 31/03/2025, largely to fund the capital programme.

Total general fund reserves have been declining over the last few years. General Fund and earmarked reserves reduced by £28 m, from £99.6 (31 Mar 2024) to £71.57m (31 Mar 2025). The Budget Stabilisation Reserve is now insufficient to support the funding gap forecast past 2026/27. Whilst there is a recognition the use of reserves cannot be relied on to provide a long term solution to the funding challenges, the Council now needs to take urgent action to ensure any use of these reserves is properly planned and that all options to increase income and reduce expenditure have been considered.

	31 March 2024 £m	31 March 2025 £m
Property, plant and equipment	639	731.5
Cash/ Cash Equivalents	0.5	1.2
Total Current Assets	76	94
General fund (Unallocated)	10	10
Earmarked Reserves	89.6	61.5
Total General Fund Balance	99.6	71.6
Total usable reserves	156.7	133.7

The minimum revenue provision (MRP) charge for 2024/25 year included in the draft accounts is £3.2m (2023/24 £2.5m). This equates to spreading the opening capital financing requirement of £383.5m over roughly 117 years. The statutory guidance suggests Councils should use asset lives of 50 years as a maximum, although the guidance also recognises there may be circumstances where this maximum can be prudently exceeded. Although the MRP charge has not been subject to detailed audit review in 2023/24 or 2024/25, we are concerned the current approach may not be sufficiently prudent, even allowing for the extent to which the Council's capital programme is directed towards regeneration schemes.

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - Continued

Financial planning and monitoring arrangements

In February 2024 the Council set a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year. However, this was set with a reliance on reserves of £15.1m and a savings target of £5.3m. The total net budget for Council services was approved at £209.6m with an assumed increase in Council Tax of 2.99% excluding the Adult Social Care Levy of 2%. Whilst challenging, the Council considered this to be achievable. The budget was produced on the basis the savings and efficiencies identified to close the full gap would be delivered recurrently.

The Council reported a final overspend on the revenue budget of £4.365m for 2024/25 on a final revised budget of £224.480m. This included funding of £13.149 m from reserves (£2m lower than budgeted). A significant amount of the overspend relates to Health & Adult Care and Children and Young People services which reported a £3.7m and 2.5 overspend. The overspend in the Health & Adult Care and Children and Young People services was offset by an underspend of £2.29m in non-service specific expenditure.

During the year the Council reported its financial position to Cabinet on a regular basis. We have reviewed a sample of the reports presented for 2024/25. These contain appropriate detail of the significant variances to budget and provide an update on the delivery against savings targets. They also contain appropriate information on the delivery of the approved capital programme, including explanations for both over and under spends against the budget profile.

The budget report presented to Budget Council in February 2025 set out the Council's budget requirement for the 2025/26 financial year and provided details on the Council's reserves position. Council approved a net revenue budget of £238m for 2025/26, which included an approved use of reserves of £5.8m to balance the revenue budget. The budget report assumed an increase in Council Tax of 2.99% excluding the Adult Social Care Levy of 2%. We reviewed the forecast outturn reported to Cabinet on 3 December 2025 we noted a continuing overspend in 25/26 and a budget proposals for 26/27 show a budget gap after use of reserves of £16m (before savings proposals of 8.4m), which means again use of reserves above the level approved in budget.

Spend on the capital programme for the 2024/25 year was £59.81m. In February 2024 Council approved the 2024/25 capital budget at £146.92m, which was later increased by £23.42m to accommodate slippage from 2023/24 increasing the 2024/25 Capital Programme to £170.347m. However, subsequent in-year capital programme reviews led to the 2024/25 capital programme being

reduced to £79.17m.

In the summer of 2024, the Council declared itself to be in a state of financial distress. It established a voluntary Finance Improvement Panel, with support from CIPFA and the LGA, to review its financial position, including the systems and processes in place. The work of this panel included a review of the policy on reserves, a review of the recently approved Treasury Management strategy and saw the beginning of a zero-based budget exercise across every department. It also included a review of the staffing structures in place across the finance service.

The work of the Financial Improvement Panel identified the Council did not have a clear understanding of its financial position or of the Council's cost base. The level of usable reserves available to the Council, whilst declining, was higher than reports to members had previously indicated. As a result, leadership of the Council's finance team changed with the appointment of a new Interim Section 151 officer. A substantive appointment was made in autumn 2024. Since then, considerable further work has been undertaken to better understand the Council's financial position and challenges, and to update the medium term financial planning to ensure the Council can get to a more financially sustainable position.

Arrangements for the identification, management and monitoring of funding gaps and savings

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is a four year plan which sets out the resources available to deliver the Council's overall commitment to provide services that meet the needs of people locally and that represent good value for money.

A key part of the MTFS is to highlight the budget issues that need to be addressed by the Council in each of the years it covers. This includes assumptions to allow forecasting of the level of available resources from all sources together with the budget pressures relating to both capital and revenue spending. It also assesses the adequacy of reserves and the level of provisions held for past events which may impact on the Council's resources. The financial plans were developed based a number of estimates and assumptions. We have reviewed the assumptions used and are satisfied these were appropriate at the time, reflecting the professional judgement of the finance team. However, it is clear the level of reserves available to the Council was not properly understood.

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Financial Sustainability reporting criteria - Continued

The Council's 2024/25 and 2025/26 budgets were set to reflect the prevailing rate of inflation due to the Ukraine war and the cost of living crisis. However, the MTFs reflected some significant uncertainties, particularly with the funding assumptions for future years because local authorities were working with single year settlements. The 2026/27 settlement, announced in December 2025, was a multi year settlement through to 2028/29 which provides a clearer base for future decisions.

Following the independent reviews of the Council's financial position undertaken in the autumn of 2024 and spring of 2025, and the reassessment of the level of reserves available to the Council, the budget for 2025/26, presented to Council in February 2025, set out the Council's budget requirement for the 2025/26 year as a net revenue budget of £238m. This included an approved use of reserves of £5.8m. However, the 2025/26 quarter 1 position presented to September 2025 Cabinet showed a forecast overspend of £4.15m.

In the budget setting process for 2026/27, there is a recognition the Council needs to make investments in a range of areas in order to improve services for local people and also to transform the way the Council operates for the longer term. This, together with some known financial pressures arising from increasing demand and continuing pay and price inflation, means the Council knows it has a significant financial challenge to set a balanced budget. Members have been presented with a range of options to both reduce costs and increase income but rejected some. As a consequence, the delivery of the savings plans that were agreed will be essential. The Council still needs to use reserves to help to achieve a balanced position. The 2025/26 budget report recognised that although there was a significant reduction in the funding gap covered by reserves between 2024/25 and 2025/26, this is dependent on the delivery of over £16m of new savings proposals of which £8.260m needs to be delivered in 2025/26. The updated MTFs shows a structural funding gap remain that needs to be addressed through the identification of new savings proposals for 2026/27.

In January 2025, the Council introduced new assurance boards to support its governance framework in response to our formal recommendation issued in December 2024. Following this, delivery of the in-year budget together with the development of the refreshed MTFs and 2026/27 budget proposals has been overseen by the Finance Board. As a result of the significant work undertaken over the last few months, the Council now expects to be able to set balanced budgets over the life of the MTFP without recourse to exceptional financial support.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit – Project Safety Valve

In addition to the use of reserves to balance its general fund budget, the Council has also accumulated a large deficit balance in relation to Dedicated Schools Grant. The deficit stands at £19.04m as presented in the draft 2024/25 statements. Although the Council entered into a Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) in 2021, intended to eradicate the DSG deficit by the end of the 2024-25, the Council has not been able to do so. An amendment has been made to the Council's DSG Management Plan and agreed with the department which now has a timeframe for eradicating this deficit by the end of 2028/29. As part of this plan, the Council has agreed to reach a positive in-year balance on its DSG account by the end of 2028/29 and in each subsequent year. The Council has also agreed to implement the action plan agreed with the DfE, and to complete ongoing monitoring of the Council's performance in fulfilling this agreement.

The financial projection for the year end position in 2025/26 is for a £2.5m overspend and a DSG deficit of £21.5m. However, this reflects costs of the Council's investment in the Children and Young People's team and a sharp increase in demand which, because of insufficient in-borough provision, meant the Council had to increase the use, and bear the additional cost of, Independent and Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) provision. As a result, and despite the financial plan being off trajectory, the DfE has not made further interventions and continues to monitor the Council's position closely.

In May 2024 OFSTED published the results of its inspection of the Council's SEND services. This inspection concluded there were widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The DfE confirmed they would work with Bury to ensure the response to the OFSTED inspection outcome and their Safety Valve activity are properly aligned.

OFSTED have continued to engage with the Council to ensure the actions taken to address the inspection findings are being put in place. However, it is too early to determine the impact of these actions.

Based on the above considerations we have identified a significant weakness in the Council's arrangements in relation to financial sustainability.

VFM arrangements

Governance

How the body ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks



VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria

Risk management and monitoring arrangements

Bury Council has a risk management system in place which is included in the governance structure of the organisation. As part of the Council's governance framework, the Audit Committee has been responsible for ensuring that management arrangements are in place and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are working effectively.

Each department maintains and updates its own risk register, which then feeds into the Council-wide corporate risk register. We have reviewed an example department register and confirmed it is sufficiently detailed. Each risk has an assigned risk owner and a risk score based on the likelihood and impact matrix. Where mitigating actions are identified they are also assigned an owner(s) to ensure there is appropriate accountability.

The Corporate Risk Register focusses on risks that are cross cutting and strategic. These risks are defined as those with the potential to disrupt the Council's ability to meet its strategic and operational objectives. The risks are agreed by the Executive Team as warranting regular scrutiny to help minimise future adverse implications including financial challenges.

The corporate risk register is a live document subject to review by the Executive Team on a quarterly basis in alignment with the schedule of meetings for the Audit Committee. It is presented to the Committee for scrutiny with some risks then identified for a more detailed review by members. Although the Council has a documented approach to managing risks, this was not fully embedded across the Council. As a consequence, when, in August 2023 a national issue relating to the use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aeriated Concrete (RAAC) in buildings was identified, the Council was slow to react to undertake an assessment of all its buildings to ensure it had a clear picture of the extent of RAAC in its exposure, other than in schools where DfE coordinated the initial response. By the end of October 2023, the Council was aware of RAAC in the Market Hall building, which was immediately closed to ensure public safety but had made little progress in inspecting other Council buildings. By December 2024, some 15 months after first being notified of the issue, the Council still did not have a clear understanding of the potential risk. We have been told the Council has now completed its assessment of the risks in relation to RAAC. However, in our view, during 2024/25, the Council's risk management framework was not sufficiently embedded and did not necessarily drive the completion of effective mitigating action.

Internal Controls

In order to provide assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud, the Council has a team of internal auditors, led by the Head of Internal Audit. Annual Internal Audit Plans were agreed with Management at the start of each financial year and reviewed by the Audit Committee prior to final approval. The plan for 2024/25 was approved by Committee in March 2024 and the plan was amended during the year where management requested changes or deferrals, or because there was insufficient audit team capacity to deliver.

The internal audit plans were based on an assessment of the risks the Council faced and were determined to ensure assurance could be provided on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. We have reviewed the internal audit plan for 2024/25 and confirmed it follows a risk based approach.

Internal audit progress reports are presented to each Audit Committee meeting, including follow up reporting of recommendations not implemented by agreed dates. At the end of each financial year the Head of Internal Audit provided an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control. For 2024/25, the Head of Internal Audit concluded that Limited assurance could be given that significant risks facing the Council are addressed. A total of 27 audit reviews, making 165 recommendations, were considered as part of forming the overall opinion for the year. 17 audits were still in progress at the end of the financial year and were carried forward into 2025/26 to be finalised. The Head of Internal Audit Opinion reflects concerns about the high volume of limited assurance reports in the year, delays in the implementation of fundamental and significant recommendations and the ongoing governance and financial pressures.

The Council has in place all relevant policies which we would expect including policies on:

- Gifts and hospitality;
- Codes of conduct;
- Declarations of interest; and
- Whistle blowing.

VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - Continued

Internal Controls

In respect of the main accounting system review reported in August 2024, Internal Audit reported that:

- periodic reviews of all user permissions on the Unit 4 system are not undertaken. As a result, officers may have access rights beyond those required for their role;
- bank reconciliations are undertaken on a monthly basis. However, they are not undertaken on a timely basis and there is a delay in completion. Reconciling items are not always cleared and reconciliations are not subject to review by a Senior Finance Officer; and
- no formal records exist to evidence the budget monitoring undertaken for each service.

We attended all of the Audit Committee meetings during 2024/25 and to date. From our attendance at these meetings, we confirmed the Committee receives regular updates on both internal audit progress and risk management. We have seen members engage by challenging the papers and reports which they receive from officers, internal audit and external audit. Notwithstanding this challenge, the Audit Committee's intervention is not driving management to take actions in response to either risks identified or internal control weaknesses.

From our review of internal audit update reports and our attendance at Audit Committee, we remain concerned that internal audit recommendations were not actioned on a timely basis during 2024/25.

Alongside this, in our view, this challenges the Council faces in operating its internal control framework effectively is evidenced by the impact of the finance team restructures undertaken in 2022 and 2023. The changes left the Council without the capacity, skills and experience required to operate systems and processes as required to maintain an adequate system of internal control. A further restructure and recruitment process has been launched in 2025/26 to properly resource the function. This will sit alongside a planned upgrade to the Council's financial systems.

More recently, new governance arrangements introduced as part of the council wide improvement plan established a Governance Board to oversee the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations as this had been recognised as an area requiring improvement. Reports to this Board indicate significant improvements have been made in 2025/26. The Members Assurance Group receives monthly updates with regard to outstanding audit recommendations and has asked accountable managers to attend to explain reasons for any delays and agree revised timelines. Whilst it is positive to see the Leadership Team taking steps to improve the implementation of audit recommendations and to strengthen internal controls, it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the actions.

Arrangements for budget setting and budgetary control

The Council's approach to budget setting aligns to the corporate plan and LET'S Do It! Strategy (Bury 2030). The budget setting process is a continuous process with work being undertaken to identify new savings proposals early in the new financial year before being considered by Cabinet in the Autumn. The initial budget and associated proposals go through several iterations with Executives, Policy Advisory Group, Overview and Scrutiny Finance and Performance Subgroup before budget consultation being undertaken to feed into the final budget proposals to be considered by Cabinet and Council in February each year. Regular meetings between Services and Finance Leads to discuss the financial position and emerging pressures, delivery of savings plans and opportunities for future service redesign, savings or efficiencies.

Whilst members are actively engaged in budget setting and have an understanding of the seriousness of the Council's overall position, we note that some of the policy options proposed were declined by members because they were considered difficult.

Throughout the 2024/25, budget monitoring was undertaken and reports were taken to cabinet quarterly. In 2024/25 the outturn report confirmed transfers from reserves were in excess of the planned use of reserves per the budget. This suggests that budget monitoring arrangements in year were not effective. As in previous years, budget monitoring is the responsibility of budget managers with the support of the Finance team. Monthly budget meetings are held with budget holders and departments to discuss progress against the financial forecasts. Significant variances are reported to cabinet quarterly with explanations provided.

Decision making arrangements and control framework

Bury has an established governance structure in place which is set out within its Annual Governance Statement. This is supported by the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, the Governance Framework, the Constitution and scheme of delegation. Decision Making processes are formally set out in the Council's Constitution.

The Council operated four Scrutiny Committees and 2 sub committees responsible for ensuring robust scrutiny of decisions made by Cabinet. The Committees call in decisions and hold Portfolio Holders to account for Council performance.

VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - Continued

The role and responsibilities of the Audit Committee are established within the Council's Constitution. The Council's Audit Committee had responsibility for overseeing the work of the Internal and External Audit functions. It provided Full Council with assurance on the effectiveness of:

- The governance arrangements of the Council and its services.
- The Council's risk management framework and the associated control environment.
- The Council's financial management processes and the way this relates to the performance of individual services and the Council as a whole.

Following the formal recommendation we made to the Council in December 2024, a formal Council-wide improvement plan was agreed. From January 2025, the Council took steps to strengthen improvement focus by establishing six new Boards, each chaired by a member of the Executive Leadership Team to provide effective oversight of the actions required. These Boards cover:

- Commercial
- Finance
- Governance and Assurance
- Performance, Delivery and Transformation
- Property and Estates
- Regeneration

The Boards meet monthly and consider business in line with their formally agreed terms of reference. There is a direct reporting line through to members through the Members Assurance Group.

Audit of the Statement of Accounts

In 2020/21 we raised a significant weakness linked to the poor quality of the draft accounts submitted for audit and the significant difficulties encountered during the audit process because of problems with underlying records. The issues identified affected significant balances within the draft accounts published by the Council, such as Property, Plant and Equipment and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit. In 2021/22, as in the previous years, the draft accounts were not prepared to the required quality standard and contained a number of significant internal inconsistencies and errors. As the audit commenced, it became clear the working papers and supporting information required to support the audit were not always available and were being prepared as we requested them. A significant number of amendments, some of them material, were been made to the financial

statements. Unfortunately, by late November 2024, we had still not been provided with all of the information we required to conclude our work. As a result, we were unable to complete our audit work by the statutory deadline of 13 December 2024 and therefore issued a disclaimed opinion on the financial statements.

Due to the issues with the quality of the draft financial statements, supporting working papers and underlying records in 2020/21 and 2021/22, there were significant delays in the audit process. This led to us issuing a disclaimed audit opinion on the financial statements for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 years. Furthermore, due to the previous years significant issues and delays we were unable to complete our audit of the 2023/24 financial statements by the statutory deadline of 28 February 2025 and therefore a disclaimed audit opinion was issued on the 2023/24 financial statements.

The Council's 2024/25 draft financial statements were due for publication by the statutory deadline of 30 June 2025. However, the accounts were late and were not published on the Council's website until October 2025.

Although the draft accounts were supported by an annual governance statement, this was a poorly drafted document containing typographical errors, references to the wrong year and hyperlinks to documents that did not work. Our high-level review also found the Annual Governance Statement required revision because it did not adequately reflect the scale of governance issues and risks identified through both internal and external audit and management. These issues demonstrate ongoing strain in financial governance and reporting capability in 2024/25.

The Council is required to publish its Accountability Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, by 27 February 2026 ('the 2026 backstop date'). The National Audit Office issued guidance to auditors on rebuilding assurance following backstop-related disclaimers of opinion in June 2025. We have determined that there is not sufficient time to carry out the procedures we deem necessary to rebuild assurance before the 2026 backstop date and disclaimed opinion for 22024/25 is to be issued.

The finance restructure undertaken in 2022 and key staff turn over in finance team in following years meant loss of continuity and corporate knowledge. Interim staff were appointed to try to bridge the gaps in technical skills. The cost of such interim staff can be relatively high and the lack of corporate knowledge can make their role difficult.

VFM arrangements – Governance

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - Continued

A new Chief Accountant took up post on the 6th March 2023 and made progress in reviewing timetables, providing training and establishing model working papers. These were used for the 2023/24 closedown. A new Director of finance was appointed in June 2024, to provide more stability in the function. However, there is more to do to make sure the finance function of the Council is appropriately resourced and has the capacity, skills and technical knowledge to provide appropriate financial reporting as well as to support the wider business of the Council.

Statutory Recommendation

In December 2024 we issued the following written recommendation to the Council:

We recommend the Council should, as a matter of urgency, develop a comprehensive Council-wide improvement plan to reflect the transformation and cultural change needed across all departments, to ensure the Council can deliver the range, level and quality of services that it deems appropriate and within its statutory responsibilities in a financially sustainable way. As part of this, appropriate senior leadership and management is required to ensure the improvement plan delivers the required changes. Member oversight is needed to ensure the changes are embedded into the organisation.

Since this recommendation was issued, the Council developed and approved an improvement action plan to map out how the required organisational improvements would be taken forward. This included adopting new governance arrangements through the six new delivery boards as discussed previously. The Boards have clear accountability to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). They operate within defined remits aligned to the Council's Service Improvement Plan, with delivery activity tracked and monitored to support effective oversight and escalation. During the initial implementation phase, the boards met at an increased frequency to establish pace and grip. These arrangements have since transitioned into a business-as-usual cycle, with meeting frequency adjusted to reflect maturity, workload and risk. The Executive Leadership Team has continued to engage with senior managers to reinforce Service Improvement Plan actions and to emphasise the importance of Council-wide cultural change in supporting sustainable improvement. While not all improvement actions were deliverable

immediately following the issuing of external recommendations, the governance arrangements are now embedded. Delivery and effectiveness continue to be monitored through ELT oversight, Audit Committee reporting and the Annual Governance Statement, demonstrating ongoing commitment to strengthening governance, financial management and organisational culture

Alongside this, the Executive Leadership Team oversight has been strengthened by establishing a Chief Office Group and a Senior Manager Group intended to support delivery of the Council's strategy and to drive the culture change needed. Notwithstanding these changes, management capacity and capability across the Council remains stretched.

Regulators

We reviewed the regulatory reports issued in respect of the Council.

Information Commissioners Office (ICO)

The ICO published a report in August 2021 following a data protection audit carried out in June 2021. The report made 79 recommendations, including seven urgent and 24 high-priority actions. The scale of the findings represented a significant weakness in the Council's internal control arrangements at that time. A follow-up review by the ICO in April 2022 identified 22 recommendations still outstanding, including some originally categorised as urgent or high priority, highlighting that progress had not been sufficient at that stage. Since 2022, the Council has undertaken sustained remedial action to address the ICO findings. The majority of recommendations have now been implemented, supported by strengthened information governance arrangements, dedicated compliance capacity, and regular oversight through the Audit Committee.

Since the ICO's follow-up review in April 2022, there have been no further ICO data-protection audits or enforcement action. During 2024/25, the ICO issued only routine FOI/EIR decision notices, which were case-specific and not indicative of systemic data-protection failings.

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - Continued

OFSTED

A focused Ofsted visit in October 2020 found that Children’s Services in Bury had deteriorated since 2016, with leadership instability and insufficient focus on improvement. A full Ofsted inspection in 2021 judged services ‘Inadequate’, citing serious failures leaving children at risk of harm. Although a peer review and Improvement Board had been established, these arrangements took some time to embed, not least because of leadership changes in September 2021.

Following the inspection, improvement governance was strengthened, with an DfE-appointed independently chaired Improvement Board, revised terms of reference agreed in January 2022. The Board receives reports setting out the progress against the improvement plan. This plan is organised around 3 key themes: leadership and management, quality and impact of practice on the outcomes for children, and workforce. A separate workforce board has been established to facilitate input from staff to the Improvement Board.

In January 2022, the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee considered both the Ofsted findings and the Council’s response, and the final improvement plan was submitted to Ofsted in January 2022. The Council made available finances to invest into Children’s Services in order to address the remedial actions. This investment was used to recruit additional staff, in order to reduce social worker caseloads as a step to improving the quality of practice. Externally managed teams were also commissioned by the Council to immediately provide additional service capacity.

A six-month review was undertaken by OFSTED in February 2023. This report identified some positive progress and emerging strengths. The strengths noted were a restructured and stable leadership, a commitment to invest as evidenced by 50 new posts, and the implementation of family safeguarding model. The report concluded the Council should continue to address areas of concerns and DFE should continue to monitor progress.

A further monitoring visit was undertaken by OFSTED in November 2023. Findings from this visit noted a delay in implementing the changes. As a result, OFSTED concluded outcomes for care-experienced young people remain too inconsistent. OFSTED also found progress has been hindered by a lack of management capacity at both service manager and assistant director level to implement the improvement plans, and that a performance culture is not embedded.

In December 2024 OFSTED published their findings from an October 2024 follow up visit. This noted further progress had been made since the previous report. OFSTED noted an improvement in the

pace of actions since the appointment of a permanent Director of Social Care and Early Help in May 2024. Whilst the December report was generally positive, it noted that, in some instances, it was too early to see the impact of the actions put in place and said there was still evidence of weaknesses in some areas.

The Council had its most recent Ofsted Full Children services inspection in June 2025. While the overall outcome of the report was ‘Requires improvement to be good’, Ofsted acknowledges services for children and families in Bury have improved since the inspection in 2021. Ofsted noted the leadership has strengthened and is now rated Good, reflecting improved strategic grip, a more stable workforce and a stronger quality assurance framework. However, the inspection also confirms three of the four judgement areas—help and protection, children in care, and care leavers—continue to require improvement, demonstrating that improvements are not yet consistent or embedded across frontline practice. Persistent weaknesses such as drift and delay in planning, ineffective escalation by IROs and conference chairs, inconsistent quality of direct work and life story work, and delays in meeting children’s emotional and mental health needs continue to undermine timely and effective outcomes for children. These issues are explicitly highlighted by Ofsted as ongoing areas requiring improvement.

Separately, and in May 2024 OFSTED published the results of an inspection of the Council’s SEND services. The inspection took place between 12 and 16 February 2024. The inspection outcome concluded “there are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently”.

Bury Council and NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for SEND services in the borough. As a result of the inspection, the local area was issued with a formal Improvement Notice in May 2024, identifying six priority actions and three areas for improvement to be addressed jointly by the Council and the ICB.

In response, the local area developed a Priority Action Plan, locally referred to as the Priority Impact Plan (PIP). The PIP was co-produced with stakeholders, including parents, carers and young people, and sets out actions, milestones and performance measures to be delivered over 18–24 months. The plan has since been approved by Ofsted and the CQC and is published on the Council’s Local Offer.

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Overall commentary on the Governance reporting criteria - Continued

To oversee delivery, the SEND Improvement & Assurance Board (SIAB) was established, replacing previous SEND partnership boards. The SIAB is accountable to Cabinet and to the GM ICB via the Locality Board and is chaired independently. The Board meets monthly, with its first meeting held in June 2024, and maintains an action log and risk register to monitor progress against the PIP.

The recent “Requires improvement to be good” rating for children services and outcome of SEND service from OFSTED following their inspections, indicates a risk of significant weaknesses in proper arrangements and sufficient progress has not been made to address the findings.

Our work highlights a continued significant weakness in relation to the Council’s arrangements for ensuring there is a sound system of internal control and risk management in place.

VFM arrangements

Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

How the body uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services



VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

Performance Management

In 2021 a corporate strategic planning process was established, which provided an annual, integrated strategic corporate plan for the Council and (the then) Bury Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) partnership to guide the partnership's delivery against the Let's Do It! Vision.

The Council continues to monitor its progress against its Corporate Plan with progress being reported to the Executive team on a monthly basis and Cabinet on a quarterly basis. As reported previously the Council's Performance Management Framework sets out how the progress against the Corporate Plan is managed and reported on. Departmental performance is monitored against a set of agreed measures with each department managing performance within its own departmental processes. The departmental performance monitoring feeds upwards into the Directorate Business Plans and the Corporate Plan.

In 2021/22 the corporate plan sets out 15 council across three strategic themes grouped around the Council's 3 "Rs" of Respond; Recovery; and Renewal. In February 2022 the Council refreshed the Corporate Plan for the 2022/23 year. The plan continued to focus on the 15 priority areas but committed to "strengthening the basics" in terms of the Council's services and internal operations. Within the 2022/23 refresh the Council acknowledged the significant challenges in the delivery timeframe over which it expected to see outcomes.

Although the Council had an established and agreed corporate plan and performance monitoring framework, this has not worked effectively enough to ensure services provided by the Council are good. In recent years, there have been a number of failings within Council services most notably: services for children's and young people as assessed by OFSTED inspections, including SEND services, and the failure to deliver the service changes to support the DfE's Safety Valve programme.

Further work has been undertaken since the Council received our formal recommendation on improvement in December 2024 clarifying the Council's priorities and changes to the service planning arrangements to ensure the supporting departmental business plans are in line with these. Formal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) have been agreed across both childrens and adults services. During 2026/27, other services will agree an appropriate suite of KPIs to report.

Bury has an agreed performance management framework in place. Based on our review of the Staff People Strategy, which was presented through the Council's Employment Panel process in November 2025, 90% of Bury Council employees had completed a performance / employee review within 2024/25. A PowerBI Dashboard was issued to all line managers in January 2025. This provides access to individual level information on outstanding employee reviews and those due in the next three months, as well as mandatory training completion information.

Partnerships and Commissioning

The Council works in partnership with a range of third parties, both under statutory and other arrangements to provide services. These partnership arrangements are subject to review. The Team Bury Executive Board brings most of these partner organisations together to support the delivery of the Council's ambitions articulated through its community strategy and local community plans.

The Council is open to considering all models for the delivery of service. This means that some services are provided directly by the Council and others are contracted out to third parties. To support this, the Council has a Procurement Strategy and set of Contract Procurement Rules, which are part of the Constitution, and which outline how the procurement of goods, works and services is to be achieved. These documents take into account latest legislative and operational changes at the Council. Controls are designed to ensure that all procurement activity is conducted with openness, honesty and accountability.

The latest revised Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) were approved by Full Council on 13 November 2024, and a procurement strategy in October 2022. The new strategy was written for the Council by a third party and covers the period 2022- 2026. Once approved, ownership of delivery of the strategy transferred to the Council's strategic procurement team. A further review of the Council's contract procedure rules was undertaken and approved by Council in December 2022 with an implementation date 1 February 2023.

However, the Council does not have a fully resourced procurement and contract management function. As a result, it cannot be sure the services it procures from third parties are being delivered in accordance with contract terms. Recognising the capacity gap, the Council has developed a Procurement Transformation / Future Operating Model business case (issued December 2025) to strengthen resourcing, capability and contract management arrangements over time. The Council is

VFM arrangements – Financial Sustainability

Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness

open to changing delivery models where it believes it can get a better outcome. It commissioned a review of the housing management arrangements of its wholly owned subsidiary Six Town Housing in late 2022. Following this review, and in order to address the issues raised, the Council took a decision, in June 2023, to directly manage all of its housing stock including those previously managed by Six Town Housing. Following a formal Cabinet decision, services were brought back into the Council in a transfer that was completed in February 2024.

We have identified a significant weakness in arrangements against the economy, efficiency and effectiveness reporting criteria as a result of the matters arising from the OFSTED’s inspection of Children’s Services.

Value for Money

Status of our work

We have completed our work in respect of the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2024 and have identified three significant weaknesses in arrangements and have made associated recommendations.

Follow up of previously-reported significant weaknesses in arrangements

As part of our 2020/21 audit work, we identified the following significant weaknesses, and made recommendations for improvement in the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. These identified weaknesses have been outlined in the table below, along with our view on the Council's progress against the recommendations made, including whether the significant weakness is still relevant in the 2022/23 year.

Previously identified significant weakness in arrangements	Reporting criteria	Recommendation for improvement	Our views on the actions taken to date	Overall conclusions
<p>Ofsted Inspection: Children's Services</p> <p>The council had its most recent Ofsted Full Children services inspection in June 2025. The overall outcome of the June-25 report was 'Requires improvement to be good'. Ofsted acknowledges Services for children and families in Bury have improved since the last inspection in 2021, when the overall effectiveness was inadequate. Ofsted noted the leadership has strengthened and is now rated Good, reflecting improved strategic grip, a more stable workforce and a stronger quality assurance framework. However, the inspection also confirms that three of the four judgement areas—help and protection, children in care, and care leavers—continue to be rated "Requires Improvement to be Good", showing that improvements are not yet consistent or embedded across frontline practice. Persistent weaknesses such as drift and delay in planning, ineffective escalation by IROs and conference chairs, inconsistent quality of direct work and life story work, and delays in meeting children's emotional and mental health needs continue to undermine timely and effective outcomes for children. These issues are explicitly highlighted by Ofsted as ongoing areas requiring improvement.</p> <p>Separately, and in May 2024 OFSTED published the results of an inspection of the Council's SEND services. The inspection took place between 12 and 16 February 2024. The inspection outcome concluded "there are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which the local area partnership must address urgently.</p> <p>The Council recognises that a failure to address the weaknesses identified in the Ofsted report could adversely impact upon the safety of children. In our view this is indicative of a significant weaknesses in the council's arrangements in relation to the governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness reporting criteria.</p>	<p>Governance</p> <p>Improving the 3Es</p>	<p>We recommend the Council puts in place robust arrangements to ensure the actions identified in its improvement plan are being delivered on time and are having the required impact on the quality of service provided to, and the safety of, children in the Borough.</p>	<p>Whilst the December report was generally positive, it noted that, in some instances, it was too early to see the impact of the actions put in place and said there was still evidence of weaknesses in some areas.</p> <p>The June 2025 Ofsted report acknowledges Services for children and families in Bury have improved since the last inspection in 2021, when the overall effectiveness was inadequate. Ofsted noted the leadership has strengthened and is now rated Good, reflecting improved strategic grip, a more stable workforce and a stronger quality assurance framework.</p>	<p>In our view, the identified weaknesses are still present in the 2024/25 financial year.</p>

Follow up of previously-reported significant weaknesses in arrangements - Continued

Previously identified significant weakness in arrangements	Reporting criteria	Recommendation for improvement	Our views on the actions taken to date	Overall conclusions
<p>Weaknesses in Internal Control We reported several issues including the poor quality of the draft accounts submitted for audit and the significant difficulties encountered during the audit process because of problems with underlying records. The issues identified affected significant balances within the draft accounts published by the Council. The Statement of accounts of the council for 2024/25 were not published by the statutory deadline demonstrating ongoing strain reporting capability. Additionally, internal control weaknesses have been highlighted by the Internal Audit. Internal Audit's 2024/25 Annual Report issued a limited assurance opinion based on many Limited/Moderate opinions, a high volume of high-risk recommendations, and slow close out at follow up -particularly in core finance and IT/IG control areas. In our view, the totality of the issues identified indicates a significant weakness in relation to the governance reporting criteria.</p> <p>In our view, the totality of the issues identified indicate a significant weakness in relation to the governance reporting criteria.</p>	<p>Governance</p>	<p>With reference to the weaknesses in internal control identified, the Council should ensure it has arrangements in place for strengthening and maintaining the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework.</p>	<p>The lessons learnt exercise completed post 2020/21 which was reported to the Audit Committee to outline how the issues identified in the 2020/21 external audit were to be addressed did not materialise. The improvements needed did not occur as the interim Chief accountant who was working with the Council and who produced the lessons learnt and plan for improvement left the Council before the end of March 2022. A replacement interim Chief accountant was engaged in March 2022 but did not see out the external audit leaving before the audit had concluded. A permanent Chief accountant took up post on the 6th March 2023. Although he has made progress in reviewing timetables, providing training and establishing model working papers, there is more to do to ensure the Finance team has the capacity, skills and experience required to support the Council. This is evidenced by the Council's failure to prepare accounts for the 31 March 2025 year end in line with the statutory timetable.</p> <p>Internal audit have continued to report weaknesses in internal control with a high number of limited assurance reports in the period from 2021/22 through to 2024/25, including in respect of the main financial systems including creditors, debtors, cash and bank and the main accounting system. There has been an improvement in</p> <p>In January 2025, the Council strengthened its governance arrangements by establishing six new delivery boards reporting up to the Executive Leadership Team. One of the boards has a focus on finance and is chaired by the Section 151 Officer. However, it is too early to tell if this board will bring around the required improvements, not least because the improvements are somewhat dependent on a significant upgrade to the Council's finance system.</p>	<p>In our view, the identified weaknesses are still present in the 2024/25 financial years.</p>

Progress against significant weaknesses and recommendations made in the prior year - Continued

Previously identified significant weakness in arrangements	Reporting criteria	Recommendation for improvement	Our views on the actions taken to date	Overall conclusions
<p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>In 2022/23 we raised a significant weakness in relation to financial sustainability. The Council's budgets for the 2021/22 to 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years all relied on significant use of reserves to get to a balance position. In 2022/23, 2023/24 and in 2024/25 the Council recorded a General Fund overspend requiring additional reserve draw and worsening the underlying resilience position. Further, on review of forecast outturn reported to Cabinet on 3 Dec we noted a continuing overspend in 25/26 and a budget proposals for 26/27 show a budget gap after use of reserves of £16m (before savings proposals of 8.4m)</p> <p>General Fund and earmarked reserves reduced by £28 m, from £99.6 (31 Mar 2024) to £71.57m (31 Mar 2025). The Council's own narrative acknowledges the Budget Stabilisation Reserve is now insufficient to support the forecast funding gap past 2026/27.</p> <p>3 In addition to the use of reserves to balance its general fund budget, the council has also accumulated a large deficit balance in relation to Dedicated Schools Grant, which stands at £19.04m as presented in the council's draft 2024/25 statements. Although the council entered into a Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education in 2021, aimed to eradicate the DSG deficit by the end of the 2024-25. Council could not eradicate its deficit by the end of 2024/25 target, and an amendment has been made to the council's DSG Management Plan and agreed with the department which has a timeframe of the end of 2028/29. The financial projection for the year end position in 2025/26 is for a £2.5m overspend and a DSG deficit of £21.5m.</p> <p>In summer 2023 the Council declared itself to be in a state of financial distress and established a voluntary Finance Improvement panel to review its financial systems and pressures. Although progress has been made in understanding the sources of funding available to the council, including exploring the flexible use of capital receipts, the council still faces significant inflationary pressures as a result of having historically made the decision to outsource a large proportion of the delivery of its services. To date the Council has not fully explored income generation opportunities to support the financing and continued delivery of its services.</p> <p>The issues set out above are evidence of a significant weakness in the council's arrangements for financial sustainability and governance, specifically how the council plans finances to support the sustainable delivery of services, how the Council identifies and manages risks to financial resilience and how the council approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process.</p>	<p>Financial sustainability</p>	<p>The Council should undertake a full review of how it delivers and funds its services, including developing and implementing sustainable financial plans to ensure services can be provided within available resources. Sufficient information should be provided to Members so they can understand the position of the council and actions.</p> <p>Any planned use of capital receipts flexibilities should be fully supported and in-line with the statutory guidance and in the timeframe allowed by the current direction.</p>	<p>Since this recommendation was issued the Council has been working on a comprehensive improvement action plan to map out how the required organisational improvements will be made. The Council has proposed new governance arrangements made up of six new delivery boards reporting up to the Executive Leadership Team. One of the boards has a focus on finance and is chaired by the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>The work undertaken through the latter part of 2024/25 and through 2025/26 on the zero-based budget means the Council now has a better understanding of its financial position and the reserves available to use. It also has a clearer idea of the drivers of overpends. As a result, the Council will set a budget for 2026/27 which, whilst still requiring the use of reserves to support services, avoids the need for Exceptional Financial Support.</p> <p>However, there is more to do to ensure both members fully understand the financial challenge and the need for difficult decisions on the options for both savings and additional income. It is also too soon to know the Council can deliver the financial plans, including savings, set given the continuing demand pressures it faces, most notably in the Children and Young People's service.</p>	<p>In our view, the identified weaknesses are still present in the 2024/25 financial year.</p>

Audit fees and other services

Audit fees and other services

Fees for work as the Council's appointed auditor

Our fees (exclusive of VAT and disbursements) as the Council's appointed auditor are outlined below. Our fees are designed to reflect the time, professional experience, and expertise required to perform our audit.

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 * £
Scale Fee (for Info)	106,118	321,724	348,886
Planning & Reporting Disclaimed Opinion	31,712	38,539	43,335
Value for Money – core	8,000	93,461	104,671
Value for Money – additional risks	74,447	30,000	42,144
Total Fee	106,118	162,000	190,150

- The 2024./25 fee is a proposed fee, subject to review by PSAA.

We have not provided any non-audit services to the Council.

Confirmation of our independence

Confirmation of our independence

Requirements

We comply with the International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants, including International Independence Standards issued by the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants together with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK reflected in the ICAEW Code of Ethics and the FRC Revised Ethical Standard.

Compliance

We are not aware of any relationship between Forvis Mazars and Bury Council that, in our professional judgement, may reasonably be thought to impair our independence.

We are independent of Bury Council and have fulfilled our independence and ethical responsibilities in accordance with the requirements applicable to our audit.

Non-audit and Audit fees

We have not provided any non-audit services to Bury Council.

We are committed to independence and confirm that we comply with the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard. In addition, we have set out in this section any matters or relationships we believe may have a bearing on our independence or the objectivity of our audit team.

Based on the information provided by you and our own internal procedures to safeguard our independence as auditors, we confirm that in our professional judgement there are no relationships between us and any of our related or subsidiary entities, and you and your related entities, that create any unacceptable threats to our independence within the regulatory or professional requirements governing us as your auditors.

We have policies and procedures in place that are designed to ensure that we carry out our work with integrity, objectivity, and independence. These policies include:

- All partners and staff are required to complete an annual independence declaration.

- All new partners and staff are required to complete an independence confirmation and complete annual ethical training.

- Rotation policies covering audit engagement partners and other key members of the audit team.

- Use by managers and partners of our client and engagement acceptance system, which requires all non-audit services to be approved in advance by the audit engagement partner.

We confirm, as at the date of this report, that the engagement team and others in the firm as appropriate, Forvis Mazars LLP are independent and comply with relevant ethical requirements. However, if at any time you have concerns or questions about our integrity, objectivity or independence, please discuss these with me in the first instance.

Prior to the provision of any non-audit services, I will undertake appropriate procedures to consider and fully assess the impact that providing the service may have on our independence as auditor.

Principal threats to our independence and the associated safeguards we have identified and/ or put in place are set out in Terms of Appointment issued by PSAA available from the PSAA website: [Terms of Appointment from 2023/24 - PSAA](#). Any emerging independence threats and associated identified safeguards will be communicated in our Audit Completion Report.

Appendices

A: Draft management representation letter

B: Key Communication points

Appendix A: Draft management representation letter

Forvis Mazars
One St Peter's Square
Manchester
M2 3DE

[Date]

Dear Karen,

Bury Metropolitan Borough Council - Audit for Year Ended 31 March 2025

This representation letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council the Council and Group for the year ended 31 March 2025. I note that you intend to intend to issue a disclaimer of opinion in respect of your audit. I understand I am still required to provide the representations set out in this letter so you can complete your audit in accordance with relevant auditing standards.

I confirm that the following representations are made on the basis of enquiries of management and staff with relevant knowledge and experience (and, where appropriate, inspection of supporting documentation) sufficient to satisfy ourselves that I can properly make each of the following representations to you.

My responsibility for the financial statements and accounting information

I believe that I have fulfilled my responsibilities for the true and fair presentation and preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Code, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law.

My responsibility to provide and disclose relevant information

I have provided you with:

- access to all information of which I am aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other material;
- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to individuals within the Council and Group you determined it was necessary to contact in order to obtain audit evidence.

I confirm as the s151 officer that I have taken all the necessary steps to make me aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that you, as auditors, are aware of this information.

As far as I am aware there is no relevant audit information of which you, as auditors, are unaware.

Accounting records

I confirm that all transactions that have a material effect on the financial statements have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements. All other records and related information, including minutes of all Council and committee meetings, have been made available to you.

Accounting policies

I confirm that I have reviewed the accounting policies applied during the year in accordance with International Accounting Standard 8 and consider these policies to faithfully represent the effects of transactions, other events or conditions on the Council and Group's financial position, financial performance and cash flows.

Accounting estimates, including those measured at current or fair value

I confirm that the methods, significant assumptions and the data used by the Council and Group in making the accounting estimates, including those measured at current or fair value, are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

Contingencies

There are no material contingent losses including pending or potential litigation that should be accrued where:

- information presently available indicates that it is probable that an asset has been impaired or a liability had been incurred at the balance sheet date; and
- the amount of the loss can be reasonably estimated.

There are no material contingent losses that should be disclosed where, although either or both the conditions specified above are not met, there is a reasonable possibility that a loss, or a loss greater than that accrued, may have been incurred at the balance sheet date.

There are no contingent gains which should be disclosed.

All material matters, including unasserted claims, that may result in litigation against the Council and Group have been brought to your attention. All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to you and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the Code, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law.

Laws and regulations

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all those events of which I am aware which involve known or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, together with the actual or contingent consequences which may arise therefrom.

The Council and Group has complied with all aspects of contractual agreements that would have a material effect on the accounts in the event of non-compliance.

Fraud and error

I acknowledge my responsibility as s151 Officer for the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error and I believe I have appropriately fulfilled those responsibilities.

I have disclosed to you:

- all the results of my assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- all knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud affecting the Council and Group involving:
 - management and those charged with governance;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; and
 - others where fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements.

I have disclosed to you all information in relation to any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the Council and Group's financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

Related party transactions

I confirm that all related party relationships, transactions and balances, have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Code, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law.

I have disclosed to you the identity of the Council and Group's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which I am aware.

Impairment review

To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing to indicate that there is a permanent reduction in the recoverable amount of the property, plant and equipment and intangible assets below their carrying value at the balance sheet date. An impairment review is therefore not considered necessary.

Charges on assets

All the Council and Group's assets are free from any charges exercisable by third parties except as disclosed within the financial statements.

Future commitments

The Council and Group has no plans, intentions or commitments that may materially affect the carrying value or classification of assets and liabilities or give rise to additional liabilities.

Subsequent events

I confirm all events subsequent to the date of the financial statements and for which the Code, as amended by the Code Update and applicable law, require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted or disclosed.

Should further material events occur after the date of this letter which may necessitate revision of the figures included in the financial statements or inclusion of a note thereto, I will advise you accordingly.

Going concern

To the best of my knowledge there is nothing to indicate that the Council and Group will not continue as a going concern in the foreseeable future. The period to which I have paid particular attention in assessing the appropriateness of the going concern basis is not less than twelve months from the date of approval of the accounts.

Annual Governance Statement

I am satisfied that the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) fairly reflects the Council and Group's risk assurance and governance framework and I confirm that I am not aware of any significant risks that are not disclosed within the AGS.

Narrative Report

The disclosures within the Narrative Report fairly reflect my understanding of the Council and Group's financial and operating performance over the period covered by the financial statements.

Arrangements to achieve economy, effectiveness and efficiency in Use of Resources (Value for Money arrangements)

I confirm that I have disclosed to you all findings and correspondence from regulators for previous and ongoing inspections of which I am aware. In addition, I have disclosed to you any other information that would be considered relevant to your work on value for money arrangements.

Yours faithfully,

s151 officer

Appendix B: Draft audit report

Independent auditor's report to the members of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Disclaimer of opinion on the financial statements

We were appointed to audit the financial statements of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council (“the Council”) and its subsidiaries and joint ventures (“the Group”) for the year ended 31 March 2025, which comprise the Council and Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Council and Group Movement in Reserves Statement, the Council and Group Balance Sheet, the Council and Group Cash Flow Statement, the Housing Revenue Account Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement, the Collection Fund Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25.

We do not express an opinion on the financial statements. Because of the significance of the matter described in the Basis for Disclaimer of Opinion section of our report, we have not been able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on these financial statements.

Basis for disclaimer of opinion

On 30 September 2024, the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 (“The Amendment Regulations”) came into force. The Amendment Regulations specify the date by which the Council is required to publish its Accountability Statements, which include the financial statements and the auditor’s opinion, for each financial year. The Council is required to publish its Accountability Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, by 27 February 2026 (“the 2026 backstop date”).

We issued disclaimers of opinion in relation to the financial statements for the years ended 31 March 2022 to 2023 on 12 December 2024 and on 28 February 2025 a disclaimer of opinion was issued in relation to the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. The disclaimers of opinion were issued as there was insufficient time to perform all necessary audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence upon which to form an opinion before the relevant backstop dates specified in the Amendment Regulations.

The National Audit Office issued guidance to auditors on rebuilding assurance following backstop-related disclaimers of opinion through Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance 06 (“LARRIG 06”) in June 2025. We have had regard to LARRIG 06 and other relevant guidance and determined that there is not sufficient time to carry out the procedures we deem necessary to rebuild assurance. As a result, we are not able to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence upon which to form an opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 before the 2026 backstop date.

Responsibilities of the Executive Director of Resources for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities, the Executive Director of Resources 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 2024/25, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view. The Executive Director of Resources is also responsible for such internal control as the Executive Director of Resources determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Appendix B: Draft audit report - Continued

The Executive Director of Resources is required to comply with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 and prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis on the assumption that the functions of the Council will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. The Executive Director of Resources is responsible for assessing each year whether or not it is appropriate for the Council to prepare its accounts on the going concern basis and disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our responsibility is to conduct an audit of the Council's financial statements in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) and to issue an auditor's report. However, because of the matter described in the Basis for Disclaimer of Opinion section of our report, we were not able to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a basis for an audit opinion on these financial statements. In reaching this judgement we have complied with the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice and have had regard to the Local Audit Reset and Recovery Implementation Guidance published by the National Audit Office and endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council.

We are independent of the Council in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

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 the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources

Matter on which we are required to report by exception

We are required to report to you if, in our view we are not satisfied that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2025.

On the basis of our work, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024, we have identified the following significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2025.

In March 2022 we identified significant weaknesses in relation to Governance and Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness for the 2020/2021 year. In December 2024 we identified a significant weakness in relation to Financial Sustainability for the 2022/23 year. In February 2025, the weaknesses remained for the year ended 31 March 2024.

In our view these significant weaknesses remained for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Appendix B: Draft audit report - Continued

Significant weakness in arrangements – issued in a previous year	Recommendation
<p>Ofsted Inspection: Children’s Services</p> <p>The most recent full inspection of Children’s Services by OFSTED was carried out between 9 to 20 June 2025, the service was assessed as “Inadequate”. In our view this is indicative of a significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements in relation to the governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness reporting criteria.</p>	<p>We recommend the Council puts in place robust arrangements to ensure the actions identified in its improvement plan are being delivered on time and have the required impact on the quality of service provided to, and the safety of, children in the Borough.</p>
<p>Weaknesses in Internal Control</p> <p>We reported several issues including the poor quality of the draft accounts submitted for audit and the significant difficulties encountered during the audit process because of problems with underlying records. The issues identified affected significant balances within the draft accounts published by the Council. The Statement of accounts of the council for 2024/25 were not published by the statutory deadline demonstrating ongoing strain reporting capability.</p> <p>Additionally, internal control weaknesses have been highlighted by the Internal Audit. Internal Audit’s 2024/25 Annual Report issued a limited assurance opinion based on many Limited/Moderate opinions, a high volume of high-risk recommendations, and slow close out at follow up -particularly in core finance and IT/IG control areas. In our view, the totality of the issues identified indicates a significant weakness in relation to the governance reporting criteria.</p>	<p>The Council should ensure it has arrangements in place for strengthening and maintaining the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control framework.</p>
<p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>The Council’s budgets for financial years from 2021/22 to 2022/25 all relied on significant use of reserves to get to a balanced position. Further, the forecast outturn shows a continuing overspend in 25/26. The Council has also accumulated a large deficit balance in relation to Dedicated Schools Grants in the Council’s draft 2024/25 statements. Council could not eradicate its DSG deficit under Safety Valve agreement with DfE by the end of 2024/25 target, and an amendment has been made to the council’s DSG Management Plan.</p> <p>The issues set out above are evidence of a significant weakness in the Council’s arrangements for financial sustainability and governance.</p>	<p>The Council should undertake a full review of how it delivers and funds its services, including developing and implementing sustainable financial plans to ensure services can be provided within available resources. Sufficient information should be provided to Members so they can understand the position of the Council and actions.</p> <p>Any planned use of capital receipts flexibilities should be fully supported and in-line with the statutory guidance and in the timeframe allowed by the current direction.</p>

Appendix B: Draft audit report

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

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

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

We have undertaken our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in November 2024.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception under the Code of Audit Practice

We are required by the Code of Audit Practice to report to you if:

- we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- we make a recommendation under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014; or
- we exercise any other special powers of the auditor under sections 28, 29 or 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

We are also required by the Code of Audit Practice, to give an opinion on whether other information published together with the audited financial statements, is consistent with the financial statements. Because of the matter described in the Basis for Disclaimer of Opinion section we do not express an opinion on the financial statements. We also do not express an opinion on whether other information published together with the audited financial statements is consistent with the financial statements.

Use of the audit report

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

Appendix B: Draft audit report

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have received confirmation from the NAO that the group audit of the Whole of Government Account has been completed and that no further work is required to be completed by us.

Karen Murrey, Key Audit Partner

For and on behalf of Forvis Mazars LLP

One St Peter's Square

Manchester

M2 3DE

February 2026

Appendix C: Key communication points

We value communication with Audit Committee, as a two-way feedback process is at the heart of our client service commitment. The Code of Audit Practice as well as ISA (UK) 260 *Communication with Those Charged with Governance* and ISA (UK) 265 *Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management* specifically require us to communicate a number of matters with you. We meet these requirements, principally, through presenting the following documents to you:

- Our Audit Strategy Memorandum;
- Our Audit Completion Report; and
- Our Auditor's Annual Report.

These documents will be discussed with management prior to being presented to you and their comments will be incorporated as appropriate.

Relevant points that need to be communicated with you at each stage of the audit are outlined below.

Key communication points at the planning stage as included in this report

- Our responsibilities in relation to the audit of the financial statements;
- The planned scope and timing of the audit;
- Significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Our commitment to independence;
- Responsibilities for preventing and detecting errors;
- Materiality and misstatements; and
- Fees for audit and other services.

Key communication points included in this report

- Significant deficiencies in internal control;
- Significant findings from the audit;
- Significant matters discussed with management;
- Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit;
- Qualitative aspects of the entity's accounting practices, including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;
- Our conclusions on the significant audit risks and areas of management judgement;
- Summary of misstatements;
- Management representation letter;
- Our proposed draft audit report; and
- Independence.

Changes introduced by the 2024 Code of Audit Practice

The 2024 Code now requires the auditor to issue the draft Auditor's Annual Report by 30th November following each year end. For the 2024/25 audit, this means that we were required to issue our draft Auditor's Annual Report by 30 November 2025, whether our audit was complete or not. We issued our draft report on 30 November 2025.

In instances where our audit work is not complete by 30 November for any given year, the 2024 Code requires us to provide a summary of the status of the audit at the time of issuance and should reflect the work completed to date since we issued our previous Auditor's Annual Report. In such instances, we will issue an Interim Auditor's Annual Report to meet the 30 November deadline. On completion of any outstanding financial statement audit work or Value for Money arrangements work, we will re-issue the Auditor's Annual Report which will include an updated commentary on Value for Money arrangements

Appendix C: Key communication points

ISA (UK) 260 *Communication with Those Charged with Governance*, ISA (UK) 265 *Communicating Deficiencies In Internal Control To Those Charged With Governance And Management* and other ISAs (UK) specifically require us to communicate the following:

Required communication	Where addressed
Our responsibilities in relation to the financial statement audit and those of management and Those Charged with Governance.	This document
The planned scope and timing of the audit including any limitations, specifically including with respect to significant risks.	This document
<p>With respect to misstatements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion; • The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods; • A request that any uncorrected misstatement is corrected; and • In writing, corrected misstatements that are significant. 	This document
<p>With respect to fraud communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiries with Audit committee to determine whether you have knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud affecting the entity; • Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that fraud may exist; and • A discussion of any other matters related to fraud. 	This document and discussion at Audit Committee meeting(s), audit planning meeting(s), and audit clearance meeting(s)

Appendix C: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity’s related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-disclosure by management; • Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions; • Disagreement over disclosures; • Non-compliance with laws and regulations; and • Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity. 	<p>This document</p>
<p>Significant findings from the audit including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures; • Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit; • Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management or were the subject of correspondence with management; • Written representations that we are seeking; • Expected modifications to the audit report; and • Other matters, if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process or otherwise identified in the course of the audit that we believe will be relevant to Council or Audit committee in the context of fulfilling your responsibilities. 	<p>This document</p>

Appendix C: Key communication points

Required communication	Where addressed
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit.	This document
Where relevant, any issues identified with respect to authority to obtain external confirmations or inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures.	This document
Audit findings regarding non-compliance with laws and regulations where the non-compliance is material and believed to be intentional (subject to compliance with legislation on tipping off) and inquiry of the Audit Committee into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements that the Audit Committee may be aware of.	This document
<p>With respect to going concern, events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity’s ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty; • Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements; and • The adequacy of related disclosures in the financial statements. 	This document
<p>Communication regarding our system of quality management, compliant with ISQM (UK) 1, developed to support the consistent performance of quality audit engagements. To address the requirements of ISQM (UK) 1, our firm’s System of Quality Management team completes, as part of an ongoing and iterative process, a number of key steps to assess and conclude on our firm’s System of Quality Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is an appropriate assignment of responsibilities under ISQM (UK) 1 and across Leadership • Establish and review quality objectives each year, ensuring ISQM (UK) 1 objectives align with the firm’s strategies and priorities • Identify, review, and update quality risks each quarter, taking into consideration the number of input sources (such as FRC / ICAEW review findings, internal monitoring findings, findings from our firm’s root cause analysis and remediation functions, etc.) • Identify, design, and implement responses as part of the process to strengthen our firm’s internal control environment and overall quality • Evaluate responses and remediate control gaps or deficiencies <p>We perform an evaluation of our system of quality management on an annual basis. Our first evaluation was performed as of 31 August 2023. Details of that assessment and our conclusion are set out in our 2022/2023 Transparency Report, which is available on our website here.</p> <p>The details of our evaluation of our system of quality management as of 31 August 2024, and our conclusion, set out in our 2023/24 Transparency Report, which is available on our website here.</p>	This document

Appendix C: Key communication points

Other communication	Response
 <p>System of Quality Management</p>	<p>To address the requirements of ISQM (UK) 1, our firm’s System of Quality Management team completes, as part of an ongoing and iterative process, a number of key steps to assess and conclude on our firm’s System of Quality Management, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is an appropriate assignment of responsibilities under ISQM (UK) 1 and across Leadership • Establishing and reviewing quality objectives each year, ensuring ISQM (UK) 1 objectives align with our firm's strategies and priorities • Identifying, reviewing, and updating quality risks each quarter, taking into consideration a number of input sources (such as FRC / ICAEW review findings, internal monitoring findings, findings from our firm’s root cause analysis and remediation functions, etc.) • Identifying, designing, and implementing responses as part of the process to strengthen our firm's internal control environment and overall quality • Evaluating responses and remediating control gaps or deficiencies <p>We perform an evaluation of our system of quality management on an annual basis. Our latest evaluation was performed as of 31 August 2024. Details of that assessment and our conclusion are set out in our 2023/2024 Transparency Report, which is available on our website here.</p>

Contact

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Unaudited 2024-25

Statement of Accounts

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Introduction by the Director of Finance

I am pleased to introduce our financial accounts for 2024/25. The purpose of these accounts is to present a true and fair view of the financial results of our activities for the year and the value of our assets and liabilities at the end of the year. The Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. The Statement of Accounts play a vital role in providing Bury residents, Council Members, and other interested parties with an understanding of the Council's financial position, providing assurance that public resources have been used and accounted for in an appropriate manner.

It aims to ensure the readers of the Statement of Accounts can:

- Understand the overarching financial position of the Council and the 2024/25 financial outturn.
- Have confidence that public money with which the Council has been entrusted has been used and accounted for appropriately, and;
- Be assured of the robustness of the council's financial standing.

The Council's Statement of Accounts is presented as simply and clearly as possible. However, the accounts for such a large and diverse organisation are by their nature both technical and complex. To assist in this, a narrative report has been produced.

Neil Kissock
Director of Finance (S151 Officer)

Certificate of the Statement of Accounts

I certify that the Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of Bury Council at 31 March 2025, and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Neil Kissock
Director of Finance (S151 Officer)
17 February 2026

Approval of the Accounts

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, I certify that the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2025, was approved under delegated powers as agreed by the Audit Committee at the meeting held on 17 February 2026.

Councillor Elliot Moss
Chair of the Audit Committee
17 February 2026

Narrative Report

The Narrative Report provides information on the authority, its main objectives and strategies and the principal risks that it faces, as well as providing a commentary on how the authority has used its resources to achieve its desired outcomes in line with its objectives and strategies throughout 2024/25.

The 2024/25 financial year began with a challenging and uncertain national financial outlook. Despite recent reductions in the rate of inflation, the Council is still addressing the impact of 11% inflation. This is a rendition of how, we have navigated the boat in these stormy waters with our strategic plans and some of the risks that we hope to overcome in the coming financial years as identified below.

At the beginning of the year, this was the situation of the council's finances:

- 17% demand increase on the council's budget, against an income increase of just 7%.
- These pressures come on top of systemic under funding. The Institute of Fiscal Studies published data in 2023 which highlighted Bury Council's position as in the bottom 20% worst-funded councils, ranking 122 out of 150 upper-tier English local authorities in terms of money to spend per resident.
- Whilst there has been a recent increase in one off grants and fixed term funding from central government, core funding has gone down by 55% since 2010/11.
- As a result of this situation the Council declared itself to be in a state of financial distress last summer and established a voluntary Finance Improvement Panel, with support from CIPFA and the LGA, to review all its financial systems and processes.
- The council was informed by the advice of the Finance Improvement Panel the Council has reassessed the balance of earmarked and ringfenced reserves to support a balanced budget for the next three years.
- This work ensures the immediate viability of the Council but is not, of course, a long-term solution. Reserves can only be spent once and therefore work is now underway to identify recurring financial savings at the equivalent value across the areas.
- Workforce capacity, to identify efficiencies in staffing structures and job design Reform, by applying the public service reform principles enshrined in LET'S do it! To children's and adult's social care in particular, as well as housing services including those formerly provided by Six Town Housing Strategic financing through the strategic application of grants and ongoing efficiencies in the Treasury Management functions.

Introduction to Bury

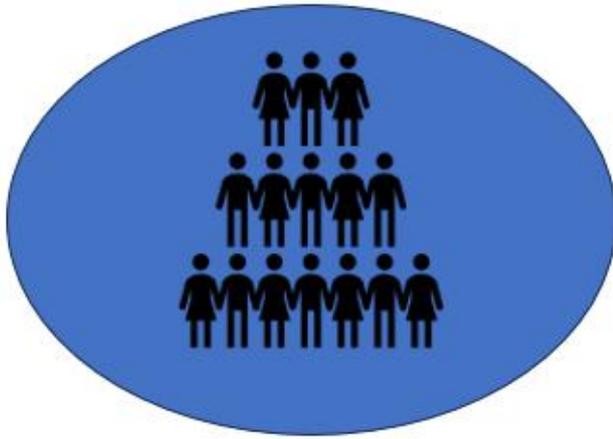
Bury Council is one of ten local authorities in the Greater Manchester region. Bury is a place of independent shops, regeneration, thriving businesses and strong communities making it a place where people want to live, work, and spend their leisure time.

About Bury

Bury is home to a vibrant community and shops and leisure facilities a fun place to live, work and play as supported by the 2017 Happy at Home Index amongst the 10 greater Manchester Councils third happiest in the Northwest, behind only the Wirral and Chester.



Key Facts



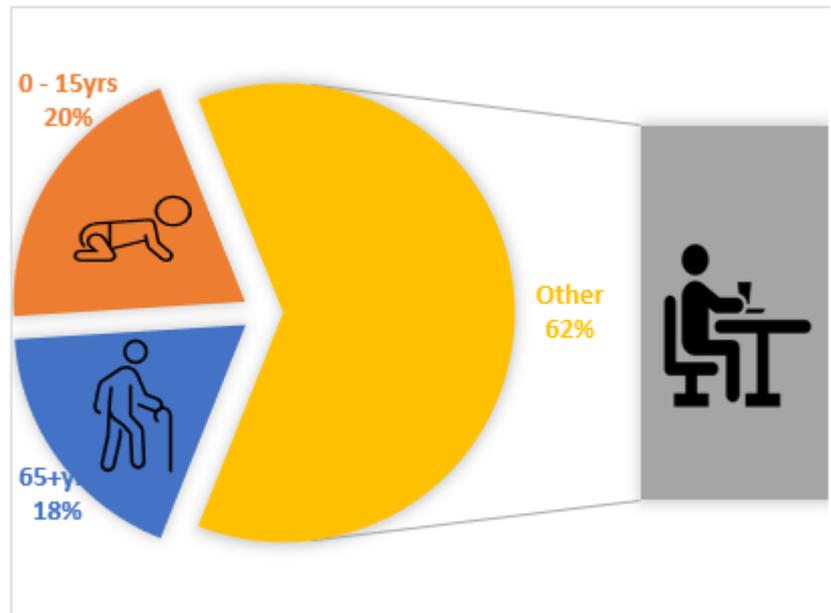
Population

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 mid-year population estimate report Bury's total population as 193,855. It is forecasted to grow to 207,091 by 2043, with an expectant increase of aged over 80 from 8,800 in 2018 to 14,935, in 2043 with resultant increases in demand for health and social care services.

Age Profile

The working age population (age 16 to 64) as a proportion of the population is slightly lower than the regional and national averages, whilst those over 65 also represent a lower percentage of the population than regional and national averages. Over 85's represents 2.3% of the population compared to 2.5% nationally. Under 16s are higher than regional and national averages.

There is expected to be a high increase in those residents aged 80 and over from 8,800 in 2018 to 14,935 in 2043.

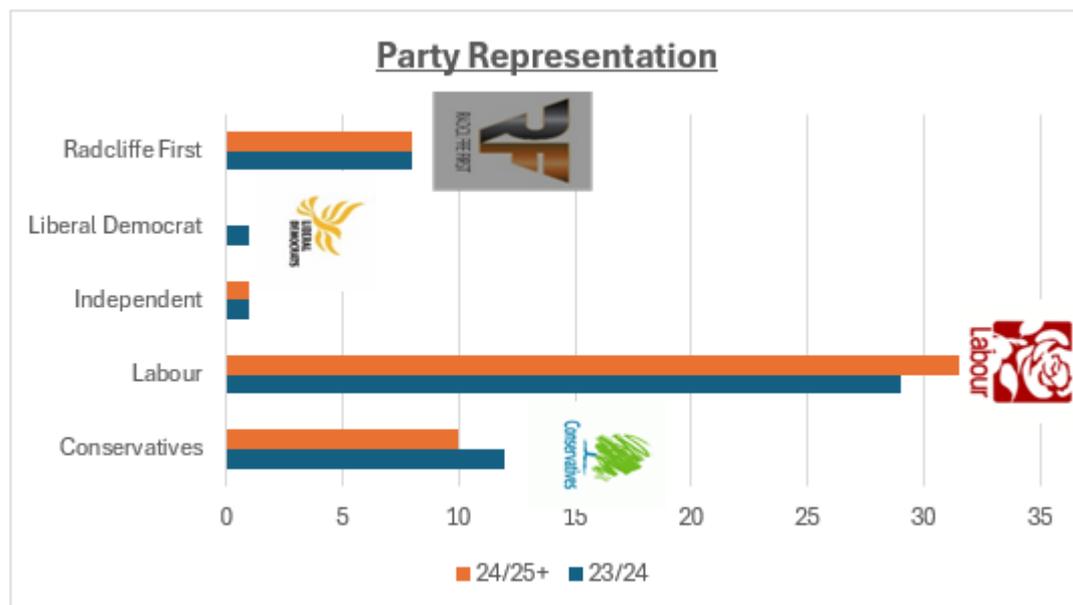


About the Council

The Council operate a cabinet structure, with the majority party on most occasion choosing the leader of the council, with the chairmanship of the cabinet heading their respective portfolios. The scrutiny committee have an oversight of the actions of the cabinet. The member lead on the strategy with the Chief Executive and directors working with members to implement these strategies.

Political structure

Bury is made up of 17 wards with 3 Councillors representing each ward giving an overall total of 51 members. The political make-up of the Council, including changes in political colours following the May 2024 elections for 2024/25 was:



The Cabinet

The Cabinet is the main decision-making body of the Council and is responsible for the strategic management of Council services. The Council in 2024/25 consisted of a Leader and 8 Cabinet Member Councillors each of whom held a Cabinet Member portfolio.

These were as follows:

- Strategic Growth
- Adult Care, Health, and Public Service Reform
- Children and Young People
- Finance and Transformation
- Culture Economy and Skills
- Environment, Climate Change and Operations
- Customer Service, Communications and Corporate Affairs
- Housing Services
- Communities and Inclusion

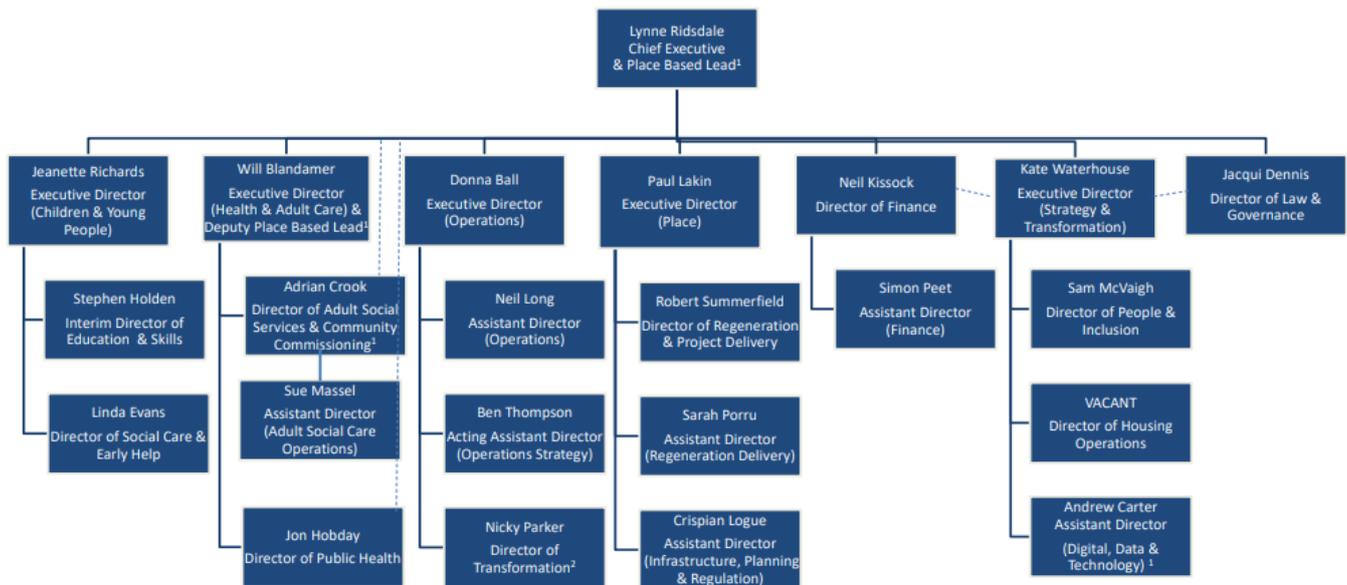
Cabinet members are also held to account through Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Workforce

The Council's Executive Team provides leadership to the Council and supports the work of Councillors. The Chief Executive is supported by 5 Executive Directors – (Health & Adult Care) & Deputy Place Based Lead, Children and Young People, Operations, Place and Strategy and Transformation.

In carrying out their roles, the Executive Team support the Council in:

- Developing the Council's strategies
- Identifying and planning resources
- Delivering Council plans
- Reviewing the Council's performance and effectiveness in delivering services to residents across the borough



Council Employees

The Council employee count full time equivalents (FTE), excluding staff directly employed by schools and casuals were 2,282 (2,114 23/24). The slight increase in staff number is in line with bringing significant organisational change, stability, and improvements in various challenging areas, where possible. Investing in and engaging with our staff and ensuring they have the right skills and knowledge to support effective and efficient delivery is a priority and will continue to be so as the Council continues to transform in 2024/25 and beyond. These changes and embedding of organisational values and behaviours aligned to the LET’S Do It! Strategy. The Council aims to build a resilient and flexible workforce that is able to deliver the Council’s plans and meet the changing needs of the organisation. The Council aims to have the right people, with the rights skills and the right tools in place to do their job across the whole of the Council.

2024/25 Corporate Plan

Previous Corporate Plans have attempted to identify the many priorities that must be addressed within this complex operating environment. Feedback from the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge is that such detailed plans have been unclear, however, and a much tighter set of core priorities would better assist in building engagement. On this basis, three core strategic priorities for 2024/25 are proposed, delivery of which will also secure financial stability. The priorities overlay the “business as usual” departmental functions which are described separately in service planning documents.



The core priorities are defined as follows:

- Sustainable Inclusive Growth – Further delivery of sustainable housing, the levelling up programmes, strategic regeneration along with the Local Plan, Northern Gateway Masterplan, and our continued commitment to carbon neutrality.
- Improving Children's Lives – This priority details Educational Improvement including the three A's (Attainment, Attendance and Academisation) and the continued delivery of the SEND and Social Care improvement plans as well as a review of the Youth Justice service.
- Tackling Inequalities – Since the pandemic our inequalities have widened and therefore this continues to be a key priority in 2024/25 including a review of the wider determinants of health: work, housing anti-poverty, tackling behaviours that lead to poor outcomes, system wide prevention and targeted interventions within our neighbourhoods.

A summary of the 2024/25 Corporate Plan is provided below:

2030 Vision

Council Priorities – LET’S Do It!

Enabling Actions 2024/25

1



Achieving Economic Growth

Sustainable Inclusive Growth:

- Deliver Housing pipeline
- Levelling Up Funded sites; Prestwich; Ramsbottom & Whitefield Plans; Millgate Strategic Regeneration Framework
- Local Plan update
- Northern Gateway Masterplan
- Carbon Neutral

Refresh the LET’S vision and partnership

Complete and deliver the budget:

- Reducing demand; driving growth

Build capacity:

- Member development
- Development of people and processes in Corporate Core and Finance
- Workforce Strategy (Attraction, Recruitment and Retention)

2



Reducing Deprivation

Improving Children’s Lives:

- Educational Improvement (Attendance, Attainment, Academisation)
- SEND Improvement and delivery of Project Safety Valve
- Social Care Improvement (Edge of Care; Family Safeguarding Model; Fostering & Family Hubs)
- Youth - Youth Justice Review and Service refresh

Regulator readiness:

- Children’s (Social Care and SEND)
- Social Housing
- Care Quality Commission

Tackling Inequalities:

- Wider Determinants – Work, Housing, Anti-Poverty Strategy, Education, Environment and Skills
- Behaviour – Physical activity (Wellness), Food, Substance Misuse
- Prioritise system wide prevention and targeted intervention e.g. Adult Social Care, CVD Pathways
- People and Community Plans including Social Value strategy
- Social Housing Insource, Integration and Improvement

Future Asset Plan and Rationalisation:

- Aligned to neighbourhood model and agile working

Shared success across Bury 

Governance

Bury Metropolitan Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Annual Governance Statement explains how the Council has complied with the CIPFA Financial Management Code and meets the requirements of regulation 6(2) Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, in relation to the approval of the Annual Governance Statement.

The Head of Fraud, Audit, Insurance & Risk's opinion for 2024/25

Based upon the results of the audit work undertaken during the year, the Head of Audits opinion is that the Authority's control environment provides limited assurance that the significant risks facing the Authority are addressed.

Some fundamental and significant recommendations have not been fully implemented during the year. However, the recommendations made had been accepted by management and are in the sight of the Governance and Assurance Board (GAB) and the Members Assurance Group (MAG)

Towards the end of the 2024/25 year, whilst a number of Limited Assurance reports were still being issued, the Internal Audit Team were starting to see an improvement on numbers of recommendations being addressed by the time the second follow up has been completed, thus fewer recommendations being reported as outstanding to the Governance and Assurance Board. This suggests that the work of the Governance and Assurance Board is positively contributing to the improvement of Governance across the Council however further improvement is needed.

Performance Management

During the year a new approach to performance reporting was adopted. A move from monthly highlight reporting to a more detailed quarterly report tying delivery activities and key performance indicators. This also saw the integration of the financial monitoring of the Medium – Term Financial Strategy Savings Tracker, to make it dynamic by updating it with emerging issues and other factors causing delays/changes.

To support and empower, the executives and management, a performance dashboard was developed present this information in an accessible format, include trend information and benchmarking data. Target setting workshops will be held in Quarter One with the aim of all measures having performance targets by Quarter Two. A summary of the performance metrics in development is included overleaf.

Alongside the delivery of the key priorities, we will support enabling activity including:

Internal Transformation, including digital

In July 2021, Cabinet agreed a multi-year internal transformation programme with the objectives of both improving service quality and reducing costs. The programme is comprised of three workstreams:

Let's do it...

- Once – an integrated customer contact strategy.
- Flexibly – estates rationalisation and agile working.
- Well – internal improvement and efficiencies.

Underpinning much of this work is the Council's digital programme, which seeks to promote digital-first user engagement, a digital workplace and improved business intelligence. This work has continued in earnest through 2024/25.

Organisation Development

The partnerships mission is to provide direct and robust leadership of the *Let's Do It!* vision through the mindset of staff and impact on their approach to delivery services. A People Strategy will be created, setting out the organisations framework for developing skills, structures and culture needed to drive delivery of the vision. Work here will include:

- Co-creation of a set of values which support our diverse workforce to demonstrate the '*LETS*' principles, underpinned by practical behaviours which drive a change in culture.
- Development of leaders and managers to equip them with the skills and confidence to deliver on the partnerships ambition. 2022/23 saw the launch of the managers development programme for all managers who line manage staff.
- Strengthening approaches to talent identification and development, including work with apprenticeships to focus on creating opportunities for Bury residents.
- Focus on wellbeing and engagement, emphasising the role of managers, informed by best practice and internal evidence.
- Improvement in the systems and processes that support quality management.

Financial Management

The finance department is committed to its mission of providing timely reports and support the business units in managing their respective resources as well as responding responsibly to our various stakeholders in good stead. By so doing the finance department continues to challenge itself and restructure its operations to be as fluid as possible in its mission, in optimising the resources of the council. It is key that finance is seen as an enabler to all departments to achieve the objectives and priorities of the Council, whilst ensuring financial sustainability and resilience.

Budget Setting

The 2024/25 budget has been designed to support the delivery of the 2030 vision of the "The LET'S DO IT!" strategy as set out in February 2024 and the Council's priorities and key deliverables as partly highlighted above, which appraises the Council's Corporate Plan and associated plans.

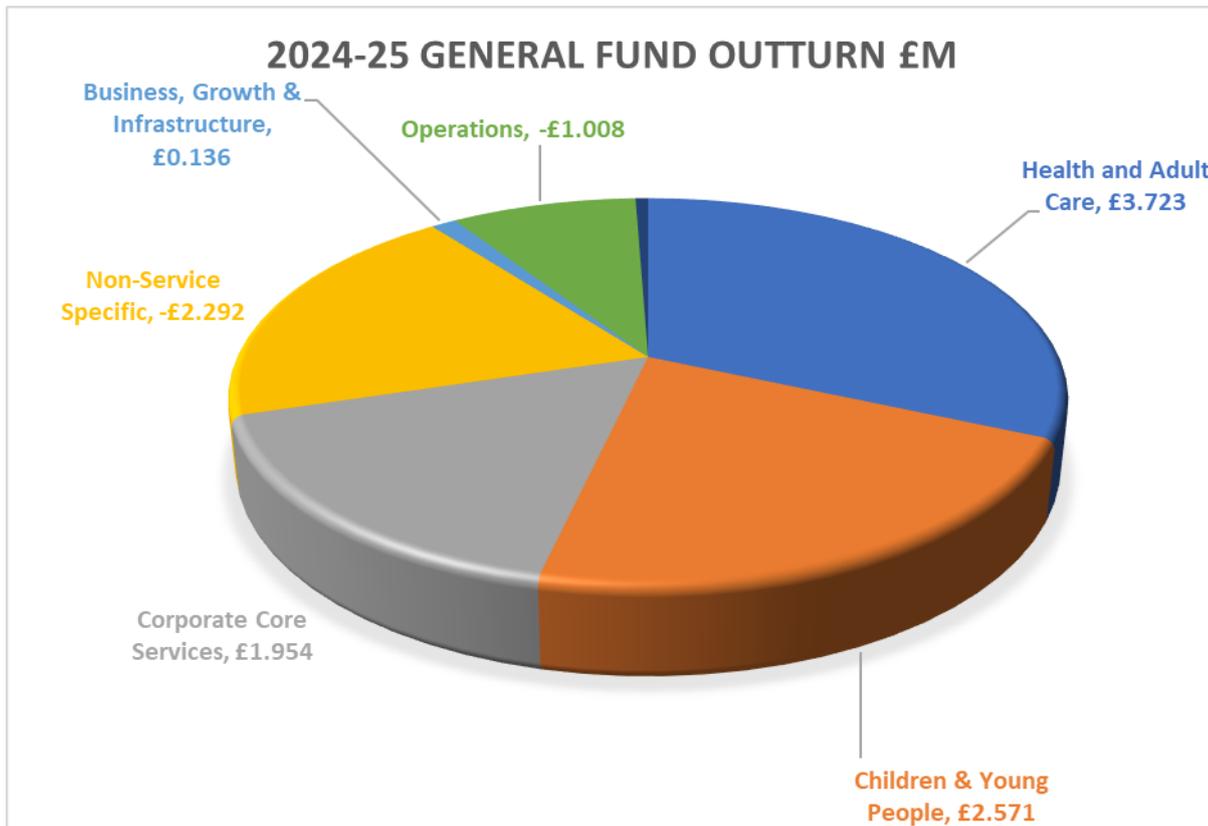
Financial Performance 2024/25

Revenue

The 2024/25 general fund revenue outturn position was an overspend of £4.365m (including the use of reserves) which represents a variance of 1.94% compared to the overall revenue budget of £224.480m. The final outturn is £1.705m higher than the forecast outturn position at quarter 3 which was reported to Cabinet in March and represents an additional call on reserves.

This Income and Expenditure is analysed by department below:

2024/25 Outturn	Revised Budget £m	Actual £m	Actual to Budget Variance £m
Health and Adult Care	£90.091	£93.814	£3.723
Children & Young People	£57.553	£60.124	£2.571
Corporate Core Services	£28.070	£30.024	£1.954
Non-Service Specific	£30.819	£28.527	(£2.292)
Business, Growth & Infrastructure	£0.580	£0.716	£0.136
Operations	£17.446	£16.438	(£1.008)
Housing General Fund	(£0.079)	(£0.011)	£0.068
DIRECTORATE TOTAL	£224.480	£229.632	£5.152
FUNDING:	(£211.331)	(£212.118)	(£0.787)
Use of Reserves	(£13.149)	(£13.149)	£0.000
BUDGET POSITION	(£0.000)	£4.365	£4.365



Savings

The Council recognises the need for savings plans to be delivered. Project management capacity has increased and a programme that supports and monitors the delivery and deliverability of savings is in place for 2024/25 supported by the Executive Delivery Board. There have been 93.88% delivery of savings plans in 2024/25 (£5.957m achieved compared to £6.345m planned).

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Approved on the 6 November 2020 but coming into effect from the 29 November 2020 parliament agreed to establishing new accounting practices in relation to the treatment of local authorities' schools budget deficits. Where the Council has a deficit on its schools budget it must not charge the amount of that deficit to a revenue account. The Council must record any such deficit in a separate account established solely for the purpose of recording deficits relating to its school's budget. The new accounting practice has the effect of separating schools budget deficits from the Councils' general fund for a period of three financial years. This issue can only be fully resolved by closing the deficits.

At the end of 2024/25 the Council held a net deficit balance of £19.041m on its DSG account, an increase of £0.582m from £18.459m at the end of 2023/24. The overall outturn was an increase in the deficit position as a result of increased demand for supporting pupils with high needs. A number of workstreams have been, and continue to be developed, which will reduce the DSG deficit position in future years. The focus of this activity is around the High Needs Block and the demands against this funding stream. The Council is working with Department for Education colleagues on these workstreams and the Council's position over the short to medium term.

Reserves

There was £13.149m budgeted use of reserves and £4.365m of reserves to balance the 2024/25 outturn.

Earmarked reserves have however been used throughout the year to deliver key priorities and deliver outcomes where specific funding had been received and was being held in reserves.

The accounts show that the Council has £56.290m (£83.161m at 31 March 2024) in general fund earmarked reserves at 31 March 2025 and £10.000m (£10.000m at 31st March 2024) in General Reserves at 31 March 2025.

The Council is faced with an uncertain financial climate over the medium to long-term which presents a high risk to the authority and there remains potential for further, yet unrecognised, risks. For this reason, a prudent approach to the level of reserves held by the Council remains a sensible and necessary approach that underpins the financial resilience of the organisation.

Usable Reserves	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
General Fund	(£10,000)	(£10,000)
Earmarked General Fund Reserve *	(£83,161)	(£56,290)
Housing Revenue Account	(£10,510)	(£16,746)
Major Repairs Reserve	£0	(£13)
Capital Receipts Unapplied	(£18,474)	(£16,532)
Capital Grants Unapplied	(£28,098)	(£28,935)
Balance at 31 March	(£150,243)	(£128,516)

Pension liabilities/(Asset)

The Council has reported a nil pension liability/(asset) as at 31 March 2025 due to the effect of the asset ceiling, more detail on the asset ceiling calculation is provided in Note 38, (asset of nil as at 31 March 2024). Pension assets & liabilities are based on the requirements of IAS 19, Employee Benefits, and calculations are carried out using a prescribed method. The liability/(asset) is not an immediate deficit/surplus that has to be met now. The sum is the current assessment taking a long-term view of the future liabilities for existing pensioners and current employees who are accruing pension entitlement and of future expected investment performance.

Capital

In 2024/25, the amount expended on capital related activities, was £59.814m (£52.994m, 23/24). A capital finance requirement of contracts entered to commence in 2024/25 not including slippage from prior years and other minor contracts is estimated to be £19.360m (£23.419m, 23/24). These commitments are part of its LET'S DO IT! Priorities, - Achieving Inclusive Economic Growth", and does not include the amount for housing development.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE by THEME	£m
Children and Young People	3.434
Climate Change / Environment	0.076
Older People and Disabled Facilities Grants	0.057
Estate Management	1.457
Highways and Infrastructure	9.811
Housing	18.225
ICT and Digital	1.523
Operational Fleet	0.367
Regeneration and economic Growth	21.018
Sport and Leisure	3.847
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	59.814

CAPITAL FINANCING	£m
Prudential Borrowing	11.124
External Funding	32.716
Capital Receipts	7.740
General Fund RCCO	0.833
Housing Revenue Account DRF/MRR	7.401
TOTAL CAPITAL FINANCING	59.814

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Under legislation, income and expenditure on Council Housing is ringfenced within the HRA. This means the Council is not able to make contributions to or from its General Fund from or to the HRA.

After taking into account adjustments between the accounting basis and the funding basis under legislation and transfers to and from earmarked reserves there is an increase of £6.236m on the HRA Balance as at 31 March 2025 bringing it to £16.746m.

Collection Fund

The council is required by legislation to maintain a separate Collection Fund Account for the administration of Council Tax and Business Rates income. All income collected from local taxpayers is paid into this account and then distributed to the Council's General Fund, and to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) for the GMCA Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner precept and the GMCA Mayoral General precept (including fire services).

The 2024/25 movement on the Collection Fund is a surplus of £6.150m, from an overall deficit of £5.466m to an overall surplus of £684k.

The Council's and the Precepting Authorities share of the surplus is shown in the table below:

The Collection Fund	Council Tax £000s	Business Rates £000s	Total £000s
Opening Collection Fund Balance (Surplus)/Deficit for the year	(£630) (£287)	£6,096 (£5,863)	£5,466 (£6,150)
Closing Cumulative (surplus)/Deficit carried forward	(£917)	£233	(£684)
<u>Allocated to:</u>			
Bury Council	(£770)	£231	(£539)
GMCA Mayoral General	(£102)		(£102)
GMCA Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner	(£45)	£2	(£43)
Total Allocation	(£917)	£233	(£684)

Greater Manchester 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot

On 1 April 2017, the GMCA, Bury Council and the nine other GM districts commenced a pilot scheme for the 100% local retention of Business Rates. The participants agreed to pilot full Business Rates Retention on the basis that no district would be worse off than they would have been under the original '50/50' arrangements whereby Business Rates revenues are shared between Central Government and the Local Authority sector. This has become known as the 'no detriment' principle. Under the pilot scheme, additional rates income is offset by reductions in other funding streams such as the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and Public Health Grant.

The Council continued with the 100% increased Business Rates Retention arrangements in 2024/25. Business rates income is a complex and volatile tax, changes in rateable values and increases in appeals by businesses are difficult to predict and can have a significant impact on the actual benefit realised at the end of the financial year.

From the Government's perspective, the primary purpose of the increased Business Rates Retention arrangements was to develop and trial approaches to manage risk and reward in a Local Government finance system that included the full devolution of Business Rates revenues. Government plans subsequently changed with a 75% Business Rates Retention Scheme expected to be introduced.

There have been delays to the expected reform of Local Government Funding, including the Business Rates Retention scheme (including the adoption of a national 75% rates retention scheme) however, it has been confirmed, that the Greater Manchester 100% increased Business Rates Retention arrangements will continue in 2025/26.

Treasury Management

We undertake treasury management activities to ensure the separation of the core treasury function under security, liquidity, and yield principles, that ensure we retain sufficient liquid funds to provide for day to-day cash flow requirements whilst funding our capital spend at the lowest cost. These activities are managed within an overall framework determined by the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies that were agreed by Full Council in February 2024 and are approved annually. Interest income and expenditure as a result of investments or borrowing are reflected in our revenue budgets.

Included in our investment income is the Council's interest in Manchester Airport Group. The airport's activity had been significantly impacted by Covid but during 2024/25 both interest and dividend receipts were received.

Risks

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 require the Council to maintain a robust, adequate, and effective system of risk management in its delivery of core services. Operation of an effective and embedded risk management framework is an important element of such a system so that the Council effectively discharges its corporate governance responsibilities.

As part of Bury Council's Code of Corporate Governance, risk management underpins its system of internal control.

The Executive Team is responsible for identifying potential strategic risk (internal and external of significant impact to the body), monitoring the Corporate Risk and maintaining a Register, ensuring that the management of risk continues to be within the Council's risk appetite.

Audit Committee is responsible for considering the effectiveness of the council's corporate risk management arrangements and constantly challenging its adequacy.

As at the end of the 2024/25 financial year, there were 23 corporate identified strategic risk in the register.

Outlook

MTFS

At the time when the 2024/25 budget was set, there remained a budget gap for 2024/25 of £15.131m and a cumulative budget gap over the three years of £30.085m. The additional funding announced in the Local Government Financial Settlement and the increase in Council Tax and Business Rates has helped to bridge part of the gap in our budget.

Savings proposal of £5.368m had been included within the budget for 2024/25. The savings were approved by members as part of setting the 2023/24 budget in February 2023. The Director of Finance chaired the Executive Delivery Board to agree a strategy to deliver savings to close the gap and to oversee the delivery of the budgeted savings.

The budget proposals include a new policy proposal which is to transfer a dividend from the BMBC Townside Fields Limited for £2.080m which is a one-off of £1.9m and a recurring of £0.180m which is income generated through rental.

As part of the budget, reserves had been reviewed. The use of reserves has been modelled over a three-year period to assess the worst-case scenario should savings not materialise to close the £30.085 budget gap. There are sufficient reserves to manage the budget gap however a strategy to close the gap over the three-year period needs to be developed to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council.

Finance Settlement

The uncertainty surrounding the publication of the future of Local Government Finance Settlement which makes, longer term future planning difficult. The MTFS only includes assumptions on the future based on annual government announcements to date. The MTFS will continue to be updated as the government release information on their funding plans. It is important that Bury spends within this approved budget, especially with pressures on current resources.

Other significant risks that impact on the delivery of a balanced budget over the medium term, includes:

- Financial Sustainability
- Increasing Demand Pressures
- Digital Transformation
- Climate change
- Workforce Skills & Capability
- Children's Social Care Services and OFSTED inspection
- Adult Social Care Reforms and CQC inspection
- Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The risks are monitored and reported:

- Included in the Corporate Risk Register.
- Regularly reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Reviewed through quarterly monitoring and updates to the Audit Committee.

Financial Statements

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as amended, set out the statutory deadlines for an authority to publish both the 2024/25 unaudited Statement of Accounts by 30 June 2025 and 2024/25 audited Statement of Accounts by 27 February 2026.

The Statement of Accounts provide an overview of the Council's financial position for 2024/25. The 2024/25 set of accounts conform to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 (the Code), which is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

Explanatory Statements

Statement of Responsibilities - explains the responsibilities of the Council and its Chief Financial Officer in relation to the Council's financial affairs and the Statement of Accounts.

Core Statements

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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 (or rents). Authorities raise taxation (and rents) to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the expenditure and funding analysis and the movement in reserves statement.

Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The statement 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 (or rents) for the year. The net increase/decrease line shows the statutory general fund balance and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

Balance Sheet shows the value as at the balance sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority. The net assets of the authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the authority.

Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the authority during the reporting period. The statement shows how the authority 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 authority are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services

provided by the authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the authority.

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

All the notes to the core statements above are collected in one place. Later in this document there is an explanation of the policies used in the preparation of the figures in these accounts, especially changes made during the year.

Other Statements

The Collection Fund and notes reflects the Council's statutory obligation to maintain a separate Collection Fund for its transactions as a billing authority in relation to Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.

Housing Revenue Account and notes shows the in-year economic cost of providing housing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

Group Accounts

In accordance with the Code the following have been consolidated in the Council's Group Accounts:

The Council relationship with three organisations over which it has substantial control and influence that have been identified as Subsidiaries of Bury Council, of:

- Six Town Housing Ltd
- Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd
- Persona Care and Support Ltd and Persona Group Ltd

The two joint arrangements formed during 2022/23, whereby the Council has agreed to share joint control and has rights to the net assets of the arrangement, have been classed as a Joint Venture, of:

- Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP
- The Prestwich Regeneration LLP

Further details on the Group entities and the Group Accounts can be found in the Group Accounts section of the Council's statement of Accounts.

Glossary

At the end of the statement there is a glossary which explains some of the technical terms used in these accounts.

Further information

As a result of complying with regulation these accounts can be complex to read. However, I hope you find them informative in helping you understand how the Council manages its finances and its service delivery. If you have any questions or comments please e-mail closedown@bury.gov.uk or write to the Director of Finance, Bury Metropolitan Council, Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0SW.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required:

- To make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In Bury that Officer is the Section 151 Officer.
- To manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient, and effective use of its resources and safeguard its assets.
- To approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Responsibilities of Audit Committee

Audit Committee is required:

- To monitor the integrity of the financial statements of the Council and to review significant financial reporting judgements contained in them;
- To review the Council's internal financial controls including its risk management systems;
- To monitor and review the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit function;
- To review and monitor the external auditor's independence and objectivity and the effectiveness of the audit process;
- To consider significant accounting policies, any changes to them, and any significant estimates and judgements;
- To review the clarity and completeness of disclosures in the financial statements and consider whether the disclosures made are set properly in context; and
- To approve the audited Statement of Accounts.

The Responsibilities of the Section 151 Officer

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts which, in terms of CIPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in Great Britain, is required to present **a true and fair view** of the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the Authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2025.

In preparing the Statement of Accounts the Section 151 Officer has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- Made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent; and
- Complied with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The Section 151 Officer has also:

- Kept proper accounting records which are up to date;
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities;
- Signed the letter of representation with the External Auditor;
- Signed and dated the draft Statement of Accounts, confirming satisfaction that it presents a true and fair view of the authority's financial position at the balance sheet date, the authority's income and expenditure for the year;
- Commenced the period for the exercise of public rights with regards to the inspection of the statement of accounts;
- Notified the External Auditor of the date on which that period began;
- Assessed the Authority's [and the Group's] ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern;
- Used the going concern basis of accounting on the assumption that the functions of the Authority [and the Group] will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future;
- Maintained such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- Reconfirmed satisfaction that the accounts present a true and fair view of the financial position at the balance sheet date and the income and expenditure for the year, upon conclusion of the public inspection period and immediately prior to approval of the audited accounts by Audit Committee.

Independent Auditors Report

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Core Financial Statements and Explanatory Notes

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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 [or rents]. Authorities raise taxation [and rents] to cover expenditure in accordance with statutory requirements; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the expenditure and funding analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Restated 2023/24			Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		2024/25		
Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Description	Note	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
£125,423	(£36,457)	£88,966	Health & Adult Care		£156,440	(£53,136)	£103,304
£221,268	(£160,671)	£60,597	Children & Young People		£223,833	(£148,777)	£75,056
£30,320	(£10,396)	£19,924	Corporate Core Services		£26,258	(£10,923)	£15,335
£6,353	(£6,198)	£155	Non-Service Specific		£10,278	(£7,538)	£2,740
£8,335	(£6,230)	£2,105	Business, Growth & Infrastructure		£9,592	(£4,828)	£4,764
£44,905	(£18,780)	£26,125	Operations		£43,112	(£18,995)	£24,117
£33,849	(£33,187)	£662	Housing General Fund		£33,615	(£33,617)	(£2)
£27,023	(£34,979)	(£7,957)	Housing Revenue Account		£29,059	(£39,344)	(£10,285)
£497,476	(£306,898)	£190,578	Cost of Services		£532,187	(£317,158)	£215,029
£48,054	£0	£48,054	Other Operating Expenditure	10	£63,450	£0	£63,450
£5,694	(£5,925)	(£231)	Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure	11	£2,657	(£6,443)	(£3,786)
£0	(£229,966)	(£229,966)	Taxation & Non-Specific Grant Income & Expenditure	12	£0	(£246,474)	(£246,474)
£551,223	(£542,788)	£8,435	(Surplus) or Deficit On Provision of Services		£598,295	(£570,074)	£28,220
		(£8,673)	(Surplus)/Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment				(£94,964)
		£0	Impairment Losses on Non-Current Assets Charged to the Revaluation Reserve				£0
		(£26,300)	(Surplus)/Deficit from Investments in Equity Instruments Designated at Fair Value through Comprehensive Income				£2,880
		(£62,471)	Actuarial (gains)/losses on the Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset)				(£122,382)
		£154,723	Asset Ceiling Adjustment				£129,714
		£57,279	Total Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				(£84,752)
		£65,714	Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				(£56,532)

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement from the start of the year to the end on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'. The Movement in Reserves Statement 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 [or rents] for the year. The net increase/decrease line shows the statutory General Fund balance and Housing Revenue Account balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

Movement in Reserves Statement 2024/25	Usable Reserves							Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Total General Fund Balance	Housing Revenue Account	Usable Capital Receipts	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied			
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April Brought Forward	(£10,000)	(£83,161)	(£93,161)	(£10,510)	(£18,474)	£0	(£28,098)	(£150,243)	(£390,337)	(£540,580)
<i>Movement in Reserves During 2023/24:</i>										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	£38,390	£0	£38,390	(£10,170)	£0	£0	£0	£28,220	(£84,752)	(£56,532)
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations	(£11,635)	£0	(£11,635)	£3,933	£1,941	(£13)	(£722)	(£6,494)	£6,494	£0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	£26,755	£0	£26,755	(£6,236)	£1,941	(£13)	(£722)	£21,726	(£78,258)	(£56,532)
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	(£26,755)	£26,870	£115	£0	£0	£0	(£115)	£0	£0	£0
(Increase)/Decrease in Year	£0	£26,870	£26,870	(£6,236)	£1,941	(£13)	(£837)	£21,726	(£78,258)	(£56,532)
Balance at 31 March Carried Forward	(£10,000)	(£56,291)	(£66,291)	(£16,746)	(£16,532)	(£13)	(£28,935)	(£128,517)	(£468,594)	(£597,111)

The following table is provided for comparative purposes:

Restated Movement in Reserves Statement 2023/24	Usable Reserves								Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	General Fund Balance	Earmarked General Fund Reserves	Total General Fund Balance	Housing Revenue Account	Usable Capital Receipts	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves		
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April Brought Forward	(£22,701)	(£91,809)	(£114,510)	(£9,176)	(£10,890)	£0	(£20,268)	(£154,843)	(£457,221)	(£612,063)
<i>Movement in Reserves During 2022/23:</i>										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	£14,734	£0	£14,734	(£6,987)	£0	£0	£0	£7,747	£57,279	£65,026
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations	£74	£0	£74	£5,653	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,749)	(£9,605)	£9,605	£0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	£14,809	£0	£14,809	(£1,334)	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,749)	(£1,858)	£66,884	£65,026
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	(£2,108)	£2,190	£82	£0	£0	£0	(£82)	£0	£0	£0
(Increase)/Decrease in Year	£12,701	£2,190	£14,891	(£1,334)	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,831)	(£1,858)	£66,884	£65,026
Balance at 31 March Carried Forward	(£10,000)	(£89,619)	(£99,619)	(£10,510)	(£18,474)	£0	(£28,098)	(£156,701)	(£390,337)	(£547,038)

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority. The net assets of the authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the authority. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the authority may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the capital receipts reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the authority 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'.

Restated 31 March 2024 £000s	Balance Sheet Description	2021 Note	31 March 2025 £000s
£639,040	Property, Plant & Equipment	13	£730,433
£26,353	Heritage Assets	15	£26,353
£18,036	Investment Property	16	£19,226
£5,204	Intangible Assets	17	£3,378
£50,700	Long-Term Investments	19	£47,820
£69,103	Long-Term Debtors	21	£69,231
£0	Pension Asset	38	£0
£808,436	LONG TERM ASSETS		£896,440
£8,031	Short-Term Investments	19	£20,700
£1,088	Assets Held For Sale	18	£4,953
£1,749	Stocks & Work in Progress		£2,081
£65,114	Short-Term Debtors	21	£65,970
£533	Cash and Cash Equivalents	22	£1,288
£76,515	CURRENT ASSETS		£94,991
(£42,185)	Short-Term Borrowing	19	(£24,868)
(£43,475)	Short-Term Creditors	23	(£46,493)
(£550)	Short-Term Provisions	24	(£2,830)
(£965)	Revenue Grants in Advance	33	(£3,304)
(£87,176)	CURRENT LIABILITIES		(£77,495)
(£4)	Long-Term Creditors		(£10,349)
(£9,582)	Long-Term Provisions	24	(£8,616)
(£223,005)	Long-Term Borrowing	19	(£270,401)
(£12)	Deferred Liabilities		(£12)
£0	Pension Liability	38	£0
(£24,591)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	33	(£27,447)
(£257,194)	LONG TERM LIABILITIES		(£316,826)
£540,580	NET ASSETS		£597,111
(£150,243)	Usable Reserves	09	(£128,517)
(£390,337)	Unusable Reserves	26	(£468,594)
(£540,579)	TOTAL RESERVES		(£597,111)

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the authority during the reporting period. The statement shows how the authority 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 authority are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources that are intended to contribute to the authority'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 authority.

Cash Flow Statement	Note	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services		£7,747	£29,399
Adjustment to Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements		(£48,793)	(£65,621)
Adjust for Items Included in the Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities		£40,461	£39,314
Net Cash flows from Operating Activities	27	(£585)	£3,092
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	27	£12,756	£39,768
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	27	(£18,461)	(£43,614)
Net Increase or (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		(£6,290)	(£755)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		£5,757	(£533)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	22	(£533)	(£1,287)

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The expenditure and funding analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by local authorities in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the council's [directorates/services/departments]. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices are presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis	2024/25							
	Outturn as Reported to Cabinet	Adjustments to Management Reporting (EFA Note 1)	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (EFA Note 2)	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments (EFA Note 3)	Other Statutory Differences (EFA Note 4)	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Health & Adult Care	£93,814	£9,528	£103,342	£180	(£218)	£0	(£38)	£103,304
Children & Young People	£60,124	£6,495	£66,620	£7,226	£1,047	£164	£8,437	£75,056
Corporate Core Services	£30,024	(£17,476)	£12,548	£2,278	(£266)	£775	£2,787	£15,335
Non-Service Specific	£28,556	(£28,201)	£355	£2,385	£0	£0	£2,385	£2,740
Business, Growth & Infrastructure	£716	£1,210	£1,926	£2,888	(£49)	£0	£2,839	£4,765
Operations	£16,438	(£559)	£15,879	£8,531	(£293)	£0	£8,238	£24,117
Housing General Fund	(£11)	£9	(£2)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£2)
Housing Revenue Account	£0	(£10,361)	(£10,361)	£156	(£83)	£4	£77	(£10,285)
Net Cost of Services	£229,660	(£39,356)	£190,305	£23,644	£138	£944	£24,726	£215,031
Other Income and Expenditure	(£225,267)	£55,482	(£169,785)	(£3,507)	(£7,470)	(£6,047)	(£17,024)	(£186,810)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	£4,393	£16,126	£20,519	£20,137	(£7,332)	(£5,103)	£7,702	£28,221

Opening General Fund and HRA Balance 1 April 2024 *

(£103,671)

Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit on General Fund Balance In-Year

£20,519

Reserve Transfers

£115

Closing General Fund and HRA Balance 31 March 2025 *

(£83,036)

* For a further split of this balance – see the Movement in Reserves Statement

Expenditure and Funding Analysis	Restated 2023/24							
	Outturn as Reported to Cabinet	Adjustments to Management Reporting (EFA Note 1)	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA	Adjustments for Capital Purposes (EFA Note 2)	Net Change for Pensions Adjustments (EFA Note 3)	Other Statutory Differences (EFA Note 4)	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Health & Adult Care	£84,475	£4,362	£88,837	£169	(£40)	£0	£129	£88,966
Children & Young People	£50,754	£4,297	£55,051	£6,208	(£465)	(£197)	£5,546	£60,597
Corporate Core Services	£26,263	(£7,452)	£18,811	£1,502	(£47)	(£342)	£1,113	£19,924
Non-Service Specific	£23,559	(£23,289)	£271	(£115)	£0	£0	(£115)	£155
Business, Growth & Infrastructure	£817	£1,252	£2,069	£49	(£13)	£0	£36	£2,105
Operations	£16,487	£2,607	£19,093	£7,089	(£57)	£0	£7,032	£26,125
Housing General Fund	(£704)	£1,367	£662	£0	£0	£0	£0	£662
Housing Revenue Account	£0	(£5,249)	(£5,249)	(£2,704)	(£3)	£0	(£2,708)	(£7,957)
Net Cost of Services	£201,651	(£22,106)	£179,545	£12,198	(£625)	(£539)	£11,033	£190,578
Other Income and Expenditure	(£190,274)	£24,891	(£165,383)	(£10,291)	(£4,246)	(£2,224)	(£16,760)	(£182,143)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	£11,377	£2,785	£14,162	£1,907	(£4,871)	(£2,763)	(£5,727)	£8,435

Opening General Fund and HRA Balance 1 April 2023 *	(£117,915)
Less/Plus (Surplus) or Deficit on General Fund Balance In-Year	£14,162
Reserve Transfers	£82
Closing General Fund and HRA Balance 31 March 2024 *	(£103,671)

* For a further split of this balance – see the Movement in Reserves Statement

Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis:

a) Adjustments to Management Reporting

This column adjusts the outturn figures reported to management for items chargeable to the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) column, for:

Net Cost of Services – the insertion of both the Housing Revenue Account and Schools, income, and expenditure.

Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure – the reallocation of Investment Properties and Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure to/from the Net Cost of Services to Other Operating Income and Expenditure.

Reserves – the removal of transfers to/from reserves included in the management outturn report as these are not shown on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

b) Adjustments for Capital Purposes

This column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the net cost of service, for:

Other Operating Expenditure – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.

Finance and Investment Income and Expenditure – the statutory charges for capital financing, i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions, are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.

Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable during the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied within the year.

c) Net Change for the Pension Adjustments

This column removes employer pension contributions and adds IAS19 Employee Benefits related expenditure and income, as follows:

For the Net Cost of Services – this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the Council as allowed by statute and their replacement with current service costs and past service costs.

For Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES).

d) Other Statutory Adjustments

This column shows the differences between amounts debited/credited to the CIES and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute are set out below:

For Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure – the other statutory adjustments column recognises adjustments to the General Fund of the timing differences for premiums and discounts.

For Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income – represents the difference between what is chargeable under statute for Council Tax and Business Rates to that which was estimated to be received at the start of the year, and the income recognised under general accepted accounting practices. This is a timing difference as any difference is brought forward in the surpluses or deficits on the Collection Fund.

For Dedicated School Grant – represents accumulated deficits relating to schools' budget.

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01. Accounting Policies for the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts

General Principals

Basis of preparation

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2024/25 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2025. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices under Section 21 of the 2003 Act primarily comprise the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Council Accounting in the United Kingdom 2024/25 (the Code) supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

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

Events after the Balance Sheet Date

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

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

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

Group Accounts

The Council has material interests in companies and other entities that have the nature of subsidiaries and joint ventures and require it to prepare group accounts. In the Council own single-entity accounts, the interests in companies and other entities are recorded as financial assets at cost, less any provision for losses.

The Council has material interest in external entities that are classified as subsidiaries and which are consolidated into the Council's group accounts on a line-by-line basis, after eliminating intra group transactions.

The Council has material interests in Joint Venture arrangements, IFRS 11 requires that a joint venturer shall recognise its interest in a joint venture by using the equity method.

The equity method for accounting for joint ventures requires an investor to bring an investment into its Group Balance Sheet at cost (identifying any goodwill arising) and then to adjust the carrying value by the change in the investor's share of the joint venture's net assets. The investor calculates its share of the joint venture's operating results for the year and includes this amount in the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement immediately after its group operating result. The share is the aggregate of the holdings in the joint venture by the authority (and its subsidiaries).

An entity could be material but still not consolidated if all its business is with the Council and eliminated on consolidation – i.e. the consolidation would mean that the group accounts are not materially different to the single entity accounts.

The Council is the host partner of the pooled funds in respect of Health and Social care and the Better Care Fund. The arrangements are made in accordance with section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 and allows budgets to be pooled between authorities and health and social care organisations.

The arrangements are accounted for as joint operations and, therefore, the Council accounts for its share of the funds' assets, liabilities, expenditure, and income.

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

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

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

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

Accounting Policies for Income and Expenditure

Accruals of Income and Expenditure

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

- 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.

Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are charged an accounting estimate of the cost of holding non-current assets during the year. This comprises:

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

The Council is not allowed to raise Council Tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement [equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance, as approved Minimum Revenue Provision policy].

Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses, and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund balance [MRP or the statutory repayment of loans fund advances]. By way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates Income

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

Accounting for council tax and NDR

The council tax and NDR income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) is the authority's share of accrued income for the year. However, regulations determine the amount of council tax and NDR that must be included in the authority's General Fund. Therefore, the difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the collection fund adjustment account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Balance Sheet includes the authority's share of the end of year balances in respect of council tax and NDR relating to arrears, impairment allowances for doubtful debts, overpayments and prepayments and appeals.

Employee BenefitsBenefits Payable During Employment

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

Employee Accumulated Absence Accrual

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

Termination Benefits

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

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

Post-Employment Benefits

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

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

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

However, the arrangements for the teachers' and NHS schemes means that liability for these benefits cannot be identified specifically to the Council. These schemes are therefore accounted for as if they are a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

The Greater Manchester Local Government Pension Scheme

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

- The liabilities of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method; an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates and projections of future earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate (based on the indicative rate of return on a basket of high-quality corporate bonds, Government gilts and other factors).
- The assets of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price
 - unquoted securities – professional estimate
 - unitised securities – current bid price
 - property – market value

Reporting of Pensions Surpluses and IFRIC 14

The Limit on a Defined Benefit Asset, Minimum Funding Requirements, and their interaction in accordance with the prescriptions in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). This has risen due to number of authorities pension funds moving from a net defined benefit liability to a net defined benefit asset position in 2022/23, leading to consideration of an asset ceiling that would limit the authority's ability to recognise the asset.

When an authority has a surplus in a defined benefit plan, under the Code and IAS 19, it is required to measure the net defined benefit asset at the lower of:

- the surplus in the defined benefit plan, and
- the asset ceiling, determined using the discount rate specified in the Code. "The IAS 19 asset ceiling is a specified estimate of the present value of the economic benefit which the employer organisation can realise, either through refunds or by gaining economic benefit through reductions in future contributions. Such an economic benefit may be available even if it is not realisable immediately at the end of the reporting period."

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

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

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

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

Discretionary Benefits

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

Government Grants and Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

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

Business Improvement Districts (BID)

A BID scheme applies across the whole of the authority. The scheme is funded by a BID levy paid by non-domestic ratepayers. The authority acts as an agent under the scheme.

Overheads and Support Services

The costs of support services such as administration and management are charged to services in accordance with the Council's arrangements for accountability and performance.

Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date:

- that gives the Council a present (legal or constructive) obligation.
- that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and
- where a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If it is not clear whether an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date, it is deemed to give rise to a present obligation if, taking account of all available evidence, it is more likely than not that a present obligation exists at the Balance Sheet date. The present obligation can be legal or constructive.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Council becomes aware of the obligation and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties. When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet.

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

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

Contingent Liabilities

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

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

Contingent Assets

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

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

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute (REFCUS)

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

Where the Council has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of Council Tax.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Value Added Tax payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from HMRC. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

Accounting Policies for Assets and Liabilities**Cash and Cash Equivalents**

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

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

Financial Instruments**Financial Liabilities**

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

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

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

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

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics.

There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

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

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

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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

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

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

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

These assets relate to financial instruments where the amounts received relating to them are solely principal and interest, but they are held to collect cash and sell the assets. The interest received on these assets is spread evenly over the life of these instruments.

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

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

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

These assets relate to financial instruments where the amounts received relating to them are not principal and interest (e.g. equity investments). Dividends received are accounted for at the point they are received.

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

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

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

An equity instrument that has been classed as FVPL can be designated as FVOCI if it is not held for trading (e.g. a strategic investment). Once this designation has been made it cannot be reversed. This designation would mean that any gains and losses would be held in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

The Council measures some of its assets and liabilities at fair value at the end of the reporting period. Fair value is the amount that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

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

The Council uses both in house and external valuers to provide a valuation of its non-financial assets and liabilities, for recognition or disclosure as appropriate, in line with the highest and best use definition within IFRS 13 Fair Value Measurement.

The highest and best use of the asset or liability being valued is considered from the perspective of a market participant. Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of the Council's fair value measurement of its assets and liabilities are categorised within the fair value hierarchy as follows:

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

Heritage Assets

The Council's Heritage Assets are held by the Council principally for their contribution to knowledge and/or culture. These include Civic Regalia, Artefacts, and various gifts & bequests some of which are held in the Museum and Art Gallery. These are recognised and measured, including treatment of revaluation gains and losses, in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on Property Plant and Equipment.

The land and building assets identified to date include Radcliffe Tower, the Dungeon and Rodger Worthington's grave. As there is no available valuation for these assets they have been reported at nominal value as recommended by the Council's property valuer.

However, some of the measurement rules are relaxed allowing the Council's Heritage Assets to be included on the Balance Sheet at their insured value where available. Where insurance valuations are not available there is a narrative disclosure.

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

Investment Property

Investment properties are those assets 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. Investment properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

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

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Council as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Council can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Council meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment loss. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Infrastructure Assets

Highways infrastructure assets include carriageways, footways and cycle tracks, structures (e.g. bridges), street lighting, street furniture (e.g. illuminated traffic signals, bollards), traffic management systems and land which together form a single integrated network.

Recognition

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

Measurement

Highways infrastructure assets are generally measured at depreciated historical cost. However, this is a modified form of historical cost – opening balances for highways infrastructure assets were originally recorded in balance sheets at amounts of capital undischarged for sums borrowed as at 1 April 1994, which was deemed at that time to be historical cost.

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

Depreciation

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

Annual depreciation is the depreciation amount allocated each year.

Useful lives of the various parts of the highways network are assessed by the Chief Highways Engineer using industry standards where applicable as follows:

Part of Highways Network	Useful Life
Roads	25 Years
Bridges	80 Years
Street Furniture	30 Years
Street Lighting	40 Years
Footways & Cycle Tracks	25 Years

Disposals and derecognition

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

The written-off amounts of disposals are not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are transferred to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Inventories

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

Long-term Contracts

Long-term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the surplus or deficit on the provision of services with the consideration allocated to the performance obligations satisfied based on the goods or services transferred to the service recipient during the financial year.

Leases

The council adopted IFRS 16 Leases with effect from 1 April 2024. At the inception of a contract, the council assesses whether a contract contains a lease. A contract contains a lease if it conveys the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time.

The council considers:

- whether the asset is explicitly or implicitly identified in a contract whether the asset identified in the contract is physically distinct,
- the rights to obtain substantially all of the economic benefits and service potential from the asset,
- the right to direct use.

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Leases that are peppercorn or nominal lease payments are those leases for which consideration is paid but the lease payments are substantially below market lease payments. Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Council as Lessee

A Right-of-Use Asset

The Code expands the scope of IFRS 16 Leases to include arrangements with nil consideration, peppercorn or nominal payments, and removes the previous classifications of operating and finance leases for lessees. Initial Measurement Leases are recognised as right-of-use assets in the Balance Sheet/disclosure note with a corresponding liability at the date from the commencement date.

The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the amount of the initial measurement of the lease liability,
- any lease payments made at or before the commencement date less any incentives received,
- any initial direct costs incurred, and
- any dilapidation or restoration costs.

However, for peppercorn, nominal payments or nil consideration leases, the asset is measured at fair value at the commencement date. The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. The lease liability is measured at the present value of lease payments that are not paid at that date, discounted by the interest rate implicit in the lease, or if that cannot be determined the lessee's incremental borrowing rate specific to the term and start date of the lease.

Subsequent Measurement

The right-of-use asset is subsequently measured at fair value. The right-of-use asset is depreciated straight-line over the shorter period of remaining lease term and useful life of the underlying asset as at the date of adoption and is tested for impairment if there are indicators of impairment. The lease liability is subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest method. The lease liability, and corresponding adjustment to the right-of-use asset, is remeasured when:

- there is a change in future lease payments arising from a change in index or rate such as inflation,
- there is a change in the estimate of the amount expected to be payable under a residual value guarantee,
- the council changes its assessment of whether it will exercise a purchase, extension or termination option, or
- there is a change in the lease term.

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

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

The council has elected to apply recognition exemptions to low value assets (those below £20,000 when new) and to short term leases (leases that expire on or before 31 March 2026, and new leases with a duration of less than 12 months) in accordance with the Code.

The council is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. However, it is required to make an annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) to contribute towards the reduction in its capital financing requirement (equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the authority in accordance with statutory guidance). Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses are therefore replaced by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

Lease payments are apportioned between:

A charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability.

A finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES).

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

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

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the CIES as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased Property, Plant or Equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

Finance Leases

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

Lease rentals receivables are apportioned between:

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

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

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

Operating Leases

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

Property, Plant and Equipment

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

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant and Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred. The Council has a £15,000 de-minimis limit for the recognition of Capital Expenditure.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

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

Assets that are being constructed by the Council will initially be recognised at cost.

The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred in the cost of acquisition, construction, and completion of qualifying assets.

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

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

Category	Measurement Basis
Community Assets and Assets Under Construction	Depreciated historical cost
Dwellings	Current value, determined using the basis of existing use value for social housing (EUV-SH).
Surplus Assets	Fair value, determined by the measurement of the highest and best use value of the asset
All Other Operational Assets	Current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV).

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

Where non-property assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current value.

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

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

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

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

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

Impairment

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

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

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

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant, and equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain community assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

Category	Measurement Basis
Dwellings	Component Life
Other Buildings	Straight line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer.
Vehicles, Plant, Furniture, and Equipment	Straight-line allocation over the useful life of the asset as estimated by a suitably qualified officer.

Where an item of property, plant and equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

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

Component Accounting

Component accounting is applied only to housing stock in accordance with the analysis provided by the valuer.

Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

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

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

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

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

Reserves

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

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

Schools

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

The Council has the following types of maintained schools under its control:

- Community
- Voluntary Aided
- Voluntary Controlled

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

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

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

02. Accounting Standards Issued, Not Adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires the disclosure of information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard which has been issued but is yet to be adopted by the 2024/25 Code.

The Code also requires that changes in accounting policy are to be applied retrospectively unless transitional arrangements are specified, this would, therefore result in an impact on disclosures spanning two financial years.

The standards introduced by the 2025/26 Code where disclosures are required in the 2024/25 financial statements, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 3.3.4.3 of the Code, are:

- a) IAS 21 The Effects of Changes in Foreign Exchange Rate (Lack of Exchangeability) issued in August 2023. The amendments to IAS 21 clarify how an entity should assess whether a currency is exchangeable and how it should determine a spot exchange rate when exchangeability is lacking, as well as require the disclosure of information that enables users of financial statements to understand the impact of a currency not being exchangeable.
- b) IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts issued in May 2017. IFRS 17 replaces IFRS 4 and sets out principles for recognition, measurement, presentation and disclosure of insurance contracts.
- c) The changes to the measurement of non-investment assets within the 2025/26 Code include adaptations and interpretations of IAS 16 Property, Plant and Equipment and IAS 38 Intangible Assets. These include setting out three revaluation processes for operational property, plant and equipment, requiring indexation for tangible non-investment assets and a requirement to value intangible assets using the historical cost approach. These have the same effect as requiring a change in accounting policy due to an amendment to standards, which would normally be disclosed under IAS 8. However, the adaptations also include a relief from the requirements of IAS 8 following a change in accounting policy as confirmed in paragraph 3.3.1.4.

03. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the 2024/25 statement of accounts are:

Accounting for Schools – Balance Sheet Recognition of Schools

The Council recognises the land and buildings used by schools in line with the provisions of the Code of Practice. It states that property used by Local Council maintained schools should be recognised in accordance with the asset recognition tests relevant to the arrangements that prevail for the property.

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

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

In 2014/15 the Council completed a school-by-school assessment across the different types of schools it controls within the Borough. Letters of confirmation were received from the Diocese of Manchester, Salford Diocese, Manchester Mesivta * and Bury and Whitefield Jewish Primary School that state that the schools occupy the school premises subject to the direction of the Trustees who own the land on which the schools are sited.

All decisions relating to land and buildings rest with the Trustees and there has been no assignment of rights to the property. No formal documentation exists, the schools occupy the premises under a "mere" license which has passed no interest to the school's governing body, and which is terminable by the Trustees at any time. As such none of the schools are included on the Council's balance sheet.

(*The Department for Education (DfE) purchased the land occupied by Manchester Mesivta in January 2016 and the Trustees have a 125-year lease arrangement with the DfE. This does not affect the local authority accounts.)

All 14 community schools are owned by the Council and the land and buildings used by the schools are included on the Council's Balance Sheet. The Council recognises on its Balance Sheet the playing fields located within the boundaries of Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools that remain in the control of the Council.

Academies are not considered to be maintained schools in the Council's control. The existing schools' land and building assets are transferred to academies on conversion date on a long-term lease of 125 years. The nominal value shown on the Council's Balance Sheet at year end reflects this arrangement.

For local authority-maintained schools transferring to academy status an academy conversion accounting policy is in place that sets out the critical actions that must be completed for the school to transfer to an academy trust. This includes the treatment of transactions and balances of the schools being derecognised from the local authority single entity financial statements and the consideration of non-current assets.

Group Boundary

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

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

The Council has assessed its group boundary for 2024/25 and has Subsidiaries and Joint Ventures who are considered to be material and will be consolidated into its group accounts.

Basis of Consolidation

The Council relationship with three organisations over which it has substantial control and influence that have been identified as Subsidiaries of Bury Council., of:

- Six Town Housing Ltd
- Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd
- Persona Care and Support Ltd and Persona Group Ltd

Basis of consolidation, line-by-line consolidation

The two joint arrangements formed during 2022/23, whereby the Council has agreed to share joint control and has rights to the net assets of the arrangement, have been classed as a Joint Venture, of:

- Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP
- The Prestwich Regeneration LLP

Basis of consolidation, equity method

Investment Properties

Investment properties have been assessed using the identifiable criteria under the international accounting standards and are being held for rental income or for capital appreciation. Properties have been assessed using these criteria, which is subject to interpretation to determine if there is an operational reason for holding the property such as regeneration.

Airport Investment

The Council has a 3.22% shareholding in Manchester Airport Holdings Limited (MAHL). Following the adoption of accounting standard IFRS 9 Financial Instruments which came into effect 1 April 2018, the default valuation method of the Council's equity holdings would be Fair Value through Profit and Loss. However, the shareholding is a strategic investment and not held for trading and therefore the Council has designated the investment as fair value through other comprehensive income. It is the Council's view that this is a reasonable and reliable accounting policy for the investment.

The Council has made an equity investment in Manchester Airport Car Park (1) Limited, (along with the other nine Greater Manchester District Councils). The Council's investment is to provide car parking facilities at Manchester Airport. The Council holds 3 Class C ordinary shares. The shareholding will be classed as a financial instrument and held at fair value on the Council's Balance Sheet. Under IFRS 9 the shareholding (investment) will be designated as a strategic investment and not held for trading

therefore the Council has opted to designate it as fair value through Other Comprehensive Income. The decision to designate to fair value through Other Comprehensive Income is irrevocable and it is the Council view that this is a reasonable and reliable accounting policy for this investment.

Borrowing – Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) Loans

LOBO loans contain options which allow, on specific dates, the lender to alter the interest rate on the loan, and the Council then has an option to decide to either accept the new rate or repay the loan without penalty. These loans have a fixed rate of interest, but the options mean it could change over the life of the loan. This means that there cannot be any certainty as to whether the loans will be paid early, and therefore the Council has treated these loans as fixed loans which will run to their existing maturity. Therefore, we have taken the decision to disclose these as long-term liabilities.

Pensions Liability (Asset)

In calculating the net pensions asset, the Council has made a judgement that the statutory framework for setting employer's contributions under the Local Government Pension Scheme constitutes a minimum funding requirement. As a result, the Council's ability to realise the full economic benefits of the net pensions asset of £284.437m calculated under the Accounting Code's provisions for post-employment benefits through reductions in future employer's contributions is limited. An asset ceiling therefore applies.

The effect means that the asset ceiling has reduced what would otherwise be the net pensions asset of £284.437m to £0m.

The practical effect of this is to move the basis of measurement for the net pensions asset/liability closer to the assumptions made in the triennial valuation of the Scheme under which the employer's contributions were set by the Scheme's actuaries. It does not indicate that the Council has paid excess amounts into the Scheme that it will never be able to recover.

04. Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The statement of accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. The assumptions and other sources of estimation uncertainty disclosed below relate to the estimates that require the Council's most difficult, subjective, or complex judgements. As the number of variables and assumptions affecting the possible future resolution of the uncertainties increases, those judgements become more subjective and complex. As a result, balances cannot be determined with certainty and actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2025 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Property, Plant and Equipment – Depreciation

Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the authority will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.

Long-Term Assets – Manchester Airport Holdings Limited (MAHL)

The Authority's shareholding in the Manchester Airport Group is 3.22%. The asset is valued using the earnings-based method resulting in the asset being valued at fair value rather than historic cost, therefore requiring an annual valuation. The valuation includes reviewing the financial performance, stability, and business assumptions of the MAHL and is based on estimations and assumptions.

Pensions Liability (Asset)

Estimation of the pensions net liability (Asset) depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the authority with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

Provision for NNDR Appeals

Following the introduction of the Business Rate Retention Scheme in 2013/14 and the 100% GM Business Rates Pilot in 2017/18. The Council is responsible for a 99% share of the cost of successful appeals by businesses against their rateable value. A provision is recognised in the statement of accounts, that has been calculated using the latest Valuation Office (VAO) ratings list of ratings appeals and potential appeals against the analysis of successful appeals to date.

05. Material Items of Income and Expense

The Code requires individual items of income or expenditure that exceed materiality and have not been individually recorded on the face of the financial statements or in one of the other notes to the accounts to be disclosed in this note.

For the purposes of this note, the materiality is set at £5m.

There were no individual items above £5m which have not been individually disclosed.

06. Events After the Reporting Period

The statement of accounts was authorised for issue by the Director of Finance on 14 October 2025. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2025, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

There are no adjusting events after the Balance Sheet date, in relation to the 2024/25 Statement of Accounts.

07. Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

2024/25													
	Health & Adult Care	Children & Young People	Corporate Core Services	Non-Service Specific	Business, Growth & Infrastructure	Operations	Housing General Fund	Other Income and Expenditure	Outturn as Reported to Cabinet	Adjustments to Management Reporting (EFA Note 1)	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Fees & Charges	(£19,357)	(£1,411)	(£3,112)	(£3,126)	(£4,251)	(£15,481)	£0	£0	(£46,738)	(£40,021)	(£86,758)	£0	(£86,758)
Other Service Income	(£31,787)	(£622)	(£4,942)	(£2,244)	(£1,111)	(£3,366)	£0	£0	(£44,072)	(£6,919)	(£50,991)	£0	(£50,991)
Financing and Investment Income	£0	£0	£0	(£5,352)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£5,352)	(£1,091)	(£6,443)	£0	(£6,443)
Government Grants and Contributions	(£1,993)	(£4,003)	(£2,857)	(£2,168)	(£119)	(£84)	(£33,617)	(£55,492)	(£100,332)	(£135,151)	(£235,483)	(£33,380)	(£268,863)
Income from Council Tax	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£110,931)	(£110,931)	£0	(£110,931)	(£241)	(£111,172)
Income from Business Rates	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£40,044)	(£40,044)	£0	(£40,044)	(£5,804)	(£45,848)
Total Income	(£53,136)	(£6,036)	(£10,911)	(£12,890)	(£5,481)	(£18,931)	(£33,617)	(£206,467)	(£347,469)	(£183,181)	(£530,650)	(£39,425)	(£570,075)
Employee Benefits Expenses	£20,871	£25,621	£28,780	£69	£3,405	£24,434	£0	£0	£103,181	£74,674	£177,854	£500	£178,354
Other Service Expenses	£127,233	£41,243	£12,772	£6,661	£2,870	£10,555	£33,606	£0	£234,939	£87,746	£322,685	£0	£322,685
Support Service Charges	£0	£91	(£249)	£0	£100	(£184)	£0	£0	(£242)	£4	(£238)	£0	(£238)
Depreciation, Amortisation, Revaluations and Impairment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£26,957	£26,957
Capital Expenditure Financed from Revenue Balances	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£329	£329	(£329)	£0
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute & Deminimis	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,431	£4,431
Financing and Investment Expenses	£0	£0	£1	£8,979	£0	£0	£0	£0	£8,979	£6,182	£15,161	(£12,504)	£2,657
Precepts and Levies	£0	£0	£0	£27,414	£0	£550	£0	£0	£27,963	£0	£27,963	£0	£27,963
Payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pool	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£55	£55
(Gain) or Loss on Disposal of Non-Current Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£35,431	£35,431
Posting of HRA Resources from Revenue to the MRR	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,414	£7,414	(£7,414)	£0
Total Expenditure	£148,105	£66,954	£41,303	£43,122	£6,375	£35,355	£33,606	£0	£374,821	£176,348	£551,169	£47,126	£598,295
Contributions to/(from) Reserves	(£1,154)	(£794)	(£368)	(£1,676)	(£179)	£14	£0	(£18,800)	(£22,958)	£22,958	£0	£0	£0
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	£93,814	£60,124	£30,024	£28,556	£716	£16,438	(£11)	(£225,267)	£4,393	£16,125	£20,518	£7,702	£28,220

Restated 2023/24

	Health & Adult Care	Children & Young People	Corporate Core Services	Non-Service Specific	Business, Growth & Infrastructure	Operations	Housing General Fund	Other Income and Expenditure	Outturn as Reported to Cabinet	Adjustments to Management Reporting (EFA Note 1)	Net Expenditure Chargeable to the GF and HRA	Adjustments Between Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Fees & Charges	(£14,718)	(£1,353)	(£3,575)	(£2,894)	(£5,287)	(£15,776)	£0	£0	(£43,603)	(£37,646)	(£81,249)	£0	(£81,249)
Other Service Income	(£20,448)	(£1,404)	(£4,289)	(£109)	(£1,497)	(£3,240)	£0	£0	(£30,986)	(£7,945)	(£38,931)	£0	(£38,931)
Financing and Investment Income	£0	£0	£0	(£4,738)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£4,738)	(£1,187)	(£5,925)	£0	(£5,925)
Government Grants and Contributions	(£1,291)	(£3,574)	(£2,617)	(£3,195)	(£27)	(£384)	(£33,187)	(£50,639)	(£94,914)	(£142,301)	(£237,215)	(£30,370)	(£267,585)
Income from Council Tax	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£105,765)	(£105,765)	£0	(£105,765)	£75	(£105,690)
Income from Business Rates	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£41,112)	(£41,112)	£0	(£41,112)	(£2,296)	(£43,409)
Total Income	(£36,457)	(£6,332)	(£10,480)	(£10,936)	(£6,810)	(£19,400)	(£33,187)	(£197,516)	(£321,118)	(£189,079)	(£510,197)	(£32,591)	(£542,789)
Employee Benefits Expenses	£19,253	£22,661	£26,424	£1,236	£2,983	£22,749	£0	£0	£95,306	£87,962	£183,268	(£1,023)	£182,244
Other Service Expenses	£105,186	£34,238	£10,944	£4,608	£4,604	£13,071	£32,482	£0	£205,134	£84,730	£289,864	£0	£289,864
Support Service Charges	(£11)	£175	(£265)	£0	£74	(£144)	£0	£0	(£171)	£253	£83	£0	£83
Depreciation, Amortisation, Revaluations and Impairment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£22,352	£22,352
Capital Expenditure Financed from Revenue Balances	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,828	£5,828	(£5,828)	£0
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute & De-minimis	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,933	£2,933
Financing and Investment Expenses	£0	£0	£1	£7,111	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,111	£4,563	£11,675	(£5,981)	£5,694
Precepts and Levies	£0	£0	£0	£25,878	£0	£505	£0	£0	£26,383	£0	£26,383	£0	£26,383
Payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pool	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
(Gain) or Loss on Disposal of Non-Current Assets	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£21,670	£21,670
Posting of HRA Resources from Revenue to the MRR	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,259	£7,259	(£7,259)	£0
Total Expenditure	£124,428	£57,074	£37,104	£38,833	£7,661	£36,181	£32,482	£0	£333,764	£190,595	£524,359	£26,864	£551,223
Contributions to/(from) Reserves	(£3,496)	£11	(£360)	(£4,338)	(£33)	(£295)	£0	£7,242	(£1,269)	£1,269	£0	£0	£0
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	£84,475	£50,754	£26,263	£23,559	£817	£16,487	(£704)	(£190,274)	£11,377	£2,785	£14,162	(£5,727)	£8,435

08. Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations

This note details the adjustments that are made to the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure recognised by the Council in the year, in accordance with proper accounting practice to arrive at the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Council to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

The following sets out a description of the reserves that the adjustments are made against:

General Fund balance

The General Fund is the statutory fund into which all the receipts of an authority are required to be paid and out of which all liabilities of the authority are to be met, except to the extent that statutory rules might provide otherwise. These rules can also specify the financial year in which liabilities and payments should impact on the General Fund balance, which is not necessarily in accordance with proper accounting practice. The General Fund balance therefore summarises the resources that the council is statutorily empowered to spend on its services or on capital investment (or the deficit of resources that the council is required to recover) at the end of the financial year. [For housing authorities however, the balance is not available to be applied to funding HRA services.]

Housing Revenue Account balance

The HRA balance reflects the statutory obligation to maintain a revenue account for local authority council housing provision in accordance with Part VI of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. It contains the balance of income and expenditure as defined by the 1989 Act that is available to fund future expenditure in connection with the council's landlord function or (where in deficit) that is required to be recovered from tenants in future years.

Major Repairs Reserve

The authority is required to maintain the major repairs reserve, which controls an element of the capital resources limited to being used on capital expenditure on HRA assets or the financing of historical capital expenditure by the HRA. The balance shows the capital resources that have yet to be applied at the year-end.

Capital Receipts Reserve

The capital receipts reserve holds the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets, which are restricted by statute from being used other than to fund new capital expenditure or to be set aside to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied for these purposes at the year-end.

Capital Grants Unapplied

The capital grants unapplied account (reserve) holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the council has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies, but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

2024/25	Revenue Reserves		Capital Reserves			Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves
	General Fund Balance	Housing Revenue Account	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied			
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s			
ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REVENUE RESOURCES								
Pensions Costs (transferred to (or from) the Pension Reserve)	(£6,948)	(£384)	£0	£0	£0	(£7,332)	£7,332	£0
Financial Instruments (transferred to the Financial Instruments Adjustments Account)	(£2)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£2)	£2	£0
Council Tax & NDR (transfers to (or from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	(£6,045)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£6,045)	£6,045	£0
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	£358	£5	£0	£0	£0	£362	(£362)	£0
DSG Deficits (transferred to the DSG Adjustment Account)	£582	£0	£0	£0	£0	£582	(£582)	£0
Reversal of Entries Included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in Relation to Capital Expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account or Capital Grants Unapplied)	£30,763	£7,463	£0	£0	£5,703	£43,928	(£43,928)	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REVENUE RESOURCES	£18,707	£7,083	£0	£0	£5,703	£31,493	(£31,493)	£0
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN REVENUE & CAPITAL RESOURCES								
Transfer of Non-Current Asset Sale Proceeds from Revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	(£2,482)	(£3,458)	£0	£5,940	£0	£0	£0	£0
Administrative Costs of Non-Current Asset Disposals (funded by a contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	£27	£60	£0	(£86)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Payments to the Government Housing Receipts Pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	£55	£0	£0	(£55)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Posting of HRA Resources from Revenue to the Major Repairs Reserve	£0	(£7,414)	£7,414	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Statutory Provision for the Repayment of Debt transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	(£3,841)	(£204)	£0	£0	£0	(£4,045)	£4,045	£0
Capital Expenditure Financed from Revenue Balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(£329)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£329)	£329	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN REVENUE & CAPITAL RESOURCES	(£6,571)	(£11,016)	£7,414	£5,799	£0	(£4,375)	£4,375	£0
ADJUSTMENTS TO CAPITAL RESOURCES								
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	(£7,740)	£0	(£7,740)	£7,740	£0
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	(£7,401)	£0	£0	(£7,401)	£7,401	£0
Application of Unapplied Capital Grants to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£5,483)	(£5,483)	£5,483	£0
Cash Payments in Relation to Deferred Capital Receipts	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Cash Payments in Relation to Long-Term Debtor Loans	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS TO CAPITAL RESOURCES	£0	£0	(£7,401)	(£7,740)	(£5,483)	(£20,624)	£20,624	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	£12,136	(£3,933)	£13	(£1,941)	£220	£6,494	(£6,494)	(£0)

Restated 2023/24	Revenue Reserves		Capital Reserves			Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Authority Reserves
	General Fund Balance	Housing Revenue Account	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied			
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s			
ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REVENUE RESOURCES								
Pensions Costs (transferred to (or from) the Pension Reserve)	(£4,832)	(£39)	£0	£0	£0	(£4,871)	£4,871	£0
Financial Instruments (transferred to the Financial Instruments Adjustments Account)	(£2)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£2)	£2	£0
Council Tax & NDR (transfers to (or from) the Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	(£2,222)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£2,222)	£2,222	£0
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)	(£398)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£398)	£398	£0
DSG Deficits (transferred to the DSG Adjustment Account)	(£141)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£141)	£141	£0
Reversal of Entries Included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in Relation to Capital Expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account or Capital Grants Unapplied)	£18,241	£9,386	£0	£0	£12,958	£40,585	(£40,585)	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE REVENUE RESOURCES	£10,646	£9,347	£0	£0	£12,958	£32,951	(£32,951)	£0
ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN REVENUE & CAPITAL RESOURCES								
Transfer of Non-Current Asset Sale Proceeds from Revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	(£7,951)	(£2,446)	£0	£10,397	£0	£0	£0	£0
Administrative Costs of Non-Current Asset Disposals (funded by a contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	£119	£46	£0	(£165)	£0	£0	£0	£0
Payments to the Government Housing Receipts Pool (funded by a transfer from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Posting of HRA Resources from Revenue to the Major Repairs Reserve	£0	(£7,259)	£7,259	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Statutory Provision for the Repayment of Debt transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	(£2,400)	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£2,400)	£2,400	£0
Capital Expenditure Financed from Revenue Balances (transfer to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(£488)	(£5,341)	£0	£0	£0	(£5,829)	£5,829	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN REVENUE & CAPITAL RESOURCES	(£10,720)	(£15,000)	£7,259	£10,233	£0	(£8,229)	£8,229	£0
ADJUSTMENTS TO CAPITAL RESOURCES								
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	(£2,649)	£0	(£2,649)	£2,649	£0
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	(£7,259)	£0	£0	(£7,259)	£7,259	£0
Application of Unapplied Capital Grants to Finance New Capital Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£5,209)	(£5,209)	£5,209	£0
Cash Payments in Relation to Deferred Capital Receipts	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Cash Payments in Relation to Long-Term Debtor Loans	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS TO CAPITAL RESOURCES	£0	£0	(£7,259)	(£2,649)	(£5,209)	(£15,117)	£15,117	£0
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	(£75)	(£5,653)	£0	£7,584	£7,749	£9,605	(£9,605)	£0

09. Movement in Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund and HRA balances in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund and HRA expenditure in 2024/25.

General Fund Earmarked Reserves are held for the following purposes:

Directorate Reserve - These are reserves held to support service specific outcomes across the council and are presented on a thematic basis relating to current priorities.

Investment Reserves - These are reserves held to support corporate specific outcomes across the council and are presented on a thematic basis relating to current priorities.

Risk Reserves - This reserve is utilised to manage in-year financial variations such as fluctuations in demand or any other financial risk.

Stabilisation Reserves - These reserves will be utilised to manage areas of spending where costs in any one year are variable and unpredictable but where annual fluctuations are averaged over the medium term.

External Funding - This reserve is utilised to manage external funding received for specific purposes where the decisions on how the funding is used is not wholly within the control of the council.

Investment Funds - This reserve is utilised to provide pump-priming investment to deliver the Council's key objectives.

Schools Reserves - This includes the balances held by schools under the scheme of delegation.

Section 106 Commuted Sums - This reserve represents money received as part of Section 106 agreements from Housing and other developers. The reserve is earmarked and is not available for general use.

The following table and note explains the amount and purpose of the earmarked reserves held by the Council.

Usable Reserves	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
General Fund	(£10,000)	(£10,000)
Earmarked General Fund Reserve *	(£83,161)	(£56,290)
Housing Revenue Account	(£10,510)	(£16,746)
Major Repairs Reserve	£0	(£13)
Capital Receipts Unapplied	(£18,474)	(£16,532)
Capital Grants Unapplied	(£28,098)	(£28,935)
Balance at 31 March	(£150,243)	(£128,516)

General Fund Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2023	Transfers Between 2023/24	Transfers Out 2023/24	Transfers In 2023/24	Restated Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s	Transfers Between 2024/25 £000s	Transfers Out 2024/25 £000s	Transfers In 2024/25 £000s	Balance at 31 March 2025 £000s
General Fund	(£22,701)	£12,701	£0	£0	(£10,000)	£0	£0	£0	(£10,000)
Directorate Reserves	(£10,304)	£5,215	£3,048	(£1,183)	(£3,224)	(£1,767)	£2,317	(£714)	(£3,388)
Investment - Invest To Save	(£3,200)	£1,654	£100	(£73)	(£1,519)	£588	£0	(£69)	(£1,000)
Investment - Regeneration	(£284)	£178	£223	(£116)	£1	(£1,093)	£116	£0	(£976)
Investment - Transformation	(£3,654)	£1,769	£1,047	£0	(£838)	£0	£0	£0	(£838)
Risk - Volatility / Demand Reserve	(£3,495)	£3,495	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Risk - Insurance	(£7,834)	£3,920	£0	(£750)	(£4,664)	£0	£1,555	(£1,797)	(£4,906)
Risk - DSG	£0	(£6,000)	£0	£0	(£6,000)	£0	£0	£0	(£6,000)
Stabilisation Reserves - Net Budget	(£26,206)	(£32,468)	£19,822	(£4,278)	(£43,130)	(£1,409)	£18,901	£0	(£25,638)
Stabilisation Reserves - Funding	(£13,329)	£8,696	£0	(£2,560)	(£7,193)	£0	£6,383	(£732)	(£1,542)
External Funding	(£12,563)	£922	£2,521	(£4,430)	(£13,550)	£3,796	£1,718	(£993)	(£9,029)
Earmarked Council Balances Sub-Total	(£80,869)	(£12,619)	£26,761	(£13,390)	(£80,117)	£115	£30,990	(£4,305)	(£53,317)
Schools Reserves	(£5,169)	£0	£4,681	(£2,555)	(£3,043)	£0	£2,555	(£2,484)	(£2,972)
Earmarked General Fund Reserves Total	(£86,038)	(£12,619)	£31,442	(£15,945)	(£83,160)	£115	£33,545	(£6,789)	(£56,289)
Total General Fund Reserves	(£108,739)	£82	£31,442	(£15,945)	(£93,160)	£115	£33,545	(£6,789)	(£66,289)

10. Other Operating Expenditure

This note provides an analysis of other operating expenditure within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Other Operating Expenditure	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Levies	£26,383	£27,963
Payments to the Government Housing Capital Receipts Pool	£0	£55
(Gain)/Loss on Disposal of Non-Current (Fixed) Assets	£21,670	£35,431
Total	£48,054	£63,450

11. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

This note provides an analysis of financing and investment income and expenditure within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	£9,207	£11,091
Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset)	(£4,246)	(£7,470)
Interest Receivable and Similar Income	(£5,005)	(£5,111)
Income and Expenditure in Relation to Investment Properties and Changes in their Fair Value	£136	(£1,398)
Other Investment Income and Expense	(£323)	(£898)
Total	(£231)	(£3,786)

12. Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income

This note provides an analysis of taxation and non-specific grant income within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Council Tax Income	(£105,690)	(£111,172)
Non-Domestic Rates Income and Expenditure	(£66,583)	(£70,704)
Non-Ringfenced Government Grants	(£27,464)	(£30,636)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(£30,228)	(£33,962)
Total	(£229,966)	(£246,474)

13. Property, Plant and Equipment

Depreciation

The Council carried out depreciation on a straight-line basis of the estimated useful life of the asset which is reviewed as part of the asset revaluing process. The following useful asset lives, and depreciation rates have been used in the calculation of depreciation:

- Land - is not depreciated
- Council Dwellings – Componentised *
- Other Land & Buildings – as estimated by the valuer
- Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment – estimated by a suitably qualified officer
- Infrastructure:
 - Roads – 25 Years
 - Bridges – 80 Years
 - Street Furniture – 30 Years
 - Street Lighting – 40 Years
 - Footways & Cycle Tracks – 25 Years

*Council Dwellings are valued on a beacon basis, in order to ensure that the depreciation is not materially misstated the beacon lives are componentised to reflect the different rates at which the components will be consumed. For 2024/25 the estimated component lives are as follows:

- Main Structure – 50 Years
- Roof – 35 Years
- M&E – 15 Years
- Other Works – 15 Years

Revaluations

The Council undertakes a rolling programme of revaluating assets no more than every 5 years, which is carried out by revaluing 20% of the Council's assets each year. In 2019/20 the Council undertook a full revaluation of assets, which was done by external valuers Align (80%) with the remaining 20% carried out by our in-house valuers. In 2020/21 the Council returned to its rolling 5-year programme, and this has continued in 2024/25.

In 2024/25, all revaluations were carried out externally by Align.

Fair Values have been calculated in line with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the RICS Valuation standards. This includes reviewing comparable valuations reviewing property of an equivalent nature and location. The effective date of all the 2024/25 revaluations was 31 March 2025.

For the purposes of valuation materiality is set at £50k. However, in order to ensure that any assets below the materiality level which may have moved above the materiality threshold in valuation was captured, all assets above £40k were included in the valuations. There are some assets held at depreciated historical cost in the categories revalued. This is because they were either below the de-minimis level for revaluation or because purchases of new assets and additions to assets, which were below de-minimis during 2024/25, means that they have yet to be revalued. This will take place in subsequent years.

Revaluations 2024/25	Council Dwellings £000s	Other Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000s	Community Assets £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Assets Under Construction £000s	PPE Note Total £000s	Infrastructure Assets £000s	PPE Total £000s
Depreciated Historical Cost	£44	£0	£10,590	£10,019	£0	£42,669	£63,322	£72,546	£135,868
Valued at Current Value:									
31.03.2025	£72,255	£6,203	£0	£0	£2,647	£0	£81,105	£0	£81,105
31.03.2024	£297,047	£147,814	£0	£0	(£256)	£0	£444,605	£0	£444,605
31.03.2023	£0	£43,434	£0	£0	£3,493	£0	£46,927	£0	£46,927
31.03.2022	£0	£4,427	£0	£0	£5,475	£0	£9,902	£0	£9,902
31.03.2021	£1,869	£7,042	£0	£0	£3,119	£0	£12,030	£0	£12,030
	£371,215	£208,920	£10,590	£10,019	£14,478	£42,669	£657,891	£72,546	£730,437

Capital Commitments

By 31 March 2025, the Council had entered a number of external contracts for the construction or enhancement of property, plant and equipment in 2025/26 and future years budgeted to cost £55.678m. Similar commitments at 31 March 2024 were £37.068m. The major commitments are:

Scheme	£000s
Radcliffe Hub - LUF	£21,600
Bury Flexi Hall - LUF	£18,185
Prestwich Regeneration	£15,893
Total	£55,678

The actual level of expenditure on any of the uncommitted schemes for future years will depend upon the availability of capital financing resources.

Movements on Balances

Property, Plant and Equipment Note 2024/25	Council Dwellings £000s	Other Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000s	Community Assets £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Assets Under Construction £000s	TOTAL £000s
Certified Value as at 1 April 2024	£300,296	£231,201	£29,606	£10,516	£20,725	£20,839	£613,183
Adjustments	£0	£12,033	£0	£0	(£28)	£2	£12,007
Adjusted Value as at 1 April 2024	£300,296	£243,234	£29,606	£10,516	£20,697	£20,841	£625,190
Additions & Acquisitions	£16,083	£2,551	£1,254	£1,526	£22	£23,139	£44,574
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£57,789	£17,804	£0	£0	£4,790	£0	£80,384
Revaluations Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£156)	(£2,625)	£0	£0	(£922)	£0	(£3,702)
Derecognition - Disposals	(£2,117)	(£1,015)	£0	£0	(£1,514)	£0	(£4,647)
Derecognition - Others	(£633)	(£37,537)	£0	(£4)	(£1,917)	(£1,012)	(£41,103)
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	(£45)	£2,631	£968	£127	(£6,531)	(£299)	(£3,149)
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Cost/Valuation	£70,921	(£18,191)	£2,221	£1,649	(£6,073)	£21,828	£72,356
Amount as at 31 March 2025	£371,217	£225,044	£31,827	£12,165	£14,624	£42,669	£697,547
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairments as at 1 April 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,124)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£39,913)
Depreciation charged In-year	(£7,414)	(£8,828)	(£2,635)	£0	£0	£0	(£18,876)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	£7,600	£6,980	£0	£0	£0	£0	£14,581
Depreciation written out to (Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	£0	£133	£0	£0	£630	£0	£763
Impairments Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Impairments Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Derecognition - Disposals	£44	£40	£10	£0	£0	£0	£94
Derecognition - Other	£14	£4,171	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,185
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£1	£0	(£489)	£0	(£1)	£0	(£489)
Other Movements in Depreciation and Impairment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Depreciation & Impairment	£245	£2,497	(£3,113)	£0	£629	£0	£258
Amount as at 31 March 2024	(£2)	(£16,124)	(£21,237)	(£2,146)	(£146)	£0	(£39,655)
Opening NBV	£300,049	£224,613	£11,482	£8,370	£19,922	£20,841	£585,277
Total Movement	£71,166	(£15,694)	(£892)	£1,649	(£5,444)	£21,828	£72,614
Closing NBV	£371,215	£208,920	£10,590	£10,019	£14,478	£42,669	£657,892

The following table is provided for comparative purposes:

Property, Plant and Equipment Note 2023/24	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Certified Value as at 1 April 2023	£297,994	£242,618	£26,072	£8,476	£25,268	£18,249	£618,677
Additions & Acquisitions	£16,572	£6,542	£3,565	£1,841	£64	£8,191	£36,775
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(£2,871)	£5,843	£0	£0	£549	£0	£3,521
Revaluations Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£9,766)	£1,072	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£8,694)
Disposals	(£1,633)	(£26,423)	(£31)	£0	(£5,338)	(£176)	(£33,601)
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£0	£1,549	£0	£199	£182	(£5,425)	(£3,495)
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Cost/Valuation	£2,302	(£11,417)	£3,534	£2,040	(£4,543)	£2,590	(£5,494)
Amount as at 31 March 2024	£300,296	£231,201	£29,606	£10,516	£20,725	£20,839	£613,183
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairments as at 1 April 2023	(£154)	(£18,040)	(£16,158)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£37,273)
Depreciation charged In-year	(£7,259)	(£8,348)	(£1,997)	£0	£0	£0	(£17,604)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£5,153	£0	£0	£0	£0	£5,153
Depreciation written out to (Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	£7,129	£787	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,916
Impairments Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Impairments Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Depreciation Written out on Disposal	£37	£1,827	£31	£0	£0	£0	£1,895
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Movements in Depreciation and Impairment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Depreciation & Impairment	(£93)	(£581)	(£1,966)	£0	£0	£0	(£2,640)
Amount as at 31 March 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,124)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£39,913)
Opening NBV	£297,840	£224,578	£9,914	£6,330	£24,493	£18,249	£581,404
Total Movement	£2,209	(£11,998)	£1,568	£2,040	(£4,543)	£2,590	(£8,134)
Closing NBV	£300,049	£212,580	£11,482	£8,370	£19,950	£20,839	£573,270

14. Infrastructure Assets**Movements on balances**

In accordance with the temporary relief offered by the Update to the Code on Infrastructure Assets this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements.

The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

Infrastructure Assets	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Certified Valuation or Cost at 1 April	£55,883	£65,774
Additions in Year	£12,381	£9,802
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£449	£43
Derecognition - Other	£0	£310
Depreciation charged in year	(£2,939)	(£3,383)
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	£0	£0
As at 31st March	£65,774	£72,546

As infrastructure assets are not being disclosed on the face of the Balance Sheet a reconciling note has been prepared:

PPE Assets	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Infrastructure Assets	£65,774	£72,546
Other PPE Assets	£573,270	£657,892
Total PPE Assets	£639,044	£730,438

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulation [30M England] of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England/Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

15. Heritage Assets

Reconciliation of the carrying value of heritage assets held by the authority.

Heritage Assets	Artifacts and Gifts £000s	Pictures £000s	Civic Regalia £000s	Total Assets £000s
Cost or Valuation 1 April 2023	£31	£25,693	£629	£26,353
Additions	£0	£0	£0	£0
Revaluation Gains/(Losses) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0	£0	£0
31 March 2024	£31	£25,693	£629	£26,353
Cost or Valuation 1 April 2024	£31	£25,693	£629	£26,353
Additions	£0	£0	£0	£0
Revaluation Gains/(Losses) Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0	£0	£0
31 March 2025	£31	£25,693	£629	£26,353

Heritage assets are defined as assets intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental, or historical association. They are held by the council in pursuit of our overall objectives in relation to the maintenance of our local heritage. These include Civic Regalia, Artefacts, and various gifts & bequests some of which are held in the Museum and Art Gallery. These are recognised and measured, including treatment of revaluation gains and losses, in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on Property Plant and Equipment.

Heritage assets are deemed to have an indefinite life, therefore are not depreciated as the charge made would be minimal and immaterial. Nevertheless, where there is evidence of physical deterioration to a Heritage Asset, or doubts arise to its authenticity, the value of the asset has to be reviewed. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policies on impairment.

Further Information on The Collections

The two principal collections of heritage assets held in Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre are:

Fine and Decorative Art – this collection consists of over 1,800 artworks including oil paintings, watercolours, prints, sculpture, and other mixed media works. Of particular interest and value are the oil painting, 'Calais Sands: Poissards Gathering Bait' and 4 watercolours by J.M.W. Turner. The collection also has significant paintings by Clausen, Landseer, Riviere, and Lady Butler. A selection of works is displayed at Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre and works not on display are kept in store and available to view by appointment. Images and information about paintings is available to view on the Art UK searchable website (<https://www.artuk.org/visit/venues/bury-art-museum-6547>) and also our own website (<https://www.buryartmuseum.co.uk>)

Social History – This collection consists of around 60,000 items and is of significant value as material evidence of the social history of Bury and its people. The collections relate to the area's archaeology, industrial and domestic history and include ephemera representing the everyday life of the Borough. The founding collection included natural history, geology, and ethnography. Some objects from the collections are of significant historical importance, such as a Thomas Lees long case clock, George III Spade Guineas, Sir Robert Peel's cradle, Bronze Age urns, a Roman bracelet, and coins, 2 Celtic heads, Hutchinson family furniture, African ivories, Wedgwood vases and one hundred pieces of Pilkington's Royal Lancastrian pottery.

Civic Regalia – forms part of the Social History Collection and is stored in the Strong Room.

Other Heritage Assets – Additionally, the Authority has in its care three Historic Buildings that are classed as Heritage Assets these carried in the accounts at a nominal value only and are named as the Radcliffe Tower in Radcliffe, The Dungeon in Tottington and Rodger Worthington's Grave in Hawkshaw.

16. Investment Properties

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

Items accounted for in the Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure [CIES]	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Rental Income from Investment Property	(£597)	(£434)
Direct Operating Expenses Arising from Investment Property	£65	£23
Movement in Fair Value of Investment Properties	£668	(£987)
Net (Gain)/Loss	£136	(£1,398)

There are no restrictions on the Council's ability to realise the value inherent in its investment property or on the Council's right to the remittance of income and the proceeds of disposal. The Council has no contractual obligations to purchase, construct or develop investment property or to repair, maintain or enhance it.

The following table summarises the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

Movement in Fair Value of Investment Properties	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£18,704	£18,036
Additions in Year	£0	£118
Disposals in Year	£0	£0
Reclassifications of Assets	£0	£84
Net Gain (Loss) from Fair Value Adjustment	(£668)	£987
Balance At 31 March	£18,036	£19,225

Fair Value Hierarchy

All the Council's investment properties have been value assessed as Level 2 on the fair value hierarchy for valuation purposes (please refer to accounting policy – fair value measurement for more information) Valuation Techniques Used to Determine Level 2 Fair Values for Investment Properties.

The fair value of investment properties has been measured using a market approach, which takes into account quoted prices for similar assets in active markets, existing lease terms and rentals, research into market evidence including market rentals and yields, the covenant strength for existing tenants, and data and market knowledge gained in managing the Council's Investment Asset portfolio. Market conditions are such that similar properties are actively purchased and sold and the level of observable inputs are significant, leading to the properties being categorised as level 2 on the fair value hierarchy. There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for investment properties.

Highest and Best Use

In Council's estimates the fair value of our investment properties by taking the highest and best use value of the asset at the balance sheet date.

17. Intangible Assets

The Council regards the cost of purchased software as an intangible asset, which is carried at the historical cost of purchase and amortised over its expected useful life.

Economic lives for the purposes of amortisation have been assessed at 5 and 10 years as per the Council's accounting policies.

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

Intangible Assets	2023/24 Software Licences £000's	2024/25 Software Licences £000's
Gross Carrying Amount	£9,946	£13,404
Accumulated Amortisation	(£7,168)	(£8,200)
Net Carrying Amount at 1 April	£2,778	£5,204
Additions	£412	£411
Amortisation in Year	(£1,032)	(£1,758)
Assets Reclassified	£3,046	£0
Reclassifications/Transfers	£0	(£479)
Net Carrying Amount at 31 March	£5,204	£3,378

Comprising:		
Gross Carrying Amount	£13,404	£12,847
Accumulated Amortisation	(£8,200)	(£9,469)
Net Carrying Amount at 31 March	£5,204	£3,378

18. Assets Held for Sale

This note contains assets that are held for sale and are shown as non-current assets on the balance sheet as they are expected to be sold within 1 year. In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice, these assets are available for immediate sale in their present condition and are being actively marketed for sale.

Assets Held for Sale	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£1,285	£1,088
Assets Newly Classified as Held for Sale	£0	£3,990
Additions	£0	£0
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0
Revaluations Recognised in CIES	£0	£0
Assets Sold	(£197)	(£125)
Assets Declassified as Held for Sale	£0	£0
Movements in Year	(£197)	£3,865
Balance as 31 March	£1,088	£4,953

19. Financial Instruments

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

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

Financial Assets

Financial Assets	Non-Current				Current				Total	
	Investments		Debtors		Investments		Debtors		Restated 31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s
	31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s	31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s	Restated 31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s	Restated 31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s		
Amortised Cost										
Long-Term Debtor Loans	£0	£0	£69,102	£69,231	£0	£0	£0	£0	£69,102	£69,231
Investments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£8,031	£20,700	£0	£0	£8,031	£20,700
Deposits (Short Maturity) and Bank Accounts	£0	£0	£0	£0	£510	£1,270	£0	£0	£510	£1,270
Short-Term Debtors (Financial Assets)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£36,129	£35,957	£36,129	£35,957
Amortised Cost Total	£0	£0	£69,102	£69,231	£8,541	£21,970	£36,129	£35,957	£113,772	£127,158
Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income - Designated Equity Instruments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income - Other	£50,700	£47,820	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£50,700	£47,820
Total Financial Assets	£50,700	£47,820	£69,102	£69,231	£8,541	£21,970	£36,129	£35,957	£164,472	£174,978
Short-Term Debtors (Non-Financial Assets)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£28,985	£30,014	£28,985	£30,014
Total	£50,700	£47,820	£69,102	£69,231	£8,541	£21,970	£65,114	£65,971	£193,457	£204,992

Financial Liabilities

Financial Liabilities	Non-Current				Current				Total	
	Borrowings		Creditors		Borrowings		Creditors		Total	
	31-Mar 2024 £000s	31-Mar 2025 £000s								
Amortised Cost										
Borrowings - PWLB Loans	(£223,737)	(£242,398)	£0	£0	(£5,213)	(£4,868)	£0	£0	(£228,950)	(£247,266)
Borrowings - LOBO/Market Loans	£735	(£28,000)	£0	£0	(£36,972)	(£20,000)	£0	£0	(£36,237)	(£48,000)
Borrowings - Local Bonds	(£3)	(£3)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£3)	(£3)
PFI, Finance Lease and Transferred Debt	£0	£0	(£16)	(£10,361)	£0	£0	£0	(£828)	(£16)	(£11,189)
Short-Term Creditors (Financial Assets)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£30,100)	(£30,448)	(£30,100)	(£30,448)
Total Financial Liabilities	(£223,005)	(£270,401)	(£16)	(£10,361)	(£42,185)	(£24,868)	(£30,100)	(£31,276)	(£295,306)	(£336,906)
Short-Term Creditors (Non-Financial Liabilities)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£13,375)	(£15,217)	(£13,375)	(£15,217)
Total	(£223,005)	(£270,401)	(£16)	(£10,361)	(£42,185)	(£24,868)	(£43,475)	(£46,493)	(£308,681)	(£352,123)

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Investments in Equity Instruments Designated at Fair Value through other Comprehensive Income

With the introduction of IFRS 9 the Council has designated the following equity at 31 March 2025 as fair value through other comprehensive income:

Investments in Equity Instruments Designated at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income	Nominal £000s	Fair Value £000s	Change in Fair Value during 2024/25 £000s	Dividend 2024/25 £000s
Manchester Airport Shares	£10,214	£43,420	(£2,880)	£484
Manchester Airport Car Park (1) Limited	£5,610	£4,400	£0	£414
Total	£15,824	£47,820	(£2,880)	£898

The Council holds 3.22% shares in Manchester Airport Holdings Ltd, the shareholding is a strategic investment and not held for trading and therefore the Council has opted to designate it as fair value through Other Comprehensive Income. This would mean that there is no impact on the revenue

budget and the decision to designate to fair value through other comprehensive income is irrevocable. Any gains or losses on the valuation of the shareholding will therefore be transferred to a Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Items of Income, Expense, Gains or Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

Items of Income, Expense, Gains or Losses	2023/24			2024/25		
	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000s	Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure £000s	Total £000s	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000s	Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure £000s	Total £000s
Net Gains/Losses on: Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income	£0	(£26,300)	(£26,300)	£0	£2,880	£2,880
Total Net Gains/(Losses)	£0	(£26,300)	(£26,300)	£0	£2,880	£2,880
Interest Income: Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost	(£5,005)	£0	(£5,005)	(£5,111)	£0	(£5,111)
Other Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income	(£323)	£0	(£323)	(£898)	£0	(£898)
Total interest income	(£5,328)	£0	(£5,328)	(£6,009)	£0	(£6,009)
Interest Expense	£9,207	£0	£9,207	£11,091	£0	£11,091

Fair Value of Financial Assets and Liabilities

Fair Values of Financial Assets

Some of the Council's financial assets are measured in the Balance Sheet at fair value on a recurring basis and are described in the following table, including the valuation techniques used to measure them.

Recurring Fair Value Measurements	Input Level in Fair Value Hierarchy	Valuation Technique Used to Measure Fair Value	As at 31/03/2024 Fair Value £000s	As at 31/03/2025 Fair Value £000s
Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income Manchester Airport	Level 2	Earnings Based	£50,700	£47,820
Total			£50,700	£47,820

The Council holds a 3.22% share in Manchester Airport Holdings Limited (MAHL). The shares in this company are not traded in an active market; however, the fair value shown above is based on a high degree of comparability to listed company data including any movement in share prices. An earnings-based method has been employed which takes as its basis for the profitability of the company, assessing its historic earnings and arriving at a view of "maintainable" or "prospective" earnings.

The method involves the application of an EV/EBITDA multiple (Enterprise Value by Earnings before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortisation) to the maintainable or prospective earnings and draws on data from comparable quoted companies. The data is then adjusted by discount factors to allow for the fact that the shares are not publicly traded and that the Council holds a minority interest with no voting rights. These unobservable inputs have been developed using the best information about the assumptions that the market participants would use when pricing the asset.

The valuation has been made using annual audited accounts of MAHL for the financial year ending 31 March 2025. These shares are subject to annual valuation. In 2024/25 this has seen a decrease in value of (£2.880m).

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not measured at Fair Value

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value (described in the table above), all other financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors are carried on the Balance Sheet at amortised cost.

Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments (Level 2) using the following assumptions:

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

The fair values are calculated as follows:

The Fair Values of Financial Liabilities that are Not Measured at Fair Value	31 March 2024		31 March 2025	
	Carrying Amount £000s	Fair Value £000s	Carrying Amount £000s	Fair Value £000s
PWLB Loans	(£228,950)	(£209,362)	(£247,266)	(£217,927)
LOBO/Market Loans	(£36,237)	(£37,533)	(£48,000)	(£48,474)
Local Bonds	(£3)	(£3)	(£3)	(£3)
PFI, Finance Lease and Transferred Debt	(£16)	(£16)	(£11,189)	(£11,189)
Short-Term Creditors (Financial Assets)	(£30,100)	(£30,100)	(£30,448)	(£30,448)
Financial liabilities	(£295,306)	(£277,014)	(£336,906)	(£308,041)

The fair value of the liabilities is lower than the carrying amount because the Council's portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is lower than the rates available for similar loans at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future gain (based on economic conditions at 31 March 2025) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders below current market rates.

The Fair Values of Financial Assets that are Not Measured at Fair Value	Restated 31 March 2024		31 March 2025	
	Carrying Amount £000s	Fair Value £000s	Carrying Amount £000s	Fair Value £000s
Long-Term Debtor Loans	£69,102	£77,435	£69,231	£77,840
Investments	£8,031	£8,006	£20,700	£20,720
Deposits (Short Maturity) and Bank Accounts	£510	£510	£1,270	£1,270
Short-Term Debtors (Financial Assets)	£36,129	£36,129	£35,957	£35,957
Financial Assets	£113,772	£122,080	£127,158	£135,787

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

Fair Value hierarchy for Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not measured at Fair Value

Recurring Fair Value Measurements Using:	Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)	Other Significant Observable Inputs (Level 2)
	31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2025 £000s
Financial Liabilities		
PWLB Loans	(£209,362)	(£217,927)
LOBO/Market Loans	(£37,533)	(£48,474)
Total	(£246,895)	(£266,401)
Financial Assets		
Investments	£8,006	£20,720
Long-Term Debtor Loans	£66,386	£66,586
Total	£74,392	£87,306

The fair value for financial liabilities and financial assets that are not measured at fair value included in Level 2 in the table above have been arrived at using a discounted cash flow analysis with the most significant inputs being the discount rate detailed.

20. Nature and Extent of Risks Arising from Financial Instruments

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

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

Overall Procedures for Managing Risk

The Council's management of treasury risks actively works to minimise the Council's exposure to the unpredictability of financial markets and to protect the financial resources available to fund services. The Council has fully adopted CIPFA's Code of Treasury Management Practices and has written principles for overall risk management as well as written policies and procedures covering specific areas such as credit risk, liquidity risk and market risk.

Credit Risk

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

This risk is minimised through the Annual Treasury Management Strategy, which requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, in accordance with the Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's Credit ratings Services. The Annual Investment Strategy also considers maximum amounts and time limits with a financial institution.

This Council used the creditworthiness service provided by Arlingclose throughout 2024/25. This service uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from all three rating agencies, forming the core element. However, it does not rely solely on the current credit ratings of counterparties but also uses the following as overlays:

- Credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- Credit Default Swap spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings; and
- Sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

The full Investment Strategy for 2024/25 was approved by Council on 21 February 2024 and is available on the Council's website.

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

The council has a total of £20.7m deposits with a number of financial institutions as 31 March 2025. The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to this amount cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. Recent experience has shown that it is rare for such entities to be unable to meet their commitments. A risk of irrecoverability applies to all the Council's deposits, but there was no evidence at the 31 March 2025 that this was likely to crystallise.

The Council does not generally invest in quoted equity shares where there is an active market. It does have a shareholding valued at £47.8m in the Manchester Airport Group. The Council is therefore exposed to the risk of a loss in the valuation of its investments arising as a result of poor performance by the Group. The Council would not normally attempt to spread its risk by diversifying its portfolio.

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

We have assessed the Council's investments (all short-term) and concluded that the expected credit loss is not material therefore no allowances have been made.

Only lifetime expected credit losses (simplified approach) have been recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

Loss Allowance by Asset Class (Amortised Cost)	Amounts at 31 March 2025 £000s	Lifetime Expected Credit Losses: Simplified Approach %	Loss Allowance Opening Balance £000s	Amounts Written Off £000s	Changes in Models/Risk Parameters £000s	Loss Allowance Closing Balance £000s
Short-Term Debtors (Financial Assets)	£35,957	26.47%	(£6,445)	£77	(£3,150)	(£9,518)
Total	£35,957		(£6,445)	£77	(£3,150)	(£9,518)

Loss Allowance by Asset Class (Amortised Cost)	Restated Amounts at 31 March 2024 £000s	Lifetime Expected Credit Losses: Simplified Approach %	Loss Allowance Opening Balance £000s	Amounts Written Off £000s	Changes in Models/Risk Parameters £000s	Loss Allowance Closing Balance £000s
Short-Term Debtors (Financial Assets)	£36,129	17.84%	(£6,027)	£365	(£783)	(£6,445)
Total	£36,129		(£6,027)	£365	(£783)	(£6,445)

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

The Council does not generally allow extended credit for customers, but some of the current balances is past its due date for payment. The past due but not impaired amount can be analysed by age as follows:

Aged Debt Analysis - Past Due but Not Impaired	31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2025 £000s
Less than three months	£5,851	£8,343
Three to four months	£1,872	£809
Four months to one year	£3,681	£1,286
More than one year	£3,537	£3,137
Total	£14,941	£13,575

Liquidity Risk

The Council manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the treasury and investment strategy reports), as well as through a comprehensive cash flow management system, as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. This seeks to ensure that cash is available when needed.

The Council has ready access to borrowings from the money markets to cover any day-to-day cash flow need, and the PWLB and money markets for access to longer term funds. The Council is also required to provide a balanced budget through the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which ensures sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The maturity analysis of financial assets is as follows:

Maturity Analysis of Financial Assets	Restated 31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2025 £000s
Less than 1 year	£44,798	£58,061
Between 1 and 2 years	£134	£139
Between 2 and 3 years	£139	£145
More than 3 years	£68,701	£68,813
Total	£113,772	£127,158

Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The Council maintains a significant debt and investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures above are considered against the refinancing risk procedures, longer-term risk to the Council relates to managing the exposure to replacing financial instruments as they mature. This risk relates to both the maturing of longer-term financial liabilities and longer-term financial assets.

The approved treasury indicator limits for the maturity structure of debt and the limits placed on investments placed for greater than one year in duration are the key parameters used to address this risk. The Council approved treasury and investment strategies address the main risks and the central treasury team address the operational risks within the approved parameters.

This includes:

- Monitoring the maturity profile of financial liabilities and amending the profile through either new borrowing or the rescheduling of the existing debt; and
- Monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Council's day-to-day (daily) cash flow needs, and the spread of longer-term investments provide stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer-term cash flow needs.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows:

Maturity Analysis of Financial Liabilities	31 March 2024	31 March 2025
	£000s	£000s
Less than 1 year	(£32,877)	(£56,161)
1 - 2 years	(£27,031)	(£31,301)
2 - 5 years	(£15,184)	(£32,534)
5 - 10 years	(£85,498)	(£86,044)
More than 10 years	(£134,717)	(£130,866)
Total	(£295,306)	(£336,906)

Of the £13m of Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans, all loans mature in more than 10 years (the average maturity time being 52.3 years).

The terms of the LOBO state that loans could be recalled within 12 months; this occurred during 2023/24 for two loans totalling £20m, that were repaid during the financial year. However, for the two remaining loans totalling £13m, we have taken the decision to disclose these as long-term liabilities as they are very likely to be on our balance sheet for a period of greater than 12 months and so the classification of long-term creditors provides the most realistic status of these loans to the users of the accounts.

Market Risk

The Council is exposed to market risk in terms of its exposure that the value of an instrument will fluctuate because of changes in:

- Interest rate risk;
- Price risk; and
- Foreign Exchange rate risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Council is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Council, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on

variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the General Fund Balance. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments that have a quoted market price will be reflected in the Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Council has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together Council's prudential and treasury indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy a treasury indicator is set which provides maximum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The central treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance, during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long-term returns, similarly the drawing of longer-term fixed rates borrowing would be postponed.

According to this investment strategy, at 31 March 2025, if all interest rates had been 1% higher (with all other variables held constant) the financial effect would be:

Interest Rate Risk	£000s
Increase in Interest Payable on Variable Rate Borrowings	£207
Increase in Interest Receivable on Variable Rate Investments	(£107)
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	£100
Decrease in Fair Value of Fixed Rate Investment Assets	£0
Impact on Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	£0
Decrease in Fair Value of Fixed Rate Borrowing Liabilities (no impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure)	£22,343

The approximate impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above but with the movements being reversed. These assumptions are based on the same methodology as used in the Note – Fair value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost.

Price Risk

The Council does not generally invest in equity shares but does have shareholdings to the value of £47.8m in local industry. Whilst these holdings are generally illiquid, the Council is exposed to losses arising from movements in the price of the shares.

As the shareholdings have arisen in the acquisition of specific interests, the Council is not in a position to limit its exposure to price movements by diversifying its portfolio. Instead, it only acquires shareholdings in return for "open book" arrangements with the company concerned so that the Council can monitor factors that might cause a fall in the value of specific shareholdings.

Of the shares mentioned above, £47.8m has been elected as Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income, meaning that all movements in price will impact on gains and losses recognised in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve. A general shift of 5% in the general price of shares (positive or negative) would thus have resulted in a £2.39m gain or loss being recognised in the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Foreign Exchange Risk

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

21. Analysis of Long and Short-Term Debtors

Analysis of Short-Term Debtors	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Gross Trade Receivables	£38,151	£41,289
less Trade Receivables Impairment Allowance	(£4,229)	(£7,043)
Net Trade Receivables	£33,922	£34,246
Payments in Advance	£2,876	£4,072
Related Parties	£2,426	£1,436
Gross NNDR Payers	£12,866	£12,258
less NNDR Payers Impairment Allowance	(£7,600)	(£7,521)
Net NNDR Payers	£5,265	£4,737
Gross Council Tax Payers	£21,233	£23,156
less Council Tax Payers Impairment Allowance	(£13,654)	(£14,923)
Net Council Tax Payers	£7,580	£8,234
Collection Fund Preceptors	£798	£926
Gross Housing Benefit	£5,295	£4,971
less Housing Benefit Impairment Allowance	(£1,344)	(£1,159)
Net Housing Benefit	£3,951	£3,812
Gross Housing Rent	£1,997	£2,750
less Housing Rent Impairment Allowance	(£2,216)	(£2,475)
Net Housing Rent	(£219)	£276
Other Receivables	£8,515	£8,233
Total	£65,114	£65,971

Analysis of Long-Term Debtors	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Manchester Airport Loan	£29,366	£29,366
Manchester Airport Loan Interest	£8,588	£8,262
Bury MBC Townside Fields Loan	£7,257	£7,257
Six Town Housing Loan	£2,822	£2,797
Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP Loan	£20,349	£20,349
The Prestwich Regeneration (LLP) Loan	£628	£1,127
Debt Managed for Probation Services	£11	£11
Other Loan Accounts	£81	£63
Total	£69,102	£69,231

22. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash Equivalents	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cash held by the Authority	£23	£17
School Bank Accounts	(£199)	(£310)
Bank Call Accounts	£0	£0
Bank	£709	£1,580
Total	£533	£1,287

23. Analysis of Creditors

Analysis of Short-Term Creditors	2023/24	2024/25
	£000s	£000s
Trade Payables	(£25,270)	(£24,494)
Receipts in Advance	(£725)	(£1,373)
Related Party Payables	(£629)	(£1,033)
NNDR Payers	(£3,529)	(£4,415)
Council Tax Payers	(£3,025)	(£2,387)
Collection Fund Preceptors	£0	£0
Deposits and Client Funds	(£148)	(£119)
Leases	£0	(£828)
Other Payables	(£10,149)	(£11,846)
Total	(£43,475)	(£46,493)

24. Long and Short-Term Provisions

Provisions are amounts set aside by the Council to meet the cost of a future liability, for which the timing of the payment is uncertain. The amounts represent the best estimate of that liability where an exact cost is not able to be determined. In line with the Code of Practice, the provision is charged to service revenue accounts in the year it is established. When the liability falls due, the costs are charged directly to the provision.

Short-Term Provisions	Business Rates Appeals Provision £000s	Insurance Provision £000s	Other Provisions £000s	Total £000s
Balance at 1 April 2024	£0	(£548)	(£2)	(£550)
Additional Provisions Made In-Year	£0	(£1,475)	(£150)	(£1,625)
Amounts Used In-Year	£0	£548	£2	£550
Unused Amounts Reversed In-Year	£0	£0	£0	£0
Transfers between Short & Long-term	(£1,205)	£0	£0	(£1,205)
Balance at 31 March 2025	(£1,205)	(£1,475)	(£150)	(£2,830)

Long-Term Provisions	Business Rates Appeals Provision £000s	Insurance Provision £000s	Other Provisions £000s	Total £000s
Balance at 1 April 2024	(£5,467)	(£2,658)	(£1,458)	(£9,582)
Additional Provisions Made In-Year	(£144)	(£1,125)	(£93)	(£1,362)
Amounts Used In-Year	£0	£699	£412	£1,112
Unused Amounts Reversed In-Year	£0	£0	£10	£10
Transfers between Short & Long-term	£1,205	£0	£0	£1,205
Balance at 31 March 2025	(£4,405)	(£3,083)	(£1,128)	(£8,617)

Business Rates Provision – Provision for potential backdated liability of refunding Business Rates payers as a result of reductions in Rateable Values, following successful appeals or alterations to Valuation lists.

Insurance Provision – Provision for outstanding claims relating to 31 March 2025 and before, where there are potential settlement costs attributable to the Council.

Other Provisions - This is the total of all other amounts set aside as provisions that are individually insignificant.

25. Usable Reserves

Movements in the Council's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement and Note 9 Movement in Earmarked Reserves.

26. Unusable Reserve

Summary of Unusable Reserves:

Reserve	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Revaluation Reserve	(£149,876)	(£230,617)
Capital Adjustment Account	(£232,340)	(£227,634)
Deferred Capital Receipts	£1	£1
Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	(£34,876)	(£31,996)
Financial Instruments Adjustment Reserve	£265	£262
Collection fund Adjustment Account	£5,506	(£539)
Accumulated Absences	£2,525	£2,887
DSG Adjustment Account	£18,459	£19,041
Pension Reserve	£0	£0
Balance at 31st March	(£390,337)	(£468,594)

Revaluation Reserve

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

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

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

Revaluation Reserve	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	(£158,994)	(£149,876)
Upward Revaluation of Assets	(£13,741)	(£97,487)
Downward Revaluation of Assets and Impairment Losses Not Charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£5,068	£2,523
(Surplus) or Deficit on Revaluation of Non-Current Assets not Posted to the (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£8,673)	(£94,964)
Difference between Fair Value Depreciation and Historical Cost Depreciation	£4,856	£4,148
Accumulated Gains on Assets Sold or Scrapped	£12,935	£10,075
Revaluation Balances Adjustment	£0	£0
Amount Written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	£17,791	£14,223
Balance at 31 March	(£149,876)	(£230,617)

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction, or enhancement element of those assets under statutory provisions. The account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council to finance for the costs of acquisition, construction, and enhancement.

The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Council. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

Note 8 provides details of the source of all the transactions posted to the Account, apart from those involving the Revaluation Reserve.

Capital Adjustment Account	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	(£231,789)	(£232,340)
Reversal of Items Relating to Capital Expenditure Debited or Credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
Charges for Depreciation and Impairment of Non-Current Assets	£20,543	£22,259
Revaluation Losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	£778	£2,939
Amortisation of Intangible Assets	£1,032	£1,758
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	£2,933	£4,431
Amounts of Non-Current Assets Written-off on Disposal or Sale as Part of the (Gain)/Loss on Disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£31,903	£41,285
Sub-total	£57,188	£72,672
Adjusting Amounts Written-out of the Revaluation Reserve	(£17,791)	(£14,223)
Net Written-out Amount of the Cost of Non-Current Assets Consumed in the Year	£39,397	£58,449
Capital financing applied in the year:		
Use of the Capital Receipts reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(£2,649)	(£7,740)
Use of the Major Repairs Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	(£7,259)	(£7,401)
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(£17,271)	(£27,757)
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(£5,209)	(£5,483)
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	(£2,400)	(£4,045)
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund and HRA balances	(£5,829)	(£329)
Sub-total	(£40,617)	(£52,756)
Movements in the market value of investment properties debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£668	(£987)
Repayment of Long-Term Debtors	£0	£0
Balance at 31 March	(£232,340)	(£227,634)

Deferred Capital Receipts

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

Financial Instrument Revaluation Account

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

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

Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1st April	(£8,576)	(£34,876)
Upward Revaluation of Investments	(£26,300)	£0
Downward Revaluation of Investments	£0	£2,880
Balance at 31st March	(£34,876)	(£31,996)

Financial Instrument Adjustment Account

The Financial Instrument Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for income and expenditure relating to certain financial instruments and for bearing losses or benefitting from gains per statutory provisions.

The Council uses the Account to manage premiums paid and discounts received on the early redemption of loans. Premiums are debited and discounts are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when they are incurred but reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Over time, the net expense is posted back to the General Fund balance in accordance with statutory arrangements for spreading the burden on Council Tax payers. In the Council's case this period is the unexpired term that was outstanding on loans when they were redeemed.

Financial Instrument Adjustment Account	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£267	£265
Premiums Incurred in the Year and Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£0	£0
Proportion of Premiums Incurred in Previous Financial Years to be Charged Against the General Fund Balance in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	(£2)	(£2)
Balance at 31 March	£265	£262

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

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

Collection Fund Adjustment Account	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£7,728	£5,506
Amount by Which Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Income Credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is Different from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate Income Calculated for the Year in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	(£2,222)	(£6,045)
Balance at 31 March	£5,506	(£539)

Accumulated Absences

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

Accumulative Absences	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£2,923	£2,525
Settlement or Cancellation of Accrual Made at the End of the Preceding Year	(£2,923)	(£2,525)
Amounts Accrued at the End of the Current Year	£2,525	£2,887
Amount by Which Officer Remuneration Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an Accruals Basis is Different from Remuneration Chargeable in the Year in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	(£398)	£362
Balance at 31 March	£2,525	£2,887

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Adjustment Account

The Dedicated Schools Grant adjustment account holds accumulated deficits relating to the schools budget. Where the authority has incurred a deficit on its schools budget in years beginning 1 April 2020 ending 31 March 2028, the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations do not allow for such amounts to be included in the General Fund and instead must be held in this adjustment account.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Adjustment Account	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	£18,601	£18,459
School Budget Deficit Transferred from General Fund in Accordance with Statutory Requirements	(£141)	£582
Balance at 31 March	£18,459	£19,041

Pension Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pension for which it is directly responsible.

For further details on the effect of the asset ceiling that has resulted in a nil balance on the Pensions Reserve in 2024/25, please see Note 38.

Pension Reserve	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance at 1 April	(£87,381)	£0
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset)	(£62,471)	(£122,385)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	£154,723	£129,714
Reversal of Items Relating to Retirement Benefits Debited or Credited to the (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£13,680	£12,121
Employer's Pension Contributions and Direct Payments to Pensioners Payable in the Year	(£18,551)	(£19,450)
Balance at 31 March	£0	£0

27. Cash Flow Statement Notes**Operating Activities**

The cash flows for Operating Activities include the following items:

Operating Activities	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Interest Received	(£4,760)	(£5,313)
Interest Paid	£8,114	£10,806
Dividends Received	(£323)	(£898)

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

Non-Cash Movements	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Depreciation	(£20,543)	(£22,259)
Impairment and Downward Valuations	(£778)	(£2,939)
Amortisation	(£1,032)	(£1,758)
Increase/(Decrease) in Impairment for Credit Losses	(£1,628)	(£4,077)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	(£9,156)	(£2,347)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	£12,759	£2,071
(Increase)/Decrease in Inventories	(£72)	£331
Movement in Pension Liability	£4,871	£7,332
Carrying Amount of Non-current Assets and Non-current Assets Held for Sale, Sold or Derecognised	(£31,903)	(£41,285)
<i>Other Non-cash Items Charged to the Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services:</i>		
(Increase)/Decrease in Provisions	(£1,043)	(£1,314)
Movements in the Value of Investment Properties	(£668)	£987
(Increase)/Decrease in Accumulated Absences	£398	(£362)
	(£48,793)	(£65,621)

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

Investing and Financing Activities	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Proceeds from Short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and Long-term Investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)	£0	£0
Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	£10,232	£5,854
Grant Receipts for the Financing of New Capital Expenditure	£30,228	£33,460
	£40,461	£39,314

Investing Activities

Cash Flow Statement - Investing Activities	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	£51,309	£67,584
Purchase of Short-term and Long-term Investments	£411,263	£487,489
Other Payments for Investing Activities	£628	£498
Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	(£10,232)	(£5,854)
Proceeds from Short-term and Long-term Investments	(£403,732)	(£474,789)
(Proceeds) from Other Long Term Loans	(£714)	(£370)
Grant (Receipts) for the Financing of New Capital Expenditure	(£35,765)	(£34,790)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	£12,756	£39,768

Financing Activities

Cash Flow Statement - Financing Activities	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cash (Receipts) of Short-Term and Long-Term Borrowing	(£105,904)	(£98,000)
Cash (Receipts) from Other Short-Term and Long-Term Liabilities	£0	£0
Repayments of Short-Term and Long-Term Borrowing	£87,103	£65,431
Repayments of Other Short-Term and Long-Term Liabilities	£0	£0
Cash Payments for the Reduction of Outstanding Liabilities Relating to Finance Leases and on-Balance Sheet PFI Contracts	£0	(£11,173)
Discount/Premium on Early Repayment of Debt	£0	£0
Billing Authority Collection Fund Adjustments	£339	£128
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(£18,461)	(£43,614)

Reconciliation of Liabilities Arising from Financing Activities

Liabilities from Financing Activities	Balance at 1 April 2024 £000s	Financing Cash Flows £000s	Non-Cash Changes £000s	Balance at 31 March 2025 £000s
Long-term Borrowings	(£223,005)	(£12,830)	£0	(£235,835)
Long-term Borrowings Other	(£12)	£0	£0	(£12)
Short-term Borrowings	(£42,185)	(£19,739)	£2,491	(£59,434)
Lease Liabilities	(£4)	(£11,173)	£0	(£11,177)
Total Liabilities from Financing Activities	(£265,207)	(£43,742)	£2,491	(£306,458)

Liabilities from Financing Activities	Balance at 1 April 2023 £000s	Financing Cash Flows £000s	Non-Cash Changes £000s	Balance at 31 March 2024 £000s
Long-term Borrowings	(£204,709)	(£35,801)	£17,504	(£223,005)
Long-term Borrowings Other	(£12)	£0	£0	(£12)
Short-term Borrowings	(£40,589)	£17,000	(£18,596)	(£42,185)
Lease Liabilities	(£4)	£0	£0	(£4)
Total Liabilities from Financing Activities	(£245,314)	(£18,801)	(£1,092)	(£265,207)

28. Pooled Funds

Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 allowed joint working arrangements between NHS organisations and local authorities. Pooled funds enable these bodies to work collaboratively to address specific local health issues.

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) ceased to exist as a legal entity from the 1st of July 2022 with NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care (NHS GM) being the successor entity from the 1st of July 2022. On this basis, NHS GM will be a party to the S75 with the Council moving forward.

The pooling of budgets between the two organisations, Bury Council and NHS GM, is in line with NHSE guidelines to progress integration of Adult Social Care and Health and is in accordance with the decision made by Cabinet.

Bury Council and NHS GM have worked together to support health and social care integration within the locality. From 1 October 2019 the Integrated Commissioning Fund (ICF) includes the total revenue budget allocations of both the Council and NHS GM (previously CCG).

The single fund is overseen by The Bury Integrated Care Partnership Locality Board whose membership includes equal representation from the NHS GM and the Council.

The ICF supports the 4 strategic priorities of the Bury Locality Plan:

- **Building new relationships:** We will enable a radical shift in both the relationship between local people and public services, and the way in which public services work together towards a common set of outcomes.
- **Staying well for longer:** We will support local people to remain well for longer by systematically tackling the causes of illness, radically up-scaling prevention, and implementing a whole system wellness and wellbeing programme.
- **Reducing failure demand:** We will identify and remove the demand that exists in most Public Service systems that occur as a result of the way in which services are delivered and the way in which organisations work together within the system.
- **Tackling wider determinants of health:** We will make a concerted system-wide effort to tackle the wider determinants which impact upon the health and wellbeing of local people such as deprivation, work and skills, housing, education, and the environment.

The ICF is made up of 3 component sections:

- **Section 75 Pooled Budget:** Decisions on the utilisation of this budget are delegated to the Strategic Commissioning Board (SCB).
- **Aligned Services Budget:** For services that cannot be pooled under Section 75 legislation, or the Council and NHS GM have agreed are not yet in a position to pool. Recommendations on the utilisation of this budget are made by the SCB with decisions taken by the appropriate sovereign organisation.
- **In View Services Budget:** For services that are influenced but not directly commissioned by the partners. Decisions on the utilisation of in-view budgets are made by committees/bodies outside of Bury and are shared for information purposes only.

2024/25 Integrated Commissioning Fund Contributions and Costs

Table 1 below summarises the 2024/25 Integrated Commissioning Fund contribution and costs and any net (surplus)/deficit. In 2024/25 there is a £10.151m deficit arising on the Pooled budget.

The Council deficit of £2.901m is driven by demand pressures within the Care in the community budget. The £7.250m ICB deficit is driven by pressures across Mental Health, Learning disability and Complex Care budgets.

Table 1

Integrated Commissioning Fund incorporating the Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Integrated Commissioning Fund Contribution		
Bury Council (Note 1)	(£103,759)	(£136,242)
NHS GM Bury Locality (previously Bury CCG)	(£105,382)	(£71,129)
Sub-Total	(£209,141)	(£207,371)
Integrated Commissioning Fund Costs		
Bury Council	£103,747	£139,143
NHS GM Bury Locality (previously Bury CCG)	£111,172	£78,379
Sub-Total	£214,919	£217,522
Net (Surplus)/Deficit Arising on the Pooled Budget During the Year	£5,778	£10,151

Risk Share Agreement

Each partner organisation accounts for their own contributions and details of the spend from the pool are reported to the Bury Strategic Commissioning Board.

Under the risk share arrangements of the ICF each organisation shares financial risk on a 50:50 basis. However, as in previous years when NHS GM Bury Locality has overspent NHS GM Bury Locality will not seek for any local authority support towards the deficit.

29. Members' Allowances

The council paid the following amounts to Members of the Council during the year:

Members' Allowances & Expenses	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Allowances	£874	£903
Expenses	£0	£0
TOTAL	£874	£903

30. Officers' Remuneration and Termination Benefits

The remuneration of senior employees, which is defined as those who are members of the Executive Leadership Team, those holding statutory posts, or those whose remuneration is £150,000 or more per year, is set out below. Salary, (including Fees and Allowances) includes elements such as market supplements and honoraria. No payments were made for bonuses, benefits in kind & expense allowances in either year.

Senior Officers

The remuneration paid to the authority's senior employees is as follows:

Authority's Senior Employees	2023/24						2024/25					
	Note	Salary, Fees and Allowances	Expenses Allowances	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension Contribution	Total	Note	Salary, Fees and Allowances	Expenses Allowances	Compensation for Loss of Office	Pension Contribution	Total
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Chief Executive and Placed Based Lead [L Ridsdale]	A	£190	£0	£0	£37	£227	A	£202	£0	£0	£38	£240
Executive Director: Health & Adult Care		£138	£0	£0	£20	£158		£142	£0	£0	£21	£163
Executive Director: Children & Young People		£137	£0	£0	£27	£164		£141	£0	£0	£28	£169
Executive Director: Strategy & Transformation		£121	£0	£0	£24	£145		£134	£0	£0	£25	£159
Executive Director: Place		£125	£0	£0	£24	£149		£132	£0	£0	£26	£158
Executive Director: Operations		£139	£0	£0	£27	£166		£142	£0	£0	£28	£170
Director of Finance	B	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	B	£91	£0	£0	£18	£108
Executive Director: Finance (Interim)	C	£42	£0	£0	£0	£42	C	£21	£0	£0	£0	£21
Director of Law & Governance		£102	£0	£0	£20	£122		£112	£0	£0	£21	£133
Director of Adult Social Services & Community Commissioning		£113	£0	£0	£22	£135		£121	£0	£0	£23	£144
Director of Public Health		£105	£0	£0	£20	£125		£111	£0	£0	£22	£132

Senior Officers served for the whole of 2023/24 and 2024/25 unless stated below.

2024/25 Notes:

- A The Chief Executive is also the Place Based Lead for NHS GM, 50% was recharged to NHS GM in 2024/2.
- B The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer for the Council), started 1st July 2024
- C The Interim Executive Director: Finance role (IR35 Worker) terminated 28th May 2024

2023/24 Notes:

- A The Chief Executive is also the Place Based Lead for NHS GM, 50% was recharged to NHS GM in 2023/24.
- B The Executive Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer for the Council), the post is remunerated through the NHS GM, rather than Bury Council. The annual salary falls within a range of £130,000 and £134,999. On 22 November 2023 Full Council approved to terminate the joint financial leadership arrangements with NHS Greater Manchester.
- C An Interim Executive Director: Finance, was appointed on the 22 November 2023 on a part-time basis.

Remuneration Bands

The Council's other employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer pension contributions) were paid the following amounts:

Remuneration Band	2023/24 Teaching Staff	2023/24 Non-Teaching Staff	2024/25 Teaching Staff	2024/25 Non-Teaching Staff
£50,000 - £54,999	56	49	82	74
£55,000 - £59,999	28	24	58	35
£60,000 - £64,999	25	15	21	32
£65,000 - £69,999	16	16	13	17
£70,000 - £74,999	13	7	11	6
£75,000 - £79,999	4	2	15	5
£80,000 - £84,999	4	6	6	6
£85,000 - £89,999	2	0	2	6
£90,000 - £94,999	2	0	3	3
£95,000 - £99,999	3	0	0	1
£100,000 - £104,999	1	1	2	2
£105,000 - £109,999	0	0	0	1
£110,000 - £114,999	0	0	2	1
£115,000 - £119,999	0	0	2	0
£120,000 - £124,999	0	0	1	1
£125,000 - £129,999	0	1	0	0
£130,000 - £134,999	0	1	0	0
£135,000 - £139,999	0	0	0	0
£140,000 - £144,999	0	0	0	1
£145,000 - £149,999	0	1	0	0
TOTAL	154	123	218	191

Exit Packages

The numbers of exit packages with total cost per band and total cost of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below.

Exit Package Cost Band (including special payments)	Number of Compulsory Redundancies		Number of Other Departures Agreed		Total Number of Exit Packages by Cost Band		Total Cost of Exit Packages in Each Band	
	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
£0 - £20,000	50	6	41	36	91	42	£840	£273
£20,001 - £40,000	4	1	4	7	8	8	£244	£213
£40,001 - £60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£0	£0
£60,001 - £80,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£0	£0
£80,001 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£0	£0
Total Cost Included in Bandings and in the CIES	54	7	45	43	99	50	£1,084	£485

31. External Audit Costs

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

External Audit Costs	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Fees Payable with Regard to External Audit Services Carried Out by the Appointed Auditor for the Year	£322	£349
Additional Fees to External Audit Services Carried Out by the Appointed Auditor	£0	£0
Total	£322	£349

32. Dedicated Schools Grant

The Council's expenditure on schools is funded primarily by grant monies provided by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The DSG is ringfenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the schools' budget, as defined in the School Finance and Early Years (England) Regulations 2022. The schools budget includes elements for a range of educational services provided on an authority-wide basis and for the individual schools budget (ISB), which is divided into a budget share for each maintained school.

Details of the deployment of the DSG receivable for 2024/25 are as follows:

DISCLOSURE OF DEPLOYMENT OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2024/25				
Note		Central Expenditure £000s	Individual Schools Budget £000s	Total £000s
A.	Final DSG for 2024/25 before Academy and High Needs Recoupment			£230,280
B.	Academy and High Needs Figure Recouped for 2024/25			£107,211
C.	Total DSG after Academy and High Needs Recoupment for 2024/25			£123,069
D.	Plus: Brought-forward from 2023/24			£3,014
E.	Less: Carry-forward to 2025/26 Agreed in Advance			£0
F.	Agreed Initial Budgeted Distribution in 2024/25	£40,686	£85,397	£126,083
G.	In-year Adjustments	£584	(£206)	£379
H.	Final Budget Distribution for 2024/25	£41,270	£85,191	£126,462
I.	Less: Actual Central Expenditure	£40,225		£40,225
J.	Less: Actual ISB Deployed to Schools		£84,424	£84,424
K.	Plus: Local Authority Contribution for 2024/25	£620	£0	£620
L.	In-year Carry-forward to 2024/25	£1,665	£767	£2,432
M.	Plus: Carry-forward to 2025/26 Agreed in Advance			£0
N.	Carry-forward to 2024/25			£2,432
O.	DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2021/22			(£21,473)
P.	Addition to DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2024/25			£0
Q.	Total of DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2024/25			(£21,473)
R.	Net DSG Position at the End of 2024/25			£19,041

- A: Final DSG figure before any amount has been recouped from the Council as published March 2025. Do not include the adjustment to the 2023/24 DSG for early years made during 2024/25 based on January 2024 numbers or top-up funding (see G below).
- B: Figure recouped from the Council in 2024/25 by the DfE for the conversion of maintained schools into academies and for high needs payments made by ESFA.
- C: Total DSG figure after academy and high needs recoupment for 2024/25, as published March 2025. (Do not deduct centrally funded licences.)
- D: Figure brought forward from 2023/24. There can only be an entry here if this is a surplus or zero; a deficit must have been placed in the DSG unusable reserve created by MHCLG's amending regulations (see line O).
- E: Any amount which the Council decided after consultation with the schools forum to carry forward to 2025/26 rather than distribute in 2024/25 – this may be the difference between estimated and final DSG for 2024/25, or a figure brought forward from 2023/24 that the Council is carrying forward again.
- F: Budgeted distribution of DSG, adjusted for carry-forward, as agreed with the schools forum. Note that the ISB column should include only money distributed to schools (including high needs place funding) and to other early years providers; centrally held schools block items such as the growth fund belong in the central expenditure column.
- G: Changes to the initial distribution, for example adjustments for exclusions, NNDR payments, or the final early years block adjustment for 2023/24 made during 2024/25 based on January 2024 numbers. Safety valve payments count as DSG and should be included here if paid in 2024/25.
- H: Budgeted distribution of DSG as at the end of the financial year.

- I: Actual amount of central expenditure items in 2024/25 – amounts not actually spent, eg money that is moved into earmarked reserves, should be included in items L20 or L21 as carried forward.
- J: Amount of ISB actually distributed to schools (ISB is regarded for DSG purposes as spent by the Council once it is deployed to schools' budget shares). Note that budget shares include early years funding, sixth form funding and high needs place funding; they do not include high needs top-up funding, which is treated as central expenditure.
- K: Any contribution from the local Council in 2024/25 that will have the effect of substituting for DSG in funding the schools budget. Do not include any change in balances held by schools as they are not to be recorded in this note.
- L: In-year position at end of 2024/25, ie:
- For central expenditure, difference between final budgeted distribution of DSG (item H12) and actual expenditure (item I15), plus any local Council contribution (item K17).
 - For ISB, difference between final budgeted distribution (item H13) and amount actually deployed to schools (item J16), plus any local Council contribution (item K18).
- M: Plus/minus any carry-forward to 2025/26 already agreed (Item E5).
- N: Total carry-forward on central expenditure (item L20) plus carry-forward on ISB (item L21) plus/minus any carry-forward to 2025/26 already agreed (item E5). To be entered in this line, this figure can only be a surplus or zero; if it results in a deficit, enter zero. Any in-year deficit in 2024/25 must be recorded as part of the DSG unusable reserve (item P26).
- O: DSG unusable reserve at end of 2023/24 (if any) – any amount placed in the unusable reserve at the end of 2020/21, and/or 2021/22 and/or 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 in accordance with the MHCLG amending regulations.
- P: Any addition to DSG unusable reserve in 2024/25 because of an in-year deficit in 2024/25; figure 24 is to be entered here rather than at N when it is a deficit.
- Q: Total of DSG unusable reserve at end of 2024/25; this is the total of O25 and P26.
- R: Net DSG position at the end of 2024/25; this is a memorandum item designed to show the overall position on DSG. It is calculated by taking the figure (if any) at N24 and deducting the figure (if any) at Q27 and will therefore show any net deficit that the local Council would have if the unusable reserve were not held separately.

Details of the deployment of the DSG receivable for 2023/24 is as follows:

DISCLOSURE OF DEPLOYMENT OF DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT 2023/24				
Note		Central Expenditure £000s	Individual Schools Budget £000s	Total £000s
A.	Final DSG for 2023/24 before Academy and High Needs Recoupment			£209,935
B.	Academy and High Needs Figure Recouped for 2023/24			£80,009
C.	Total DSG after Academy and High Needs Recoupment for 2023/24			£129,926
D.	Plus: Brought-forward from 2022/23			£2,873
E.	Less: Carry-forward to 2024/25 Agreed in Advance			£0
F.	Agreed Initial Budgeted Distribution in 2023/24	£41,364	£91,434	£132,798
G.	In-year Adjustments	£353	(£236)	£117
H.	Final Budget Distribution for 2023/4	£41,717	£91,199	£132,915
I.	Less: Actual Central Expenditure	£39,242		£39,242
J.	Less: Actual ISB Deployed to Schools		£90,659	£90,659
K.	Plus: Local Authority Contribution for 2023/24	£0	£0	£0
L.	In-year Carry-forward to 2023/24	£2,475	£539	£3,014
M.	Plus: Carry-forward to 2024/25 Agreed in Advance			£0
N.	Carry-forward to 2023/24			£3,014
O.	DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2021/22			(£21,473)
P.	Addition to DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2023/24			£0
Q.	Total of DSG Unusable Reserve at the End of 2023/24			(£21,473)
R.	Net DSG Position at the End of 2023/24			£18,459

- A: Final DSG figure before any amount has been recouped from the Council as published March 2024. Do not include the adjustment to the 2022/23 DSG for early years made during 2023/24 based on January 2023 numbers or top-up funding (see G below).
- B: Figure recouped from the Council in 2023/24 by the DfE for the conversion of maintained schools into academies and for high needs payments made by ESFA.
- C: Total DSG figure after academy and high needs recoupment for 2023/24, as published March 2024. (Do not deduct centrally funded licences.)
- D: Figure brought forward from 2022/23. There can only be an entry here if this is a surplus or zero; a deficit must have been placed in the DSG unusable reserve created by MHCLG's amending regulations (see line O).
- E: Any amount which the Council decided after consultation with the schools' forum to carry forward to 2024/25 rather than distribute in 2023/24 – this may be the difference between estimated and final DSG for 2023/24, or a figure brought forward from 2022/23 that the Council is carrying forward again.
- F: Budgeted distribution of DSG, adjusted for carry-forward, as agreed with the schools forum. Note that the ISB column should include only money distributed to schools (including high needs place funding) and to other early years providers; centrally held schools block items such as the growth fund belong in the central expenditure column.
- G: Changes to the initial distribution, for example adjustments for exclusions, NNDR payments, or the final early years block adjustment for 2022/23 made during 2023/24 based on January 2023 numbers. Safety valve payments count as DSG and should be included here if paid in 2023/24.
- H: Budgeted distribution of DSG as at the end of the financial year.

- I: Actual amount of central expenditure items in 2023/24 – amounts not actually spent, eg money that is moved into earmarked reserves, should be included in items L20 or L21 as carried forward.
- J: Amount of ISB actually distributed to schools (ISB is regarded for DSG purposes as spent by the Council once it is deployed to schools' budget shares). Note that budget shares include early years funding, sixth form funding and high needs place funding; they do not include high needs top-up funding, which is treated as central expenditure.
- K: Any contribution from the local Council in 2023/24 that will have the effect of substituting for DSG in funding the schools budget. Do not include any change in balances held by schools as they are not to be recorded in this note.
- L: In-year position at end of 2023/24, ie:
- For central expenditure, difference between final budgeted distribution of DSG (item H12) and actual expenditure (item I15), plus any local Council contribution (item K17).
 - For ISB, difference between final budgeted distribution (item H13) and amount actually deployed to schools (item J16), plus any local Council contribution (item K18).
- M: Plus/minus any carry-forward to 2024/25 already agreed (Item E5).
- N: Total carry-forward on central expenditure (item L20) plus carry-forward on ISB (item L21) plus/minus any carry-forward to 2024/25 already agreed (item E5). To be entered in this line, this figure can only be a surplus or zero; if it results in a deficit, enter zero. Any in-year deficit in 2023/24 must be recorded as part of the DSG unusable reserve (item P26).
- O: DSG unusable reserve at end of 2022/23 (if any) – any amount placed in the unusable reserve at the end of 2020/21, and/or 2021/22 and/or 2022/23 in accordance with the MHCLG amending regulations.
- P: Any addition to DSG unusable reserve in 2023/24 because of an in-year deficit in 2023/24; figure 24 is to be entered here rather than at N when it is a deficit.
- Q: Total of DSG unusable reserve at end of 2023/24; this is the total of O25 and P26.
- R: Net DSG position at the end of 2023/24; this is a memorandum item designed to show the overall position on DSG. It is calculated by taking the figure (if any) at N24 and deducting the figure (if any) at Q27 and will therefore show any net deficit that the local Council would have if the unusable reserve were not held separately.

33. Grant Income

The Council credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:

Grant Income Credited to Services	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (Including PSV)	(£129,346)	(£123,175)
Housing Benefit Subsidy - Rent Allowances	(£21,362)	(£22,517)
Housing Benefit Subsidy - Rent Rebates	(£11,618)	(£11,097)
Pupil Premium Grant	(£5,498)	(£3,838)
COVID 19 grants	(£4,099)	(£2,405)
Asylum Seekers (UASC)	(£702)	(£895)
Discretionary Housing payments	(£207)	(£3)
Other Government Grants	(£13,886)	(£15,479)
Total	(£186,718)	(£179,409)

Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Business Rates Top-Up and S31 Compensation Grants	(£23,173)	(£24,856)
<i>Non-ringfenced Government Grants:</i>		
Social Care Support Grant	(£12,635)	(£16,595)
Improved Better Care Fund	(£7,628)	(£7,628)
Market Sustainability	(£3,155)	(£3,573)
Lower Tier and Services Grant	(£1,456)	(£251)
ASC Discharge Fund	(£1,070)	(£1,783)
Housing Benefit Administration Grants	(£865)	(£483)
Business Rates Levy Surplus	(£604)	(£302)
New Homes Bonus	(£53)	(£20)
Non-ringfenced Government Grants	(£27,464)	(£30,636)
<i>Capital Grants and Contributions:</i>		
DfE Schools Capital Grants	(£12,391)	(£3,606)
GMCA Highways Funding	(£5,368)	(£5,292)
DLUHC Rough Sleepers Program	£0	
DLUHC Levelling Up Funding	(£4,906)	(£16,669)
DLUHC Disabled Facilities Grant	(£2,022)	(£1,846)
GMCA Social Housing De-Carbonisation Fund (SHDF)	(£1,884)	(£2,500)
The Football Foundation	(£1,315)	(£1,635)
GMCA Mayor Challenge Fund	(£1,248)	(£289)
GMCA Delivery of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Grant	(£226)	
GMCA UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(£149)	(£933)
GMCA Evergreen Fund	(£117)	
GMCA CRSTS	£0	
TfGM Local Authority Delivered Transport Schemes	(£92)	(£248)
DLUHC Brownfield Land Release Funding	(£29)	
DoH Social Care Single Capital Pot		(£57)
Homes England		(£114)
Suez Communities Trust		(£40)
MHCLG Rough Sleepers Programme		(£92)
Other Capital Grants and Contributions	(£481)	(£139)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(£30,228)	(£33,460)
Total	(£80,865)	(£88,952)

The authority has received a number of grants, contributions and donations that have yet to be recognised as income as they have conditions attached to them that will require the monies or property to be returned to the giver. The balances at the year-end are as follows:

Revenue Grants Received in Advance (Current)	Balance 31 March 2023 £000s	Receipts 2023/24 £000s	Applied 2023/24 £000s	2023/24 £000s	Receipts 2024/25 £000s	Applied 2024/25 £000s	2024/25 £000s
DfE Schools Grants	(£211)	(£326)	£211	(£326)	(£46)	£326	(£46)
GMCA UK Shared Prosperity Fund	(£334)	(£63)	£113	(£284)	£0	£284	£0
DLUHC LUF Capacity and Capability Grant	£0	(£123)	£0	(£123)	£0	£123	£0
Heat Network Delivery Unit Grant	£0	(£83)	£0	(£83)	£0	£83	£0
GMCA Digital Inclusion	(£118)	(£64)	£118	(£64)	(£49)	£64	(£49)
GMCA Stimulating Employer Demand for Apprenticeships	£0	(£32)	£0	(£32)	£0	£32	£0
GMCA Evergreen Fund	(£75)	£0	£54	(£21)	£0	£16	(£5)
GMCA Adult Education Budget	£0	(£11)	£0	(£11)	£0	£11	£0
DfE Non-Schools Grants	(£27)	(£10)	£27	(£10)	£0	£10	£0
Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	(£6)	(£8)	£6	(£8)	£0	£8	£0
DLUHC Distribution of the Levy Account Surplus (2324 LGFS)	(£302)	£0	£302	£0	£0	£0	£0
Miscellaneous Grants	£0	(£3)	£0	(£3)	(£3,205)	£3	(£3,205)
Total	(£1,073)	(£724)	£832	(£965)	(£3,299)	£960	(£3,304)

Capital Grants received in Advance (Non-Current)	Balance 31 March 2023 £000s	Receipts 2023/24 £000s	Applied 2023/24 £000s	2023/24 £000s	Receipts 2024/25 £000s	Applied 2024/25 £000s	2024/25 £000s
DLUHC Levelling Up Funding	(£5,346)	(£8,666)	£5,190	(£8,822)	(£20,349)	£16,669	(£12,502)
DLUHC Disabled Facilities Grant	(£5,370)	(£2,312)	£2,022	(£5,660)	(£2,628)	£1,845	(£6,443)
DLUHC Brownfield Land Release Funding	£0	(£1,731)	£34	(£1,697)	(£11)	£0	(£1,708)
DfE Schools Capital Grants	(£559)	(£1,071)	£1,038	(£592)	(£334)	£693	(£233)
DoH Social Care Single Capital Pot	(£459)	£0	£0	(£459)	£0	£57	(£402)
GMCA Mayor Challenge Fund	(£408)	(£2,713)	£2,834	(£287)	(£511)	£289	(£509)
TfGM Local Authority Delivered Transport Schemes	(£232)	(£122)	£181	(£173)	(£143)	£248	(£68)
GMCA Highways Funding	(£75)	(£312)	£216	(£171)	(£976)	£854	(£293)
Homes England	(£174)	(£21)	£50	(£145)	(£81)	£206	(£20)
DCMS Greater Manchester Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) Grant	(£69)	£0	£0	(£69)	£0	£0	(£69)
The Veolia Environmental Trust	(£121)	(£17)	£138	£0	(£82)	£0	(£82)
GMCA Evergreen Fund	(£117)	£0	£117	£0	£0	£0	£0
GMCA Delivery of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Grant	(£10)	£0	£10	£0	£0	£0	£0
GMCA Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF)	£0	(£2,847)	£2,847	£0	(£1,788)	£2,500	£712
The Football Foundation	£0	(£1,315)	£1,315	£0	(£1,151)	£1,635	£484
GMCA UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£0	(£115)	£149	£34	(£1,942)	£933	(£975)
Other Capital Grants and Contributions	(£315)	(£83)	£215	(£183)	(£125)	£158	(£150)
Sub-total Capital Grants & Contributions	(£13,255)	(£21,325)	£16,356	(£18,224)	(£30,121)	£26,087	(£22,258)
Section 38 & Section 278 Contributions	£0	(£245)	£40	(£205)	£0	£0	(£205)
Total	(£13,255)	(£21,570)	£16,396	(£18,429)	(£30,121)	£26,087	(£22,463)

34. Related Parties

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

This note sets out details of transactions between related parties and the Council.

Central Government: the Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Council. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Council operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants for Council services 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 in 2024/25 and outstanding at 31 March 2025 from government departments are shown in Note 33.

Members of the Council have direct control over the Council's financial and operating policies. Details of Members' interests, both pecuniary and non-financial are recorded in the Register of Members' Interests, which is open to public inspection. Members' interests are also available to view via the Council's web site.

The total of members' allowances paid in 2024/25 is shown in Note 29.

Corporate Directors and Service Directors are required on an annual basis to make a declaration of related parties. In addition, there is a code of conduct under which such officers must disclose any pecuniary and non-financial interests.

No such disclosures have been made for 2024/25.

Other Public Bodies [subject to common control by central government]

The Council has a pooled fund arrangement with NHS GM which encompasses Council Adult Social Care budgets and NHS commissioned expenditure, together with expenditure funded by the Better Care Fund and Improved Better Care Fund. For further details see Note 28 Pooled Funds.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

GMCA co-ordinates key economic development, regeneration, transport, and waste disposal functions. The Council pays levies to GMCA for transport and waste disposal functions and the following amounts are included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, within Other Operating Expenditure.

Related Parties	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
GM Waste Disposal Authority	£12,869	£14,069
GM Passenger Transport Authority	£13,403	£13,780
Environment Agency	£111	£114
Total	£26,383	£27,963

Entities Controlled or Significantly Influenced by the AuthoritySubsidiaries

The Council prepares Group Accounts for entities where it has material financial interests and a significant level of control. The Bury Council Group comprises Six Town Housing Ltd, Persona Care and Support Ltd and Persona Group Ltd, and Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd.

Related Party Transactions	2024/25					
	Receipts	Payments Management Fee	Payments Other	Payroll	Outstanding Balances: Loans	Outstanding Balances: Debtor/ Creditor
	£000s	£000s	£000s			£000s
Subsidiaries						
Six Town Housing Ltd.,	(£287)	£0	£1,860	£0	£2,752	(£187)
Persona Group Ltd.,	(£591)	£9,414	£4,450	£0	£0	£85
Persona Care and Support Ltd.,						
Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd.,	(£611)	£0	£0	£0	£7,257	£317
Total	(£1,489)	£9,414	£6,310	£0	£10,009	£215

Related Party Transactions	2023/24					
	Receipts	Payments Management Fee	Payments Other	Payroll	Outstanding Balances: Loans	Outstanding Balances: Debtor/ Creditor
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Subsidiaries						
Six Town Housing Ltd.,	(£3,609)	£10,631	£11,655	(£10,314)	£2,821	£137
Persona Group Ltd.,	(£667)	£12,424	£1,128	£0	£0	£45
Persona Care and Support Ltd.,						
Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd.,	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,257	£305
Total	(£4,276)	£23,055	£12,783	(£10,314)	£10,078	£487

Six Town Housing Ltd was set up to manage and maintain the housing stock of Bury Council. Six Town Housing has no share capital and is wholly owned by the Authority. It is an ALMO (arms-length management organisation) of the Council and is a company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on 30 October 2003. On the 1 February 2024 the Council terminated this arrangement and brought the management of the Council's housing stock back in-house.

Six Town Housing made a profit before tax of £0.352m in 2024/25 compared to a loss before tax of £0.895m in 2023/24.

The Persona group of companies comprise of Persona Group Ltd, and Persona Care and Support Ltd. These companies were formed to provide social care services to older people and people with disabilities. The company's share capital (Called up Share Capital £3) is wholly owned by Bury Council.

The Persona group of companies made profit before tax of £0.112m in 2024/25, compared to a profit before tax of £0.288m in 2023/24. Bury Council paid management fees of £9.414m in 2024/25 (£12.424m in 2023/24).

Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd was formed to facilitate the development of Knowsley Place and was incorporated on 14 October 2009. The company's share capital (Ordinary Share Capital £1) is wholly owned by Bury Council.

Bury MBC Townside Fields Limited made a profit before tax of £0.268m in 2024/25, compared to a profit before tax of £0.314m in 2023/24.

Joint Ventures

Related Party Transactions	2024/25			
	Receipts	Payments Other	Outstanding Balances: Loans	Outstanding Balances: Debtor/Creditor
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Joint Ventures				
Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP	(£1,423)	£408	£20,349	£251
The Prestwich Regeneration LLP	£0	£0	£1,127	£0
Total	(£1,423)	£408	£21,476	£251

Related Party Transactions	2023/24			
	Receipts	Payments Other	Outstanding Balances: Loans	Outstanding Balances: Debtor/Creditor
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Joint Ventures				
Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP	(£1,283)	£76	£20,349	£244
The Prestwich Regeneration LLP	£0	£0	£628	£0
Total	(£1,283)	£76	£20,977	£244

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP

A 50/50 Joint Venture company was formed on 25 January 2022, between the Council and Bruntwood LLP, to acquire, hold and manage the Millgate Estate and Shopping Centre, alongside the development of a long-term masterplan to secure and enhance the estate in line with other important town centre projects, including the Flexi Hall and transport interchange.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP acquired the Mill Gate Estate and Shopping Centre in April 2022, that was funded by the Council through PWLB borrowing and providing loans totalling £20.350m to the Joint Venture.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP made a loss of £0.315m in 2024/25, compared to a profit of £0.124m in 2023/24.

The Prestwich Regeneration LLP

Following the Council acquisition of the Longfield Shopping Centre in July 2021, a 50/50 Joint Venture company was formed on 19 October 2022, between the Council and MUSE Developments Ltd, to shape a new masterplan for the site, creating new spaces to help people and businesses to thrive, with a mix of high-quality homes and family-friendly spaces, as well as a new community hub that promotes health and wellbeing.

The Prestwich Regeneration LLP made a loss of £0.236m in 2024/25, at the 31 March 2025 compared to a loss of £0.123m in 2023/24.

More information can be found at The Group Accounts section to the Statement of Accounts.

35. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing Requirement

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

Capital Expenditure and Financing Requirement	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	£371,130	£383,511
IFRS 16 Opening balance Adjustment	£0	£12,007
Updated Opening Capital Financing Requirement	£371,130	£395,519
Capital Investment		
Property Plant and Equipment	£49,156	£54,255
Heritage Assets	£0	£0
Investment Properties	£0	£118
Intangible Assets	£412	£532
Assets Held for Sale	£0	£0
Long-term Investment	£0	£0
Long-term Debtors	£628	£498
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute	£2,933	£4,431
Source of Finance		
Capital Receipts	(£2,649)	(£7,740)
Government Grants And Other Contributions	(£22,479)	(£33,240)
Major Repairs Reserve	(£7,259)	(£7,401)
<i>Sums Set Aside from Revenue:</i>		
Direct Revenue Contributions	(£5,829)	(£329)
MRP/The Statutory Repayment of Loans Fund Advances (Capital Loans)	(£2,531)	(£3,236)
IFRS 16 MRP Adjustment	£0	(£834)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	£383,511	£402,572
Explanation of movement in year		
Increase in Underlying Need to Borrow (Supported by Government Financial Assistance)	£0	£0
Increase in Underlying Need to Borrow (Unsupported by Government Financial Assistance)	£14,912	£11,123
Assets Acquired Under Finance Leases	£0	£0
MRP/The Statutory Repayment of Loans Fund Advances (Capital Loans)	(£2,531)	(£4,070)
Increase/(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	£12,381	£7,053

36. Leases

Authority as Lessor

Operating Leases

The Council has numerous operating leasing agreements with private individuals and entities regarding shops, other premises, and land where the Council acts as the lessor. The most significant of these is for land leased to Manchester Airport until 31.03.2085 for an annual rental of £530,526.

The future minimum lease payments receivable is shown in the table below:

Operating Leases - Lessor	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Not later than one year	£2,161	£2,019
Later than one year and not later than five years	£7,864	£7,693
Later than five years	£122,330	£120,482
Total	£132,355	£130,194

Authority as Lessee

The Council has adopted IFRS 16 from 1 April 2024 and therefore no consolidation adjustments have been made in the current financial year. At transition date to IFRS 16, Bury Council applied the practical expedient which means Bury Council will not reassess whether the existing contracts are or contains leases at the date of initial application. Bury Council will also not restate previous year figures. The Council is engaged in a number of leases to acquire the use of buildings.

Right of Use Assets

The council classifies contracts as leases based on their substance. Contracts and parts of contracts, including those described as contracts for services, are analysed to determine whether they convey the right to control the use of an identifiable asset, through rights both to obtain substantially all the economic benefits or service potential from that asset and to direct its use. Leases are recognised as right-of-use assets with a corresponding liability at the date from which the leased asset is available for use (or the IFRS 16 transition date, if later). This includes arrangements with nil consideration, or nominal payments.

Right of use Assets	Land and Buildings £000s
Not later than one year	£842
Later than one year and not later than five years	£3,762
Later than five years	£6,569
Total	£11,173

Finance Leases

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

Finance Lease Liability	31 March 2024 £000s	31 March 2025 £000s
Finance Lease Liabilities (net present value of minimum lease payments)	£4	£4
Minimum Lease Payments	£4	£4

37. Pension Schemes Accounted for as Defined Contribution Schemes

Teachers' Pension Scheme

Teachers employed by the Council are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme, administered by Teachers' Pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The Scheme provides teachers with specified benefits upon their retirement and the Council contributes towards the cost by making contributions based on a percentage of scheme members' pensionable salaries.

The Scheme is a multi-employer defined benefit scheme. The scheme is unfunded, and the Department for Education (DfE) uses a notional fund as the basis for calculating the employer's contribution rate paid by Local Authorities. Valuations of the notional fund are undertaken every four years.

The scheme has in excess of 3,700 participating employers and consequently the Council is not able to identify its share of the underlying financial position and performance of the scheme with sufficient reliability for accounting purposes. For the purposes of this Statement of Accounts, it is therefore accounted for on the same basis as a defined contribution scheme.

In 2024/25, the Council paid £8.406m (£8.999m in 2023/24) to Teachers Pensions in respect of teachers' retirement benefits, representing 28.68% (23.68% in 2023/24) of pensionable pay.

The Council is responsible for the costs of any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the teachers' scheme. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefit basis as detailed below.

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

NHS Pension Scheme

Public Health employees are members of the NHS Pension Scheme, administered by the EA Finance NHS Pensions. This scheme provides its members with specified benefits on their retirement and the Council contributes towards the costs by making contributions based on a percentage of members' pensionable salaries.

The NHS Pension Scheme is operated in a similar way to the Teachers' Pension Scheme, in that Employer Contributions are set nationally and all contributions from employers and employees are paid into one pot.

In 2024/25, the Council paid £0.037m (£0.035m in 2023/24) to the EA Finance NHS Pensions for members of the NHS pension scheme's retirement benefits, representing 14.38% (14.38% in 2023/24) of pensionable pay.

The Council is responsible for any additional benefits awarded upon early retirement outside of the terms of the NHS pension scheme. These costs are accounted for on a defined benefit basis as detailed below.

38. Defined Benefit Pension Schemes

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

All employees (except teachers and members of the NHS pension scheme) are, unless they have opted out, members of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund which is administered by Tameside MBC and operates in accordance with the rules of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). This is a funded defined benefit career average (previously final salary scheme), meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets.

The Greater Manchester Pension Scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the pension committee of Tameside Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pension fund Regulations. The investment managers of the fund are appointed by the committee and consist of the Director of Finance and Resources of Tameside Council.

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

Discretionary Post-retirement Benefits

Discretionary post-retirement benefits on early retirement are an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. There are no plan assets built up to meet these pension liabilities, and cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they may eventually fall due.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

The cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services is recognised when they are earned by the employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge that is required to be made against Council Tax or Rent Payers is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

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

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cost of Services:		
Service Cost Comprising:		
Current Service Cost	£17,005	£15,905
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	£1,127	£1,477
(Gain)/Loss from Settlements	(£206)	£2,206
Total Service Cost	£17,926	£19,588
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:		
Interest income on scheme assets	(£42,500)	(£47,823)
Interest cost on defined benefit obligation	£38,254	£40,353
Total Net Interest Expense	(£4,246)	(£7,470)
Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£13,680	£12,118
Other Post-Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Liability Comprising:		
Return on Plan Assets (excluding amounts included in net interest)	(£26,403)	£7,772
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	(£5,721)	(£1,467)
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) arising from changes in financial assumptions	(£45,985)	(£119,694)
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£26,558	(£8,993)
The Effects of Business Combinations and Disposals	(£10,920)	£0
Total remeasurements recognised in other comprehensive income	(£62,471)	(£122,382)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	£154,723	£129,714
Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£105,932	£19,450
Movement in Reserves Statement:		
Reversal of Net Charges Made to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in Accordance with the Code	(£13,680)	(£12,118)
Actual Amount Charged Against the General Fund Balance for Pensions in the Year:		
Employers' Contributions Payable to the Scheme & Benefits Paid	£18,551	£19,450

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amounts included in the Balance Sheet arising from the council's obligation in respect of its defined benefit scheme is as follows:

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Fair Value of Plan Assets	£1,005,611	£1,016,448
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	(£830,119)	(£714,417)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	(£20,769)	(£17,594)
Effect of the asset ceiling	(£154,723)	(£284,437)
Net Asset / (Liability) Arising From Defined Benefit Obligation	£0	£0

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

Reconciliation of the Movement in Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	£893,314	£1,005,611
Interest Income	£42,500	£47,823
Remeasurement Gain/(Loss):		
Return on Plan Assets Excluding Amounts Included in Net Interest Expense	£26,403	(£7,772)
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£0	£0
Contributions from The Employer into the Scheme	£16,170	£17,059
Contributions from Employees into the Scheme	£5,295	£5,613
Benefits Paid	(£33,744)	(£33,012)
Other: Settlements	(£3,321)	(£18,874)
Other: Assets Assumed on Entity Combinations	£58,994	£0
Closing Fair Value of Scheme Assets	£1,005,611	£1,016,448

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

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening Balance at 1 April	(£805,933)	(£850,888)
Current Service Cost	(£17,005)	(£15,905)
Interest Cost	(£38,254)	(£40,353)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	(£5,295)	(£5,613)
Remeasurement (Gains)/Losses :		
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	£5,721	£1,467
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Financial Assumptions	£45,985	£119,694
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	(£26,558)	£8,993
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	(£1,127)	(£1,477)
Liabilities Assumed on Entity Combinations	(£48,074)	£0
Benefits Paid	£36,125	£35,403
Liabilities Extinguished on Settlements	£3,527	£16,668
Opening Balance at 31 March	(£850,888)	(£732,011)

The Effect of the Asset Ceiling

The effect of the asset ceiling has been determined by the Scheme's actuaries on the basis of the limitation on the Council's ability to recover the full economic benefit of its assets through reductions in future employer's contributions because of the minimum funding requirement imposed on it by the funding strategy for the Scheme in place at 31 March 2025.

The Scheme actuaries have assessed the Council's estimated future service costs less the estimated minimum funding requirement contributions to establish the economic benefit that is available to the Council. The net pensions asset has therefore been adjusted down to nil by this effect of the asset ceiling.

Movement in Fair Value of Scheme Assets and Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities	2023/24				2024/25			
	Scheme Plan Assets £000s	Pensions Obligations £000s	Effect of Asset Ceiling £000s	Net Pensions Asset/ (Liability) £000s	Scheme Plan Assets £000s	Pensions Obligations £000s	Effect of Asset Ceiling £000s	Net Pensions Asset/ (Liability) £000s
Opening Balance at 1 April 2024	£893,314	(£805,933)	£0	£87,381	£1,005,611	(£850,888)	(£154,723)	£0
Current Service Cost	£0	(£17,005)	£0	(£17,005)	£0	(£15,905)	£0	(£15,905)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	£5,295	(£5,295)	£0	£0	£5,613	(£5,613)	£0	£0
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	£0	(£1,127)	£0	(£1,127)	£0	(£1,477)	£0	(£1,477)
Other: Settlements	(£3,321)	£3,527	£0	£206	(£18,874)	£16,668	£0	(£2,206)
Interest Income	£42,500	£0	£0	£42,500	£47,823	£0	£0	£47,823
Interest Cost	£0	(£38,254)	£0	(£38,254)	£0	(£40,353)	£0	(£40,353)
Remeasurement (Gains)/Losses :								
Return on Plan Assets Excluding Amounts Included in Net Interest Expense	£26,403	£0	£0	£26,403	(£7,772)	£0	£0	(£7,772)
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	£0	£5,721	£0	£5,721	£0	£1,467	£0	£1,467
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Financial Assumptions	£0	£45,985	£0	£45,985	£0	£119,694	£0	£119,694
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£0	(£26,558)	£0	(£26,558)	£0	£8,993	£0	£8,993
Change in the Effect of the Asset Ceiling	£0	£0	(£154,723)	(£154,723)	£0	£0	(£129,714)	(£129,714)
Other: Entity Combinations	£58,994	(£48,074)	£0	£10,920	£0	£0	£0	£0
Benefits Paid	(£33,744)	£36,125	£0	£2,381	(£33,012)	£35,403	£0	£2,391
Contributions from The Employer into the Scheme	£16,170	£0	£0	£16,170	£17,059	£0	£0	£17,059
Closing Balance at 31 March 2025	£1,005,611	(£850,888)	(£154,723)	£0	£1,016,448	(£732,011)	(£284,437)	£0

Local Government Pension Scheme Assets Comprised

Fair Value of Scheme Assets	Period Ended 31 March 2024				Period Ended 31 March 2025			
	Quoted Prices in Active Markets £000s	Quoted Prices not in Active Markets £000s	TOTAL £000s	Percentage of Total Assets	Quoted Prices in Active Markets £000s	Quoted Prices not in Active Markets £000s	TOTAL £000s	Percentage of Total Assets
Equity Securities:								
Consumer	£64,368	£0	£64,368	6%	£67,202	£0	£67,202	7%
Manufacturing	£58,556	£0	£58,556	6%	£49,202	£0	£49,202	5%
Energy and Utilities	£58,012	£0	£58,012	6%	£60,208	£0	£60,208	6%
Financial Institutions	£88,932	£0	£88,932	9%	£94,575	£0	£94,575	9%
Health and Care	£52,178	£0	£52,178	5%	£47,246	£0	£47,246	5%
Information Technology	£57,419	£0	£57,419	6%	£53,297	£0	£53,297	5%
Other	£10,003	£0	£10,003	1%	£13,657	£0	£13,657	1%
Debt Securities								
Corporate Bonds (investment grade)	£34,902	£0	£34,902	4%	£32,978	£0	£32,978	3%
Corporate Bonds (non-investment grade)	£0	£0	£0	0%	£0	£0	£0	0%
UK Government	£27,394	£0	£27,394	3%	£44,906	£0	£44,906	4%
Other	£30,575	£0	£30,575	3%	£41,353	£0	£41,353	4%
Private Equity								
All	£0	£68,479	£68,479	7%	£0	£63,994	£63,994	6%
Real Estate								
UK Property	£0	£44,309	£44,309	4%	£0	£53,038	£53,038	5%
Overseas Property	£0	£0	£0	0%	£0	£0	£0	0%
Investment Funds and Unit Trusts								
Equities	£47,487	£0	£47,487	5%	£18,338	£0	£18,338	2%
Bonds	£95,613	£0	£95,613	10%	£102,159	£0	£102,159	10%
Infrastructure	£0	£85,625	£85,625	9%	£0	£85,233	£85,233	8%
Other	£25,024	£134,886	£159,910	16%	£26,763	£131,951	£158,714	16%
Derivatives								
Other	(£321)	£0	(£321)	0%	(£619)	£0	(£619)	0%
Cash and Cash Equivalents								
All	£22,171	£0	£22,171	2%	£30,969	£0	£30,969	3%
Total Assets	£672,312	£333,299	£1,005,611	100%	£682,233	£334,215	£1,016,448	100%

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

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

Both the Local Government Pension Scheme and Discretionary Benefits liabilities have been assessed by Hymans Robertson LLP, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates being based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2025.

The significant assumptions used by the actuary have been:

Significant Assumptions	2023/24	2024/25
Mortality Assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for Current Pensioners:		
- men	20.4	20.4
- women	23.4	23.4
Longevity at 65 for Future Pensioners:		
- men	21.2	21.0
- women	24.9	24.8
Rate of Inflation	2.75%	2.75%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.55%	3.55%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.75%	2.75%
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities	4.85%	5.80%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analysis below has been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant.

The assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated.

The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

Change in Assumptions at 31 March 2025	Approximate % Increase to Defined Benefit Obligation	Approximate Monetary Amount (£000s)
0.1% Decrease in Real Discount Rate	2%	£11,918
0.1% Increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0%	£522
0.1% Increase in the Pension Increase Rate	2%	£11,727
1 year Increase in Member Life Expectancy	4%	£29,280

Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The next triennial valuation is due to be completed on 31 March 2026.

The scheme will need to take account of the national changes to the scheme under the Public Pensions Services Act 2013. Under the Act, the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales and other main existing public service schemes may not provide benefits in relation to service after 31 March 2014 (or service after 31 March 2015 for other main existing public service pension schemes in England and Wales). The Act provides regulations for the scheme to be made within a common framework, to establish new career average revalued earnings schemes to pay pensions and other benefits.

The Council's estimated Employer's contributions for the period to 31 March 2026 will be approximately £17,041,000.

Bury Pension Guarantees

The Council has pension guarantees in place for two organisations Addiction Dependency Solutions and Persona Care and Support Ltd. The guarantees identified are those which the Council has an agreement in place with GMPF. Valuations have been obtained on both an on-going and cessation basis.

We have determined that these pension guarantees meet the definition of an insurance contract in accordance with IFRS4. IFRS4 defines an insurance contract as:

A contract under which one party (the insurer) accepts significant insurance risk from another party (the policyholder) by agreeing to compensate the policyholder if a specified uncertain future event (the insured event) adversely affects the policyholder.

The Council is the insurer and through the provision of the pension guarantee is accepting the risk of the admission body being unable to fund the benefits earned by its employees.

We have assessed the nature and extent of potential liabilities in respect of these guarantees and the likelihood of cash outflow is low. If any guarantee was invoked, this would be valued on an ongoing basis as the net surplus/liability would be added to the BMBC sub fund as we are a continuing employer.

The overall net surplus/deficit position for guarantees valued on an ongoing basis is a net surplus position – because there is a net surplus and because the likelihood of cash outflow is considered to be remote, no liabilities have been included in the Council's financial statements at 31 March 2025.

39. Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is a potential liability which depends on the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events. The Council has identified the following contingent liabilities as at 31 March 2025.

Municipal Mutual Insurance Ltd

On 30 September 1992 the Council's then insurers, MMI Ltd, announced that they were no longer accepting new business. On the 13 November 2012 the directors of MMI triggered a Scheme of Arrangement which now means that the Council may be required to repay amounts for claims previously settled. The scheme provides that following a Trigger Event a levy may be imposed on all those creditors that have been paid in respect of established scheme liabilities, this rate is currently 25%.

The established scheme liabilities of gross claim payments at 31 March 2025 is £2.198m which would attract a levy of £0.537m should a Trigger Event arise. The amended liability that the Council may be required to repay is £1.661m (£2.198m less £0.537m levy) in respect of claims previously settled.

At 31 March 2025, there are no outstanding claims with MMI.

40. Contingent Assets

A contingent asset is an asset that may be received but only if a future event occurs that is not under the control of the Council. The Council has identified no contingent assets as at 31 March 2025.

Housing Revenue Account

Income and Expenditure Statement

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

Since April 2005 the Council's housing stock has been managed by an Arm's Length Management Organisation, Six Town Housing, however on the 1 February 2024 the Council terminated this arrangement and brought the management of the Council's housing stock back in-house.

HRA Income and Expenditure Statement	Note	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Income			
Dwelling Rents		(£33,711)	(£36,745)
Non-Dwelling Rents		(£176)	(£229)
Charges for Services and Facilities		(£1,079)	(£1,151)
Contributions Towards Expenditure		(£13)	(£1,219)
Sums Directed by the Secretary of State that are Income in Accordance with Proper Practices		£0	£0
Total Income		(£34,979)	(£39,344)
Expenditure			
Repairs and Maintenance		£6,978	£9,335
Supervision and Management		£8,074	£9,866
Special Services		£1,123	£1,328
Rents, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges		£31	£183
Depreciation, Impairment and Revaluation Losses of HRA Non-current Assets	5,6	£9,895	£7,569
Debt Management Costs		£37	£25
Movement in the Allowance for Bad Debts	8	£484	£335
Total Expenditure		£26,623	£28,641
Net Cost of HRA Services as included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		(£8,357)	(£10,703)
HRA Services Share of Corporate and Democratic Core		£400	£418
Net Cost of HRA Services		(£7,957)	(£10,285)
HRA Share of Operating Income and Expenditure included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:			
(Gain)/Loss on Sale of HRA Non-Current Assets		(£805)	(£706)
Interest Payable and Similar Charges		£4,498	£4,570
Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset)		(£35)	(£301)
Interest and Investment Income		(£583)	(£649)
Capital Grants and Contributions		(£2,105)	(£2,800)
(Surplus) or Deficit for the Year on HRA Services		(£6,987)	(£10,170)

Movement on the Housing Revenue Account Statement

Movement on the HRA Statement		Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance on the HRA at the End of the Previous Reporting Period		(£9,176)	(£10,510)
(Surplus) or Deficit for the Year on the HRA Income and Expenditure Statement		(£6,987)	(£10,170)
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Statute		£5,653	£3,933
Net (Increase) or Decrease before Transfers to or from Reserves		(£1,334)	(£6,236)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves		£0	£0
(Increase) or Decrease in Year on the HRA		(£1,334)	(£6,236)
Balance on the HRA at the End of the Current Reporting Period		(£10,510)	(£16,745)

Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Statute

Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Statute		Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Analysis of Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Statute			
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Reserve)		£0	(£5)
Gain or Loss on Sale of HRA Non-Current Assets		£805	£706
HRA Share of Contributions to or from the Pensions Reserve		£39	£384
Capital Expenditure Funded by the HRA		£5,341	£0
Transfer to/from the Major Repairs Reserve		£7,259	£7,414
Transfer to/from the Capital Adjustment Account		(£7,790)	(£4,770)
HRA Revenue Provision for Debt Repayment		£0	£204
Net Adjustment		£5,653	£3,933

Notes to the Housing Revenue Account

01. Housing Stock

In preparing the HRA budget, the Council needs to estimate the total level of income it can raise from rents. In doing so it takes account of current rental income, any likely changes in the size and composition of the Housing Stock and the estimated loss of income from unoccupied dwellings.

The numbers of each type of property at 31 March were:

Housing Stock	2023/24	2024/25
Flats & maisonettes	3,324	3,274
Bungalows	725	803
Houses	3,666	3,589
Total	7,715	7,666

The total housing stock numbers for 2024/25 excludes 46 (35 in 2023/24) Council houses that were disposed of during the financial year.

The total capital receipts realised from the disposal of Council houses during the year was £3.458m (£2.446m in 2023/24). The figure represents the total selling price of Council houses (net of Right to Buy discount) and other repaid discounts relating to previous sales.

The value of the housing stock was:

Housing Stock Value	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Dwellings	£231,697	£288,244
Land	£65,644	£81,300
Shops, Offices and Garage Colonies	£2,711	£2,782
Total	£300,052	£372,326

02. Vacant Possession

The Vacant Possession Value (VPV) of dwellings within the Council's HRA as at 31 March 2025 was £921.08m representing an increase of approximately 24% over the 31 March 2024 figure of £742.6m.

The new value was established as a result of the revaluation of the Housing Stock completed in the year.

The VPV is an opinion of the best sale price that could have been obtained for the properties on the date of the valuation. The Balance Sheet value of dwellings within the HRA contains an adjustment factor advised by Government to reflect the fact that the properties have sitting tenants enjoying sub-market rents and rights, including 'right-to-buy'. This reflects the economic cost to the Government of providing council housing at less than open market rents.

The current adjustment factor for the North West and Merseyside Region originally set from April 2016 at 40% by DCLG remains, resulting in an adjusted value of £369.0m at the valuation in 2025, compared to an adjusted value of £297.0m at valuation in 2024.

03. Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)

The Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), that used to be paid in past years as part of the HRA subsidy provided authorities with the resources needed to maintain the value of their housing stock over time.

Under the new self-financing model Authorities can use, based on a componentised calculation for depreciation, that is transferred during the year into the Major Repairs Reserve and equates to an amount not less than the previous MRA amount.

Major Repairs Reserve (MRR)	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Balance as at 1st April	£0	£0
Transferred to MRR During the Year	£7,259	£7,414
Debits in Respect of Financing Capital Expenditure within HRA	(£7,259)	(£7,401)
Balance as at 31st March	£0	£13

04. Capital Expenditure within HRA

The 1989 Act gives local authorities the discretion to finance expenditure for HRA capital purposes from the HRA.

Capital Expenditure within the HRA	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Total capital expenditure within the HRA	£16,572	£15,209
Financed by:		
Capital Receipts	£2,046	£2,627
Government Grants And Other Contributions	£1,926	£2,779
Major Repairs Reserve	£7,259	£7,401
Direct Revenue Contributions	£5,341	£0
Borrowing	£0	£2,402
Total	£16,572	£15,209

05. Depreciation

The HRA is charged an amount for depreciation of assets.

HRA Depreciation	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Council Dwellings	£7,167	£7,321
Shops, Offices and Garage Colonies	£92	£93
Total	£7,259	£7,414

06. Revenue Expenditure Funded From Capital Under Statute

No revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute is attributable to the HRA.

07. Rent Arrears / Impairment Allowance**Rent Arrears**

The rent arrears as at 31 March 2025 totalled £2.750m, and at 31 March 2024 totalled £1.997m.

Of the arrears at 31 March 2025, 70.4% related to current tenants (73.44% at 31 March 2024) and 29.6% related to former tenants (26.56% at 31 March 2024).

Impairment Allowance

Rents Impairment Allowance	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening credit loss Provision	£1,910	£2,216
Additional Provisions Made In-Year	£484	£335
Amounts Written-off In-Year	(£178)	(£77)
Net increase / (decrease)	£306	£258
Closing Impairment Allowance	£2,216	£2,474

The Collection Fund

Collection Fund Statement:

Income and Expenditure Account	Note	2023/24 Council Tax £000s	2023/24 NNDR £000s	2023/24 Total £000s	2024/25 Council Tax £000s	2024/25 NNDR £000s	2024/25 Total £000s
Income							
Council Tax	1	(£126,656)	£0	(£126,656)	(£134,140)	£0	(£134,140)
Council Tax Annexe Grant		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Business Rates Receivable	2	£0	(£46,588)	(£46,588)	£0	(£48,541)	(£48,541)
Transitional Protection Receipt		£0	(£2,588)	(£2,588)	£0	(£78)	(£78)
Contributions towards Previous Year's Deficit:							
Bury MBC		£0	(£2,902)	(£2,902)	£0	(£5,361)	(£5,361)
GMCA Police & Crime Commissioner		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
GMCA Fire		£0	(£29)	(£29)	£0	(£54)	(£54)
Total Income		(£126,656)	(£52,108)	(£178,764)	(£134,140)	(£54,034)	(£188,174)
Expenditure							
Precepts and Demands on Collection Fund:							
Bury MBC		£103,680	£44,412	£148,093	£110,199	£45,950	£156,149
GMCA Police & Crime Commissioner		£13,797	£0	£13,797	£14,714	£0	£14,714
GMCA Fire		£6,122	£449	£6,570	£6,484	£464	£6,948
Transitional Protection Payments		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Cost of Collection		£0	£234	£234	£0	£234	£234
Disregards: Renewable Energy		£0	£1	£1	£0	£0	£0
Impairment of Debts/Appeals:							
Write-offs of Uncollectable Amounts		£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Increase/(Decrease) in the Allowance for Impairment of Debt		£661	£2,314	£2,975	£1,583	(£26)	£1,557
Increase/(Decrease) in the Allowance for Impairment of Arrears		£0	£2,379	£2,379	£0	£1,550	£1,550
Contributions towards Previous Year's Surplus:							
Bury MBC		£2,085	£0	£2,085	£732	£0	£732
GMCA Police & Crime Commissioner		£273	£0	£273	£98	£0	£98
GMCA Fire		£123	£0	£123	£43	£0	£43
Total Expenditure		£126,741	£49,788	£176,529	£133,853	£48,172	£182,024
Opening Fund Balance		(£716)	£8,416	£7,700	(£630)	£6,096	£5,466
Closing Fund Balance		(£630)	£6,096	£5,466	(£918)	£233	(£684)
Movement on Fund Balance		£85	(£2,320)	(£2,234)	(£287)	(£5,863)	(£6,150)

Notes to the Collection Fund Statement

01. Council Tax

Council Tax Band	Valuation	Total Number of Dwellings	Specified Ratio	Band D Equivalent
A reduced	Less than £40,000	53	5/9	30
A	Less than £40,000	20,464	6/9	13,642
B	£40,000 to £52,000	15,253	7/9	11,864
C	£52,000 to £68,000	15,247	8/9	13,554
D	£68,000 to £88,000	9,424	9/9	9,424
E	£88,000 to £120,000	5,190	11/9	6,342
F	£120,000 to £160,000	1,777	13/9	2,568
G	£160,000 to £320,000	1,228	15/9	2,047
H	More than £320,000	166	18/9	330
Total		68,802		59,801
Less Allowance for Losses on Collection			-4.00%	(£2,392)
Council Tax Base 2024/25				57,409

The actual number of properties was 85,076 but after adjusting for single person discounts, empty properties etc, the Band D equivalent number of dwellings is 59,801.

The Band D Council Tax levied for 2024/25 was £2,288.80 (£2,179.56 in 2023/24):

Band D Council Tax Levied	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Bury Council	£1,828.31	£1,919.55
GMCA Police & Crime Commissioner	£243.30	£256.30
GMCA Fire	£107.95	£112.95
Total	£2,179.56	£2,288.80

02. National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

The Council collects NNDR in respect of business premises by applying a rate poundage set by central Government to the rateable value of the premises.

The national multipliers for 2024/25 were 49.9p for qualifying small businesses (49.9p in 2023/24) and the standard multiplier being 54.6p for all other businesses (51.2p in 2023/24).

The estimated non-domestic rateable value of the Borough at 31 March 2025 is £135.47m (£135.80m as at 31 March 2024).

The Group Accounts

Introduction

The CIPFA Code of Practice requires that where a Council has material financial interests and a significant level of control over one or more entity, it should prepare Group Accounts. The aim of these statements is to give an overall picture of the Authority's financial activities and the resources employed in carrying out those activities.

Definitions

- A group is a parent and all its subsidiaries.
- Group accounts are the financial statements of a group in which the assets, liabilities, reserves, income, expenses, and cash flows of the parent (reporting authority) and its subsidiaries plus the investments in associates and interests in joint ventures are presented as those of a single economic entity.
- A subsidiary is an entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership that is controlled by another entity (known as the parent).
- A joint venture is a joint arrangement whereby the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the net assets of the arrangement.

Group Accounts Preparation

The Council has prepared the following Group Accounts due to:

The Council relationship with three organisations over which it has substantial control and influence that have been identified as Subsidiaries of Bury Council, of:

- Six Town Housing Ltd
- Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd
- Persona Care and Support Ltd and Persona Group Ltd

Basis of consolidation, line-by-line consolidation

- Adding like items of assets, liabilities, reserves, income, and expenses together line by line to those of other group members in the financial statements.
- Intragroup balances and transactions are eliminated in full.
- 100% of all other balances and transactions are consolidated.

The two joint arrangements formed during 2022/23, whereby the Council has agreed to share joint control and has rights to the net assets of the arrangement, have been classed as a Joint Venture, of:

- Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP
- The Prestwich Regeneration LLP

Basis of consolidation, equity method

- Adjusting the investment originally recognised at cost for the Councils post-acquisition change in its share of the net assets of the investee and including the Councils share of profits and losses in the group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- The Councils share of profits or losses generated by transactions between the group members (e.g. sales of assets) are eliminated.

The Group Accounts comprise the following key financial statements (with appropriate disclosures):

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

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Restated 2023/24			Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		2024/25		
Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s	Description	Note	Gross Expenditure £000s	Gross Income £000s	Net Expenditure £000s
£125,707	(£37,035)	£88,672	Health & Adult Care		£157,224	(£53,892)	£103,331
£221,257	(£160,671)	£60,586	Children, Young People & Culture		£223,825	(£148,777)	£75,048
£30,429	(£9,256)	£21,173	Corporate Core Services		£26,243	(£10,696)	£15,547
£6,354	(£6,144)	£210	Non Service Specific		£10,220	(£7,483)	£2,737
£8,193	(£5,766)	£2,427	Business, Growth & Infrastructure		£9,578	(£4,829)	£4,749
£44,868	(£16,807)	£28,061	Operations		£43,074	(£18,936)	£24,138
£33,849	(£33,187)	£662	Housing General Fund		£33,615	(£33,617)	(£2)
£30,197	(£37,718)	(£7,522)	Housing Revenue Account		£28,847	(£39,476)	(£10,629)
£500,853	(£306,583)	£194,270	Cost of Services		£532,626	(£317,706)	£214,920
£48,054	£0	£48,054	Other Operating Expenditure		£63,450	£0	£63,450
£4,560	(£6,532)	(£1,972)	Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure		£2,090	(£6,988)	(£4,898)
£0	(£229,966)	(£229,966)	Taxation & Non-Specific Grant Income & Expenditure		£0	(£246,474)	(£246,474)
£553,468	(£543,081)	£10,386	(Surplus) or Deficit On Provision of Services		£598,166	(£571,168)	£26,998
		£1,178	Share of the (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services by Associates and Joint Ventures	07			£729
		£347	Tax Expenses of Subsidiaries (Group)				£260
		£0	Tax Expenses of Associates and Joint Ventures				£0
		£11,911	Group (Surplus) or Deficit				£27,987
		(£10,184)	(Surplus)/Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment				(£94,964)
		£0	Impairment Losses on Non-Current Assets Charged to the Revaluation Reserve				£0
		(£26,300)	(Surplus)/Deficit from Investments in Equity Instruments Designated at Fair Value through Comprehensive Income				£2,880
		(£50,339)	Actuarial (gains)/losses on the Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset)				(£127,915)
		£153,552	Asset Ceiling Adjustment				£142,953
		£0	Share of Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure of Associates and Joint Ventures				£0
		£66,729	Total Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				(£77,046)
		£78,640	Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				(£49,059)

Group Movement in Reserves Statement

Movement in Reserves Statement 2024/25	Usable Reserves						Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves	Council Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries, Associates & Joint Ventures	Total Reserves
	General Fund Balance & Reserves	Housing Revenue Account	Usable Capital Receipts	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves				
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April Brought Forward	(£93,161)	(£10,510)	(£18,474)	£0	(£28,099)	(£150,243)	(£390,338)	(£540,582)	(£18,824)	(£559,406)
<i>Movement in Reserves During 2023/24:</i>										
Group (Surplus)/Deficit	£25,297	(£10,800)	£0	£0	£0	£14,497	£0	£14,497	£13,490	£27,987
Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£84,752)	(£84,752)	£7,706	(£77,046)
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	£25,297	(£10,800)	£0	£0	£0	£14,497	(£84,752)	(£70,255)	£21,196	(£49,059)
Adjustments between Group Accounts and Council Accounts	£13,093	£630	£0	£0	£0	£13,723	£0	£13,723	(£13,723)	£0
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations	(£11,635)	£3,933	£1,941	(£13)	(£722)	(£6,494)	£6,494	£0	£0	£0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	£26,755	(£6,236)	£1,941	(£13)	(£722)	£21,726	(£78,258)	(£56,532)	£7,473	(£49,059)
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	£115	£0	£0	£0	(£115)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
(Increase)/Decrease in Year	£26,870	(£6,236)	£1,941	(£13)	(£837)	£21,726	(£78,258)	(£56,532)	£7,473	(£49,059)
Balance at 31 March Carried Forward	(£66,290)	(£16,747)	(£16,533)	(£13)	(£28,935)	(£128,517)	(£468,596)	(£597,113)	(£11,351)	(£608,464)

The following table is provided for comparative purposes:

Restated Movement in Reserves Statement 2023/24	Usable Reserves						Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves	Council Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries, Associates & Joint Ventures	Total Reserves
	General Fund Balance & Reserves	Housing Revenue Account	Usable Capital Receipts	Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves				
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Balance at 1 April Brought Forward	(£108,739)	(£9,176)	(£10,890)	£0	(£20,268)	(£149,073)	(£457,222)	(£606,295)	(£31,751)	(£638,046)
<i>Movement in Reserves During 2023/24:</i>										
Group (Surplus)/Deficit	£6,034	(£17,436)	£0	£0	£0	(£11,402)	£0	(£11,402)	£23,313	£11,911
Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£57,279	£57,279	£9,450	£66,729
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	£6,034	(£17,436)	£0	£0	£0	(£11,402)	£57,279	£45,877	£32,763	£78,640
Adjustments between Group Accounts and Council Accounts	£9,388	£10,449	£0	£0	£0	£19,837	£0	£19,837	(£19,837)	£0
Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis Under Regulations	£75	£5,653	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,749)	(£9,605)	£9,605	£0	£0	£0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	£15,497	(£1,334)	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,749)	(£1,170)	£66,884	£65,714	£12,926	£78,640
Transfers (to)/from Earmarked Reserves	£82	£0	£0	£0	(£82)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
(Increase)/Decrease in Year	£15,579	(£1,334)	(£7,584)	£0	(£7,831)	(£1,170)	£66,884	£65,714	£12,926	£78,640
Balance at 31 March Carried Forward	(£93,161)	(£10,510)	(£18,474)	£0	(£28,099)	(£150,243)	(£390,338)	(£540,582)	(£18,824)	(£559,406)

Group Balance Sheet

Restated 31 March 2024 £000s	Balance Sheet Description	2021 Note	31 March 2025 £000s
£649,562	Property, Plant & Equipment		£740,697
£26,353	Heritage Assets		£26,353
£25,158	Investment Property		£26,348
£5,224	Intangible Assets		£3,385
£50,700	Long-Term Investments		£47,820
£10,882	Investments In Associates & Joint Ventures	07	£10,489
£48,096	Long-Term Debtors		£47,796
£7,235	Net Pension Asset		£0
£823,209	LONG TERM ASSETS		£902,887
£8,031	Short-Term Investments		£20,700
£1,088	Assets Held For Sale		£4,953
£1,749	Stocks & Work in Progress		£2,081
£63,670	Short-Term Debtors		£65,585
£9,775	Cash and Cash Equivalents		£10,236
£84,313	CURRENT ASSETS		£103,555
(£42,048)	Short-Term Borrowing		(£24,868)
(£46,368)	Short-Term Creditors		(£49,234)
(£550)	Short-Term Provisions		(£2,830)
(£965)	Revenue Grants in Advance		(£3,304)
(£89,931)	CURRENT LIABILITIES		(£80,236)
(£4)	Long-Term Creditors		(£10,349)
(£9,594)	Long-Term Provisions		(£8,627)
(£222,890)	Long-Term Borrowing		(£270,222)
(£476)	Deferred Liabilities		(£482)
£0	Pension Liability		£0
(£25,221)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance		(£28,063)
(£258,185)	LONG TERM LIABILITIES		(£317,744)
£559,405	NET ASSETS		£608,461
(£150,243)	Usable Reserves		(£128,517)
(£390,337)	Unusable Reserves		(£468,594)
(£18,826)	Council Share of Reserves of Subsidiaries, Associates & Joint Ventures		(£11,351)
(£559,406)	TOTAL RESERVES		(£608,461)

Group Cash Flow Statement

Cash Flow Statement	Note	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services		£10,386	£26,998
Adjustment to Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements		(£49,585)	(£64,282)
Adjust for Items Included in the Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities		£40,461	£39,816
Net Cash flows from Operating Activities		£1,262	£2,532
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities		£12,677	£40,622
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities		(£18,461)	(£43,614)
Net Increase or (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents		(£4,522)	(£461)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Reporting Period		(£5,253)	(£9,774)
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period		(£9,775)	(£10,235)

Operating Activities

The cash flows for Operating Activities include the following items:

Group - Operating Activities	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Interest Received	(£5,157)	(£5,589)
Interest Paid	£8,486	£11,172
Dividends Received	(£323)	(£898)

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

Non-Cash Movements	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Depreciation	(£20,864)	(£22,561)
Impairment and Downward Valuations	(£778)	(£2,939)
Amortisation	(£1,078)	(£1,771)
Increase/(Decrease) in Impairment for Credit Losses	(£1,575)	(£4,077)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	(£11,372)	(£1,077)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	£14,053	£1,975
(Increase)/Decrease in Inventories	(£187)	£331
Movement in Pension Liability	£5,496	£7,803
Carrying Amount of Non-current Assets and Non-current Assets Held for Sale, Sold or Derecognised	(£32,108)	(£41,285)
<i>Other Non-cash Items Charged to the Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services:</i>		
(Increase)/Decrease in Provisions	(£963)	(£1,319)
Movements in the Value of Investment Properties	(£621)	£987
(Increase)/Decrease in Accumulated Absences	£398	(£362)
Amortisation of Government Grants	£14	£14
	(£49,585)	(£64,282)

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

Investing and Financing Activities	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Proceeds from Short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and Long-term Investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)	£0	£0
Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	£10,232	£5,854
Grant Receipts for the Financing of New Capital Expenditure	£30,228	£33,962
	£40,461	£39,816

Investing Activities

Cash Flow Statement - Investing Activities	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Purchase of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	£51,699	£67,628
Purchase of Short-term and Long-term Investments	£411,398	£487,622
Other Payments for Investing Activities	£628	£498
Proceeds from the Sale of Property, Plant and Equipment, Investment Property and Intangible Assets	(£10,232)	(£5,854)
Proceeds from Short-term and Long-term Investments (Proceeds) from Other Long Term Loans	(£403,732)	(£474,789)
Grant (Receipts) for the Financing of New Capital Expenditure	(£714)	(£370)
	(£36,368)	(£34,113)
Net Cash Flows from Investing Activities	£12,677	£40,622

Financing Activities

Cash Flow Statement - Financing Activities	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cash (Receipts) of Short-Term and Long-Term Borrowing	(£105,904)	(£98,000)
Cash (Receipts) from Other Short-Term and Long-Term Liabilities	£0	£0
Repayments of Short-Term and Long-Term Borrowing	£87,103	£65,431
Repayments of Other Short-Term and Long-Term Liabilities	£0	£0
Cash Payments for the Reduction of Outstanding Liabilities Relating to Finance Leases and on-Balance Sheet PFI Contracts	£0	(£11,173)
Discount/Premium on Early Repayment of Debt	£0	£0
Billing Authority Collection Fund Adjustments	£339	£128
Net Cash Flows from Financing Activities	(£18,461)	(£43,614)

Notes to the Group Accounts

Where figures in the Group accounts differ materially from the Council's accounts, the relevant explanatory notes have been prepared on a consolidated basis. The notes below give information on the areas that have materially changed on consolidation of the group entities into the Council's accounts.

The financial year of all the subsidiaries is the same as that of Bury Council, from 1 April to 31 March, therefore no adjustments are required regarding the accounting year. However, on the 1 February 2024 the Council terminated the management arrangement of the Council housing stock with Six Town Housing and brought the management of the Council's housing stock back in-house.

01. Accounting Policies

The accounting policies of the Council's consolidated subsidiary companies have been aligned with the Council's Accounting Policies set out in Note 1. Any statutory adjustments between the accounting basis and funding basis included in the Council's accounting policies do not apply to the subsidiary companies.

02. Bodies Consolidated

Subsidiaries

The Council has consolidated three of its Subsidiaries into its Group Accounts, these are Six Town Housing Ltd, Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd and the Persona group of companies, Persona Care and Support Ltd and Persona Group Ltd.

Six Town Housing Ltd was set up to manage and maintain the housing stock of Bury Council. Six Town Housing has no share capital and is wholly owned by the Authority. It is an ALMO (arms-length management organisation) of the Council and is a company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on 30 October 2003. On the 1 February 2024 the Council terminated this arrangement and brought the management of the Council's housing stock back in-house.

Percentage of voting rights:

The composition of the Board and the voting rights is as follows:

Board members	Members	% of voting Rights
Bury Council	4	100%
Tenant	-	-
Independent*	-	-
Advisory Director	-	-
*Includes Independent Chair	4	100%

The related party transactions between Council Members on the board of Six Town Housing and Bury Council are detailed in Bury Council Statement of Accounts Note 34.

Six Town Housing's pre-audit accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been used to prepare the group accounts. The company is audited by Horsfield and Smith Ltd.

Financial Transactions and Operations:

Six Town Housing made a profit before tax of £0.352m in 2024/25 compared to a loss before tax of £0.895m in 2023/24.

As a wholly owned subsidiary, the Council is committed that, in the event of Six Town Housing being wound up to contribute up to the limit of the guarantee. After the satisfaction of all the debts and liabilities the remaining assets will be transferred to the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

Bury Council has made several loans to Six Town Housing at commercial rates of interest, of:

Loans by Bury Council to Six Town Housing						
	No of Years of Loan	2011/12 £000s	2013/14 £000s	2014/15 £000s	2015/16 £000s	Total £000s
Redbank Housing Project	35.50	£1,140				£1,140
Mortgage Rescue	18.00		£410	£166		£576
AGMA Loans	25.00			£1,869	£250	£2,119
TOTAL		£1,140	£410	£2,035	£250	£3,835

The Persona group of companies comprise of Persona Group Ltd, and Persona Care and Support Ltd. These companies were formed to provide social care services to older people and people with disabilities. The company's share capital (Called up Share Capital £3) is wholly owned by Bury Council.

The Persona Group of companies pre-audit accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been used to prepare the group accounts. Both companies are audited by Horsfield and Smith Ltd.

The Persona group of companies made profit before tax of £0.112m in 2024/25, compared to a profit before tax of £0.288m in 2023/24.

Bury Council paid management fees of £9.414m in 2024/25 (£12.424m in 2023/24).

Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd was formed to facilitate the development of Knowsley Place and was incorporated on 14 October 2009. The company's share capital (Ordinary Share Capital £1) is wholly owned by Bury Council.

Bury MBC Townside Fields Limited pre-audit accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been used to prepare the group accounts. The company is audited by Horsfield and Smith Ltd.

Bury MBC Townside Fields Limited made a profit before tax of £0.268m in 2024/25, compared to a profit before tax of £0.314m in 2023/24.

As at 31 March 2025, Bury Council has provided loans of £7.257m to Bury MBC Townside Fields Ltd.

Joint Ventures

Following the incorporation of the two Joint Ventures Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP and The Prestwich Regeneration LLP, the Council has included the Council share of the Joint Ventures Net Assets and Financial Results into the Group Accounts for 2022/23.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP (OC440763)

A 50/50 Joint Venture company was formed on 25 January 2022, between the Council and Bruntwood LLP, to acquire, hold and manage the Millgate Estate and Shopping Centre, alongside the development of a long-term masterplan to secure and enhance the estate in line with other important town centre projects, including the Flexi Hall and transport interchange.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP published accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 and for the period 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 and management accounts to the year ended 31 March 2025 have been used to prepare the group accounts.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP acquired the Mill Gate Estate and Shopping Centre in April 2022, that was funded by the Council through PWLB borrowing and providing loans totalling £20.350m to the Joint Venture.

Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP made a loss of £0.315m in 2024/25, compared to a profit of £0.124m in 2023/24.

The Prestwich Regeneration LLP (OC444311)

Following the Council acquisition of the Longfield Shopping Centre in July 2021, a 50/50 Joint Venture company was formed on 19 October 2022, between the Council and MUSE Developments Ltd, to shape a new masterplan for the site, creating new spaces to help people and businesses to thrive, with a mix of high-quality homes and family-friendly spaces, as well as a new community hub that promotes health and wellbeing.

The Prestwich Regeneration LLP published accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 and management accounts to the year ended 31 March 2025 have been used to prepare the group accounts.

The Prestwich Regeneration LLP made a loss of £0.236m in 2024/25 at the 31 March 2025, compared to a loss of £0.123m in 2023/24.

03. Plant, Property and Equipment

Six Town Housing's Property, Plant & Equipment are included and valued at either historical cost or fair value determined by DRC. Persona Care & Support Ltd Property, Plant & Equipment are included and valued at historic cost in line with Bury Council's policy. Bury MBC Townside Fields Limited accounts show no Property, Plant & Equipment but Investment Properties.

Property, Plant and Equipment Note 2024/25	Council Dwellings £000s	Other Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000s	Community Assets £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Assets Under Construction £000s	TOTAL £000s
Certified Value as at 1 April 2024	£310,450	£231,201	£30,122	£10,516	£20,725	£20,839	£623,853
Adjustments	£0	£12,033	£0	£0	(£28)	£2	£12,007
Adjusted Value as at 1 April 2024	£310,450	£243,234	£30,122	£10,516	£20,697	£20,841	£635,860
Additions & Acquisitions	£16,116	£2,551	£1,264	£1,526	£22	£23,139	£44,617
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£57,789	£17,804	£0	£0	£4,790	£0	£80,384
Revaluations Recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£156)	(£2,625)	£0	£0	(£922)	£0	(£3,702)
Derecognition - Disposals	(£633)	(£37,537)	£0	(£4)	(£1,917)	(£1,012)	(£41,103)
Derecognition - Others	(£2,117)	(£1,015)	£0	£0	(£1,514)	£0	(£4,647)
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	(£45)	£2,631	£968	£127	(£6,531)	(£299)	(£3,149)
Movement in Cost/Valuation	£70,954	(£18,191)	£2,231	£1,649	(£6,073)	£21,828	£72,400
Amount as at 31 March 2025	£381,404	£225,044	£32,353	£12,165	£14,624	£42,669	£708,260
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairments as at 1 April 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,272)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£40,061)
Adjustments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Adjusted Value as at 1 April 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,272)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£40,061)
Depreciation charged in year	(£7,678)	(£8,828)	(£2,672)	£0	£0	£0	(£19,177)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	£7,600	£6,980	£0	£0	£0	£0	£14,581
Depreciation written out to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	£0	£133	£0	£0	£630	£0	£763
Derecognition - Disposals	£44	£40	£10	£0	£0	£0	£94
Derecognition - Other	£14	£4,171	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,185
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£1	£0	(£489)	£0	(£1)	£0	(£489)
Movement in Depreciation & Impairment	(£19)	£2,497	(£3,150)	£0	£629	£0	(£43)
Amount as at 31 March 2025	(£266)	(£16,124)	(£21,422)	(£2,146)	(£146)	£0	(£40,104)
Opening NBV	£310,203	£224,613	£11,850	£8,370	£19,922	£20,841	£595,799
Total Movement	£70,935	(£15,694)	(£919)	£1,649	(£5,444)	£21,828	£72,357
Closing NBV	£381,138	£208,920	£10,931	£10,019	£14,478	£42,669	£668,156

Property, Plant and Equipment Note 2024/25	Council Dwellings £000s	Other Land & Buildings £000s	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment £000s	Community Assets £000s	Surplus Assets £000s	Assets Under Construction £000s	TOTAL £000s
Certified Value as at 1 April 2024	£310,450	£231,201	£30,122	£10,516	£20,725	£20,839	£623,853
Adjustments	£0	£12,033	£0	£0	(£28)	£2	£12,007
Adjusted Value as at 1 April 2024	£310,450	£243,234	£30,122	£10,516	£20,697	£20,841	£635,860
Additions & Acquisitions	£16,116	£2,551	£1,264	£1,526	£22	£23,139	£44,617
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£58,900	£17,804	£0	£0	£4,790	£0	£81,495
Revaluations Recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£156)	(£2,625)	£0	£0	(£922)	£0	(£3,702)
Derecognition - Disposals	(£633)	(£37,537)	£0	(£4)	(£1,917)	(£1,012)	(£41,103)
Derecognition - Others	(£2,117)	(£1,015)	£0	£0	(£1,514)	£0	(£4,647)
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	(£45)	£2,631	£968	£127	(£6,531)	(£299)	(£3,149)
Movement in Cost/Valuation	£72,065	(£18,191)	£2,231	£1,649	(£6,073)	£21,828	£73,511
Amount as at 31 March 2025	£382,515	£225,044	£32,353	£12,165	£14,624	£42,669	£709,371
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairments as at 1 April 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,272)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£40,061)
Adjustments	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Adjusted Value as at 1 April 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,272)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£40,061)
Depreciation charged in year	(£7,678)	(£8,828)	(£2,672)	£0	£0	£0	(£19,177)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	£7,600	£6,980	£0	£0	£0	£0	£14,581
Depreciation written out to Surplus/Deficit on Provision of Services	£0	£133	£0	£0	£630	£0	£763
Derecognition - Disposals	£44	£40	£10	£0	£0	£0	£94
Derecognition - Other	£14	£4,171	£0	£0	£0	£0	£4,185
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£1	£0	(£489)	£0	(£1)	£0	(£489)
Movement in Depreciation & Impairment	(£19)	£2,497	(£3,150)	£0	£629	£0	(£43)
Amount as at 31 March 2025	(£266)	(£16,124)	(£21,422)	(£2,146)	(£146)	£0	(£40,104)
Opening NBV	£310,203	£224,613	£11,850	£8,370	£19,922	£20,841	£595,799
Total Movement	£72,046	(£15,694)	(£919)	£1,649	(£5,444)	£21,828	£73,468
Closing NBV	£382,249	£208,920	£10,931	£10,019	£14,478	£42,669	£669,267

The following table is provided for comparative purposes:

Restated Property, Plant and Equipment Note 2023/24	Council Dwellings	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Certified Value as at 1 April 2023	£308,885	£242,618	£26,741	£8,476	£25,268	£18,249	£630,237
Additions & Acquisitions	£16,613	£6,542	£3,916	£1,841	£64	£8,191	£37,167
Revaluations Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(£3,649)	£5,843	£0	£0	£549	£0	£2,743
Revaluations Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(£9,766)	£1,072	£0	£0	£0	£0	(£8,694)
Disposals	(£1,633)	(£26,423)	(£535)	£0	(£5,338)	(£176)	(£34,105)
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£0	£1,549	£0	£199	£182	(£5,425)	(£3,495)
Other Movements in Cost or Valuation	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Cost/Valuation	£1,565	(£11,417)	£3,381	£2,040	(£4,543)	£2,590	(£6,384)
Amount as at 31 March 2024	£310,450	£231,201	£30,122	£10,516	£20,725	£20,839	£623,853
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairments as at 1 April 2023	(£2,194)	(£18,040)	(£16,604)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£39,759)
Depreciation charged In-year	(£7,508)	(£8,348)	(£2,070)	£0	£0	£0	(£17,926)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	£2,289	£5,153	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,442
Depreciation written out to (Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	£7,129	£787	£0	£0	£0	£0	£7,916
Impairments Recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Impairments Recognised in the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Depreciation Written out on Disposal	£37	£1,827	£402	£0	£0	£0	£2,266
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Other Movements in Depreciation and Impairment	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Movement in Depreciation & Impairment	£1,947	(£581)	(£1,668)	£0	£0	£0	(£302)
Amount as at 31 March 2024	(£247)	(£18,621)	(£18,272)	(£2,146)	(£775)	£0	(£40,061)
Opening NBV	£306,691	£224,578	£10,137	£6,330	£24,493	£18,249	£590,478
Total Movement	£3,512	(£11,998)	£1,713	£2,040	(£4,543)	£2,590	(£6,686)
Closing NBV	£310,203	£212,580	£11,850	£8,370	£19,950	£20,839	£583,792

Infrastructure Assets

Movements on balances

In accordance with the temporary relief offered by the Update to the Code on Infrastructure Assets this note does not include disclosure of gross cost and accumulated depreciation for infrastructure assets because historical reporting practices and resultant information deficits mean that this would not faithfully represent the asset position to the users of the financial statements. The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

The authority has chosen not to disclose this information as the previously reported practices and resultant information deficits mean that gross cost and accumulated depreciation are not measured accurately and would not provide the basis for the users of the financial statements to take economic or other decisions relating to infrastructure assets.

Infrastructure Assets	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Certified Valuation or Cost at 1 April	£55,883	£65,774
Additions in Year	£12,381	£9,802
Reclassifications & Asset Transfers	£449	£43
Derecognition - Other	£0	£310
Depreciation charged in year	(£2,939)	(£3,383)
As at 31st March	£65,774	£72,546

As infrastructure assets are not being disclosed on the face of the Balance Sheet a reconciling note has been prepared:

PPE Assets	2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Infrastructure Assets	£65,774	£72,546
Other PPE Assets	£583,792	£669,267
Total PPE Assets	£649,566	£741,813

The authority has determined in accordance with Regulation [30M England] of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England/Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2022 that the carrying amounts to be derecognised for infrastructure assets when there is replacement expenditure is nil.

04. Pensions

Employees of Bury Council are enrolled in the Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF). Employees of Persona Care and Support Limited who retain protected employment rights prior to 1 October 2015 are also enrolled in the Greater Manchester Pension Fund.

Each entity accounts individually for its net defined benefit cost and the resultant asset or liability.

The single entity also participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and the NHS Pensions scheme, details of which are given in the single entity statements Note 37.

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

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cost of Services:		
Service Cost Comprising:		
Current Service Cost	£18,980	£16,533
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	£1,452	£2,000
(Gain)/Loss from Settlements	(£206)	£2,206
Total Service Cost	£20,226	£20,739
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:		
Interest income on scheme assets	(£46,827)	(£50,115)
Interest cost on defined benefit obligation	£41,484	£41,961
Total Net Interest Expense	(£5,343)	(£8,154)
Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	£14,883	£12,585
Other Post-Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Liability Comprising:		
Return on Plan Assets (excluding amounts included in net interest)	(£27,110)	£8,220
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	(£10,209)	(£7,131)
Actuarial Gains/(Losses) arising from changes in financial assumptions	(£46,208)	(£119,752)
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£27,434	(£9,252)
The Effects of Business Combinations and Disposals	£5,754	£0
Total remeasurements recognised in other comprehensive income	(£50,339)	(£127,915)
Asset Ceiling Adjustment	£153,552	£142,953
Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	£118,096	£27,623
Movement in Reserves Statement:		
Reversal of Net Charges Made to the (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in Accordance with the Code	(£14,883)	(£12,585)
Actual Amount Charged Against the General Fund Balance for Pensions in the Year:		
Employers' Contributions Payable to the Scheme & Benefits Paid	£20,379	£20,388

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amounts included in the Balance Sheet arising from the Groups obligation in respect of its defined benefit scheme is as follows:

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Fair Value of Plan Assets	£1,052,654	£1,065,829
Present Value of Funded Liabilities	(£862,952)	(£743,584)
Present Value of Unfunded Liabilities	(£20,769)	(£17,594)
Effect of the Asset Ceiling	(£161,698)	(£304,651)
Net Asset / (Liability) Arising From Defined Benefit Obligation	£7,235	£0

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

Reconciliation of the Movement in Fair Value of Scheme (Plan) Assets	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	£993,559	£1,052,654
Interest Income	£46,827	£50,115
Remeasurement Gain/(Loss):	£0	£0
Return on Plan Assets Excluding Amounts Included in Net Interest Expense	£27,110	(£8,220)
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£0	£0
	£0	£0
Contributions from The Employer into the Scheme	£17,998	£17,997
Contributions from Employees into the Scheme	£5,909	£5,806
Benefits Paid	(£35,327)	(£33,649)
Other: Settlements	(£3,321)	(£18,874)
Other: Assets Assumed on Entity Combinations	(£101)	£0
Closing Fair Value of Scheme Assets	£1,052,654	£1,065,829

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

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation)	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Opening Balance at 1 April	(£880,461)	(£883,721)
Current Service Cost	(£18,980)	(£16,533)
Interest Cost	(£41,484)	(£41,961)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	(£5,909)	(£5,806)
Remeasurement (Gains)/Losses :	£0	£0
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	£10,209	£7,131
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Financial Assumptions	£46,208	£119,752
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	(£27,434)	£9,252
	£0	£0
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	(£1,452)	(£2,000)
Liabilities Assumed on Entity Combinations	(£5,653)	£0
Benefits Paid	£37,708	£36,040
Liabilities Extinguished on Settlements	£3,527	£16,668
Opening Balance at 31 March	(£883,721)	(£761,178)

The Effect of the Asset Ceiling

The effect of the asset ceiling has been determined by the Scheme's actuaries on the basis of the limitation on the Council's ability to recover the full economic benefit of its assets through reductions in future employer's contributions because of the minimum funding requirement imposed on it by the funding strategy for the Scheme in place at 31 March 2025.

The Scheme actuaries have assessed the Council's estimated future service costs less the estimated minimum funding requirement contributions to establish the economic benefit that is available to the Council.

2024/25

- The Council net pensions asset of £284.437m has been adjusted down to nil.
- Persona Care and Support Ltd net pensions asset of £20.214m has been adjusted down to nil.

2023/24

- The Council net pensions asset of £154.723m has been adjusted down to nil.

- Persona Care and Support Ltd net pensions asset of £14.210m has been adjusted down to £7.235m.
- Six Town Housing Ltd prior year asset ceiling adjustment of £8.146m has been reversed due to the transfer into the Council.

2024/25 Movement in Fair Value of Scheme Assets and Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities	Restated 2023/24				2024/25			
	Scheme Plan Assets £000s	Pensions Obligations £000s	Effect of Asset Ceiling £000s	Net Pensions Asset/ (Liability) £000s	Scheme Plan Assets £000s	Pensions Obligations £000s	Effect of Asset Ceiling £000s	Net Pensions Asset/ (Liability) £000s
Opening Balance at 1 April	£993,559	(£880,461)	(£8,146)	£104,952	£1,052,654	(£883,721)	(£161,698)	£7,235
Current Service Cost	£0	(£18,980)		(£18,980)	£0	(£16,533)		(£16,533)
Contributions from Scheme Participants	£5,909	(£5,909)		£0	£5,806	(£5,806)		£0
Past Service Cost (including curtailments)	£0	(£1,452)		(£1,452)	£0	(£2,000)		(£2,000)
Other: Settlements	(£3,321)	£3,527		£206	(£18,874)	£16,668		(£2,206)
Interest Income	£46,827	£0		£46,827	£50,115	£0		£50,115
Interest Cost	£0	(£41,484)		(£41,484)	£0	(£41,961)		(£41,961)
Remeasurement (Gains)/Losses :								
Return on Plan Assets Excluding Amounts Included in Net Interest Expense	£27,110	£0		£27,110	(£8,220)	£0		(£8,220)
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Demographic Assumptions	£0	£10,209		£10,209	£0	£7,131		£7,131
Actuarial (Gains)/Losses Arising from Changes in Financial Assumptions	£0	£46,208		£46,208	£0	£119,752		£119,752
Other Experience and Actuarial Adjustments	£0	(£27,434)		(£27,434)	£0	£9,252		£9,252
Change in the Effect of the Asset Ceiling	£0	£0	(£153,552)	(£153,552)	£0	£0	(£142,953)	(£142,953)
Other: Entity Combinations	(£101)	(£5,653)		(£5,754)	£0	£0		£0
Benefits Paid	(£35,327)	£37,708		£2,381	(£33,649)	£36,040		£2,391
Contributions from The Employer into the Scheme	£17,998	£0		£17,998	£17,997	£0		£17,997
Closing Balance at 31 March	£1,052,654	(£883,721)	(£161,698)	£7,235	£1,065,829	(£761,178)	(£304,651)	£0

The characteristics of the GMPF are set out in the single entity statements Note 38.

For Persona Care & Support, the main financial assumptions are:

Significant Assumptions	2023/24	2024/25
Rate of Inflation	2.75%	2.75%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.55%	3.55%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.75%	2.75%
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities	4.85%	5.80%

The major categories of group company plan assets as a percentage of total plan assets are as follows:

Pension Scheme Assets	31 March 2024 %	31 March 2025 %
Equity	68%	65%
Bonds	15%	17%
Property	8%	9%
Cash	9%	9%
	100%	100%

05. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and Cash Equivalents	Restated 2023/24 £000s	2024/25 £000s
Cash Held by the Group	£9,265	£8,966
School Bank Accounts	(£199)	(£310)
Bank Call Accounts	£0	£0
Bank Overdraft	£709	£1,580
Total	£9,775	£10,236

06. Subsidiary Income and Expenditure

The operating expenditure and income of:

- **Six Town Housing** has been included within "Housing Revenue Account".
- **Bury MBC Townside Fields Limited** has been included within "Income & Expenditure in Relation to Investment Properties and Changes in their Fair Value" of Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure.
- **Persona Care & Support Limited** has been included within "Health & Adult Care".

07. Joint Ventures Summarised Financial Information

2023/24		Joint Ventures: Profit/(Loss)	2024/25	
JV Total £000s	Bury Share £000s	Description	JV Total £000s	Bury Share £000s
£4,251		Turnover	£5,090	
(£2,473)		Cost of Sales	(£3,983)	
£1,778		Gross Profit/(Loss)	£1,107	
(£759)		Administration Expenses	(£542)	
£1,019		Operating Profit/(Loss)	£565	
£24		Interest Receivable	£74	
(£1,042)		Interest Payable	(£1,190)	
£1	£1	Profit/(Loss) for the Year	(£551)	(£275)
(£2,472)		Gain/(Loss) on Revaluation of Investment Property	(£911)	
£115		Gain/(Loss) on Disposal of Investment Property	£4	
(£2,357)	(£1,179)	Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure	(£907)	(£454)
(£2,356)	(£1,178)	Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure for the Year	(£1,458)	(£729)

2023/24		Joint Ventures: Balance Sheet	2024/25	
JV Total £000s	Bury Share £000s	Description	JV Total £000s	Bury Share £000s
£17,962		Fixed Assets	£17,109	
£5,416		Current Assets	£5,648	
(£4,172)		Creditors: Amounts Falling due Within One Year	(£5,503)	
(£20,490)		Creditors: Amounts Falling after More Than One Year	(£20,003)	
(£1,284)	(£642)	NET ASSETS	(£2,749)	(£1,374)
£1,284		Profit and Loss Account	£2,749	
£1,284	£642	TOTAL SHAREHOLDER FUNDS	£2,749	£1,374

Bruntwood £000s	Bury £000s	Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP Member Loans/Capital Summary	Bruntwood £000s	Bury £000s
(£10,300)	(£10,300)	Members Loans/Capital 50/50 Share	(£10,300)	(£10,300)
(£250)	(£20,350)	Members Loans/Capital Actual	(£250)	(£20,350)
(£10,050)	£10,050	Debtor/Creditor	(£10,050)	£10,050

MUSE £000s	Bury £000s	The Prestwich Regeneration LLP Member Loans/Capital Summary	MUSE £000s	Bury £000s
(£1,224)	(£1,224)	Members Loans/Capital 50/50 Share	(£1,563)	(£1,563)
(£1,820)	(£628)	Members Loans/Capital Actual	(£2,000)	(£1,126)
£596	(£596)	Debtor/Creditor	£437	(£437)

	Bury £000s	Investments In Associates & Joint Ventures		Bury £000s
	£9,720	Bury Bruntwood (Millgate) LLP		£9,109
	£1,163	The Prestwich Regeneration LLP		£1,380
	£10,882	Balance		£10,489

08. Amount to be met from Government Grant and Local Taxes

This is the same amount as that disclosed in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement of Bury Council.

09. Goodwill

No goodwill arose in respect of any subsidiaries.

Glossary of Terms

Accounting Principles

Those principles, bases, conventions, rules, and practices applied by an entity that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through:

- Recognising
- Selecting measurement bases for, and
- Presenting

Assets, liabilities, gains, losses, and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies do not include estimation techniques. They define the process whereby transactions and other events are reflected in the financial statements.

Accruals Basis

The accruals principle is that income is recorded when it is earned rather than when it is received, and expenses are recorded when goods or services are received rather than when the payment is made.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses) or the actuarial assumptions have changed.

Agency Services

These are services that are performed by or for another Authority or public body, where the principal (the Authority responsible for the service) reimburses the agent (the Authority carrying out the work) for the costs of the work.

Amortisation

A charge to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement which spreads the cost of an intangible asset over a number of years in line with the Council's accounting policies.

Appointed Auditors

The appointment of External Auditors to Local Authorities is undertaken by the Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA), an independent company limited by guarantee and incorporated by the Local Government Association in August 2014. Mazars LLP are the Council's appointed auditor.

Asset

Items that are of worth and are measurable in terms of value. Current assets may change in value on a day-to-day basis, but the Council is expected to yield the benefit within the one financial year (e.g. short-term debtors). Non-current assets yield benefit to the Council for a period of more than one year (e.g. land).

Associated Companies

An associate is an entity over which the Council has significant influence.

Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)

AGMA represents the ten local authorities in Greater Manchester and works in partnership with Central Government, regional bodies, and other Greater Manchester public sector bodies.

Balances

The balances of the Council represent the accumulated surplus of income over expenditure on any of the Funds.

Better Care Fund (BCF)

The BCF was announced by Government in June 2013 spending round to ensure a transformation in health and social care.

Capital Adjustment Account

The capital adjustment account accumulates (on the debit side) the write-down of the historical cost of non-current assets as they are consumed by depreciation and impairments or written off on disposal. It accumulates (on the credit side) the resources that have been set aside to finance capital expenditure.

The same process applies to capital expenditure that is only capital by statutory definition (revenue expenditure funded by capital under statute). The balance on the account thus represents timing differences between the amount of the historical cost on non-current assets that have been consumed and the amount that have been financed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Capital Expenditure

This is expenditure on the acquisition of a non-current asset, or expenditure, which adds to, and not merely maintains, the value of an existing non-current asset.

Capital Financing Charges

This is the annual charge to the revenue account in respect of interest and principal repayments and payments of borrowed money, together with leasing rentals.

Capital Receipts

Income received from the sale of land or other capital assets, a proportion of which may be used to finance new capital expenditure, subject to the provisions contained within the Local Government Act 2003.

Carrying Amount

The Balance Sheet value recorded of either an asset or a liability.

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)

CIPFA is the leading professional accountancy body for public services.

Collection Fund

The Council as a billing authority has a statutory obligation to maintain a separate Collection Fund. This shows the transactions relating to the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates and its distribution to Local Government bodies.

Community Assets

These are non-current assets that the Council intends to hold in perpetuity which have no determinable finite useful life, and, in addition, any have restriction on their disposal. Examples include parks and historical buildings not used for operational purposes.

Contingency

This is money set aside in the budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, or shortfalls in income, and to provide for inflation where this is not included in individual budgets.

Contingent Liabilities or Assets

These are amounts potentially due to or from individuals or organisations which may arise in the future but which at this time cannot be determined accurately, and for which provision has not been made in the Council's accounts.

Council Tax Requirement

This is the estimated revenue expenditure on General Fund services that will be financed from the Council Tax after deducting income from fees and charges, General Fund Balances, specific grants, and any funding from reserves.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the Council for work done, goods received, or services rendered, for which payment has not been made at the date of the balance sheet.

Current Service Cost

Current service cost is the increase in the present value of a defined benefit pension scheme's liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period, i.e. the ultimate pension benefits 'earned' by employees in the current year's employment.

Current Value

The current value of an asset reflects the economic environment prevailing for the service or function the asset is supporting at the reporting date.

Curtailement

Curtailements will show the cost of the early payment of pension benefits if any employee has been made redundant in the previous financial year.

Debtors

These are sums of money due to the Council that have not been received at the date of the Balance Sheet.

Deferred Capital Receipts

These represent capital income still to be received after disposals have taken place and wholly consists of principal outstanding from the sale of council houses.

Defined Benefit Scheme

This is a pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually, the scheme rules refine the benefits independently of the contribution payable and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded (including notionally funded).

Defined Contribution Scheme

A Defined Contribution Scheme is a pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions as an amount or as a percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

Depreciation

This is the measure of the wearing out, consumption, or other reduction in the useful economic life of property, plant, and equipment assets.

Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC)

A method of valuation that provides a proxy for the market value of specialist assets.

Derecognition

Financial assets and liabilities will need to be removed from the Balance Sheet once performance under the contract is complete or the contract is terminated.

Discounts

Discounts represent the outstanding discount received on the premature repayment of Public Works Loan Board loans. In line with the requirements of the Code, gains arising for the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing have been written back to revenue. However, where the repurchase or borrowing was coupled with a refinancing or restructuring of borrowing with substantially the same overall economic effect when viewed as a whole, gains have been recognised over the life of the replacement loan.

Earmarked Reserves

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

External Audit

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

Fair Value

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

Fees and Charges

Income arising from the provision of services e.g. the use of trade waste services.

Finance Lease

A finance lease is a lease that transfers substantially all of the risks and rewards of ownership of a non-current asset to the lessee.

Financial Instruments

A financial instrument is any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another. The term 'financial instrument' covers both financial assets and financial liabilities and includes both the most straightforward financial assets and liabilities such as trade receivables and trade payables and the most complex ones such as derivatives and embedded derivatives.

Financial Regulations

These are the written code of procedures approved by the Council, intended to provide a framework for proper financial management. Financial regulation usually set out rules on accounting, audit, administrative and budgeting procedures.

General Fund

This is the main revenue fund of the Council and includes the net cost of all services financed by local taxpayers and Government grants.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

This organisation was created by the Local Government, Economic Development and Construction Act, the GMCA assumed its powers and duties on 1 April 2011. It took over the functions previously the responsibility of the Greater Manchester Integrated Transport Authority (GMITA), which it replaced. It also took over responsibility for transport planning, traffic control and wide loads, assumed responsibility for transportation resources allocated to the Greater Manchester region and regional economic development functions. From 1 April 2018 it took over responsibilities for activities previously undertaken by the Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority, the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner.

Heritage Asset

A tangible asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical, or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture.

Housing Benefit

This is an allowance to persons receiving little or no income to meet, in whole or part their rent. Benefit is allowed or paid by Local Authorities but Central Government refunds part of the cost of the benefits and of the running costs of the services to Local Authorities. Benefits paid to the Council's own tenants are known as rent rebate and that paid to private tenants a rent allowance.

Impairment

A reduction in the value of assets below its value brought forward in the Balance Sheet, Examples of factors which may cause such a reduction in value include general price decreases, a significant decline in a non-current asset's market value and evidence of obsolescence or physical damage to the asset.

Infrastructure Assets

Non-current assets which general cannot be sold and from which benefit can be obtained only by continued use of the asset created. Examples of such assets are highways, footpaths, bridges and water and drainage facilities.

Intangible Assets

These are assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and controlled by the Council. Examples include software, licences, and patents.

Interest cost (Pensions)

For a defined benefit scheme, the expected increase during the period on the present value of the scheme liabilities which arises from the passage of time.

International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS)

Defined Accounting Standards that must be applied by all reporting entities to all financial statement in order to provide a true and fair view of the entity's financial position, and a standardised method of comparison with financial statements of the other entities.

Inventories

Amounts of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. Inventories are comprised of the following categories:

- Goods or other assets purchased for resale
- Consumable stores
- Raw materials and components
- Product and service in intermediate stages of completion
- Finished goods

Investment Properties

Property, which can be land or a building or part of a building or both, that is held solely to earn rentals or for capital appreciation or both, rather than for operational purposes.

Joint Venture

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

Leasing Costs

This is where a rental is paid for the use of an asset for a specified period of time. Two forms of lease exist: finance leases and operating leases.

Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO)

A LOBO is a type of loan instrument. The borrower borrows a principal sum for the duration of the loan period (typically 20 to 50 years), initially at a fixed interest rate. Periodically (typically every six months to 3 years), the lender has the ability to alter the interest rate. Should the lender make this offer, the borrower then has the option to continue with the instrument at the new rate or alternatively to terminate the agreement and pay back the principal sum without penalty.

Liabilities

These are amounts due to individuals or organisations which will have to be paid at some time in the future. Current liabilities are usually payable within one year of the Balance Sheet date.

Loss Allowance

The allowance for expected credit losses on financial assets, such as debtors.

Materiality

Information is material if omitting it or misstating it could influence the decisions that users make on the basis of financial information about the Council.

Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

This is a financial planning document that sets out the future years' financial forecasts for the Council. It considers local and national policy influences and projects their impact on the general fund revenue budget, capital programme and HRA. In Bury is usually covers a five-year timeframe.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

MRP is the minimum amount which must be charged to a Council's revenue account each year and set aside as provision for credit liabilities, as required by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

DLUHC is a central government department with the overriding responsibility for determining the allocation of general resources to Local Councils.

National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) (also known as Business Rates)

This is the levy on business property, based on a national rate in the pound applied to the 'rateable value' of the property. The Government determines national rate poundage each year which is applicable to all Local Councils.

Net Book Value (NBV)

The amount at which non-current assets are included in the Balance Sheet, i.e. their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

Net Debt

Net debt is the council's borrowings less cash and liquid resources.

Outturn

Actual expenditure and income compared to the budget.

Pooled Aligned Budget

A pooled fund, arising from a Section 75 Agreement between Bury Council and Bury NHS CCG/NHS GM Bury Locality (from 1 July 2022), but the partners' respective financial contributions to such a fund are held in their own bank accounts.

Pooled Budget

A pooled fund, arising from a Section 75 Agreement between Bury council and Bury NHS CCG/NHS GM Bury Locality (from 1 July 2022), comprising financial contributions from both partners hosted by one of the partners in its bank account.

Pooled Fund

This can be either a Pooled Budget or a Pooled Aligned Budget.

Precept

The amount collected by the Council on behalf of other bodies. For 2023/24 the major precepts were payable in relation to the GM Mayor as Police and Crime Commissioner and the Mayoral General Precept (Including Fire Services).

Premiums

These are discounts that have arisen following the early redemption of long-term debt, which are written down over the lifetime of replacement loans where applicable.

Prior Period Adjustments

These are material adjustments which are applicable to an earlier period arising from changes in accounting policies or for the correction of fundamental errors.

Provisions

Amounts set aside to meet liabilities or losses which it is anticipated will be incurred but where the amount and/or the timing of such costs are uncertain.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

An arm of Central Government which is the major provider of loans to finance long-term funding requirements for Local Councils.

Related Parties

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

- Members of the close family, or the same household; and
- Partnerships, companies, trusts, or other entities in which the individual, or member of their close family or the same household, has a controlling interest.

Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability

Remeasurement of the Net Defined Liability (asset) companies:

- Actuarial gains and losses
- The return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), and
- Any change in the net effect of the asset ceiling, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset).

Reporting Standards

The Code of Practice prescribes the accounting treatment and disclosures for all normal transactions of a Local Authority. It is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), International Accounting Standards (IAS) and International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee (IFRIC) plus UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (GAAP) and Financial Reporting Standards (FRS).

Reserves

Amounts set aside to help manage future risks, to provide working balances or that are earmarked for specific future expenditure priorities.

Revaluation Reserve

The Reserve records the accumulated gains on the non-current assets held by the Council arising from increases in value as a result of inflation or other factors (to the extent that these gains have not been consumed by subsequent downward movements in value).

Revenue Contributions

The method of financing capital expenditure directly from revenue.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute (REFCUS)

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provision but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset that has been charged as expenditure to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Section 75 Agreement

An agreement made between a Local Authority and NHS body under the powers of the National Health Service Act 2006 which facilitates the pooling of resources to improve the delivery of health and social care. Locally the agreement is between Bury Council and Bury NHS CCG.

Subsidiary

A subsidiary is an entity, including an unincorporated entity such as a partnership, which is controlled by the Council.

Treasury Management

This is the process by which the Council controls its cash flow and its borrowing and lending activities.

Treasury Management Strategy (TMS)

A strategy prepared with regard to legislative and CIPFA requirements setting out the framework for treasury management activity for the Council.

Trust Funds

These are funds administered by the council on behalf of charitable organisations and/or specific organisations.

Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing

This is borrowing for which no financial support is provided by Central Government. The borrowing costs are to be met from current revenue budgets.

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Annual Governance Statement
31st March 2025



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2024/25 provides a comprehensive overview of the Council's governance framework, its effectiveness, and the actions taken to address key challenges. The Council in this period has experienced several challenges and has taken significant steps to strengthen governance arrangements following the recommendation received in December 2024 from our external auditors Forvis Mazars.
- 1.2 This work was carried out in the last quarter of this year. An improvement plan and work carried out by the Council in Quarter Four is set out in this statement. The AGS outlines the Council's commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in governance practices and sets out further improvement activity for 2025/26. The Council recognises the challenges and is committed to delivering improvement in accordance with the plan.
- 1.3 The governance arrangements as described above have been applied throughout the year, and up to the date of the approval of the Annual Accounts, providing a framework for identifying governance issues and taking mitigating action. Over the coming year, the Council will continue to operate its governance framework as set out in the Annual Statement and implement the actions identified in the review of effectiveness to further strengthen its governance arrangements in accordance with the action plan set out in this statement. The Council remains committed to delivering high standards of governance and ensuring that its systems and processes support the achievement of strategic objectives and the delivery of quality services to residents.

2. Scope of Responsibility

- 2.1 Governance is about how the Council ensures it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 2.2 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for, and provides value for money. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 2.3 The Council operates in a complex and constantly evolving financial, policy and legislative environment. The borough continues to progress the delivery of its ambitious Let's Do It Strategy, with staff, residents and stakeholders across the borough engaged in working towards the realisation of the vision. The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its priority actions for delivering the strategy for the borough.
- 2.4 Bury Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in

accordance with the law and proper standards. It is also responsible for ensuring that public money is safeguarded, 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 its functions are exercised.

- 2.5 In discharging these responsibilities, the Council must put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance which is consistent with the seven principles of the CIPFA /SOLACE framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”.
- 2.6 The Council Constitution document sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent, and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose.
- 2.7 The following link takes you to the Bury Council Constitution.

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=350&MId=3768&Ver=4&Info=1>
- 2.8 The Council’s Constitution is reviewed annually to ensure it remains consistent with the principles of the CIPFA code and SOLACE guidance. An update to the Framework was issued in 2016, which has informed the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) from 2016/17 onwards.
- 2.9 This Annual Governance Statement explains how the Council operates its governance framework. The AGS also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 regulation 6(1) which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 2.10 The Council’s financial management arrangements are consistent with a number of the governance requirements of the CIPFA statement on the role of the Chief Finance Officer in Local Government (2016). The Statement requires that the Chief Finance Officer should report directly to the Chief Executive and be a member of the leadership team, with a status at least equivalent to others. For 2024/5 the Council appointed a S151 Officer to be dedicated to Council finance matters (prior appointment was a joint appointment with the NHS).
- 2.11 The Chief Executive is also the place-based lead for the NHS GM services in Bury. She is a Member of the Combined Authorities wider leadership team and holds portfolios within the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and is currently the GM portfolio lead for Equalities Inclusion and Cohesion. The Executive Team sit on GM groups and Executive Directors are members of GM groups including Directors of Childrens Services, Director of Place. The statutory officers attend Treasurers and Chief Legal Officer meetings. The Executive Director (Health and Care) and the Deputy Place based lead for Bury

working in a joint role to oversee health and care services in the community

3.12 All statutory officers have access to the Chief Executive. The Council considers that its management arrangements are appropriate in the context of compliance with the CIPFA Statement.

3. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

3.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture, and values by which the Council is directed and controlled, and through which it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of the borough’s strategic objectives as set out in the Let’s Do It strategy – to 2030, and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

3.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the Council’s aims and objectives and can therefore not provide absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control identifies and prioritises risks; evaluates the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised; and aims to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

4. The Governance Framework

4.1 Corporate governance describes how organisations direct and control what they do. The Constitution is updated when appropriate, to ensure it reflects the Council’s current governance arrangements.

4.2 The information below includes key examples of how the Council has adhered to its governance commitments set out in the Code and includes hyperlinks to sources of further information, which include more detail about how the Council has implemented its commitments. The Council has a broad range of strategies and policies in place, and therefore this is not intended to be an exhaustive list. More detail about particular areas of interest can be found on the Council’s website <https://www.bury.gov.uk>.

4.3 There are seven core principles of good governance in the public sector, which are set out below (principles ‘A’ through to ‘G’). Each core governance principle has a set of sub-principles beneath it with a description of how we meet those principles. Where applicable, hyperlinks are also provided where you can access more information about key examples of governance in action.

<p>Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment</p>	<p>The Council’s ‘Let’s Do It’ strategy sets out the vision for Bury 2030. <i>Let’s</i> is an acronym for a framework of core operating principles which is intended to drive a common mindset across all partners in Bury to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate Locally through a neighbourhood model which means truly understanding and
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<p>to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.</p>	<p>engaging with local communities;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive Enterprise; • Work Together with inclusion at our core; and • Take a Strengths-based approach. <p>Bury's goal is to achieve faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation. Bury's goals include achieving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A better future for the children of the borough • A chance to feel more part of the borough • More green spaces and environmentally friendly and • A better quality of life. <p>To support these ambitions the Council has focused on embedding its values and behaviors across the workforce this year, including through an immersive learning experience, the Let's Do It Challenge, which has now been attended by over 1,400 staff and a mandatory management development programme which has had over 300 attendees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local: I'm proud to make a difference to people and communities in the neighbourhoods where they live. • Enterprise: I strive to develop and improve; to play my part in delivering great solutions with the people of Bury. • Together: My work is shaped in an inclusive way, with dignity, kindness and respect; developed together by those with lived experience. • Strengths: I'm proud to build on the strengths of Bury people, my colleagues and myself to deliver. <p>These behaviours represent how we should do things, how we should treat others, what we should say, and how we should say it.</p> <p>The Council expects all employees and Members to work within and abide by the Code of Conduct for Officers and the Code of Conduct for Members. This code of conduct has been reviewed and considered by standards and Council; an updated code was agreed by Council in March 2024.</p> <p>These codes can be found in the Bury Constitution. https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=350&MId=3768&Ver=4&Info=1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Conduct for employees. Final Section 2 - EE Code of Conduct.pdf • The council has a Code of Conduct for Members alongside
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	<p>supporting guidance for Members SECTION 1- The Code of Conduct.pdf</p> <p>4. Supporting guidance on Code of Conduct.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has an Officer Member protocol PROTOCOL FOR MEMBER AND OFFICER RELATIONS.pdf • Members' training programme – This is updated annually and reviewed by the Member Development Group consisting of Members and Officers. • There is a system for Member and Officer declarations of interest. <p>We ensure that staff know how to access our whistleblowing procedure Bury Council Whistle Blowing Policy - July 2023 We seek to establish, monitor, and maintain the organisation's ethical standards and performance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation of complaints about elected members in consultation with the Independent Persons whom the Council is required to appoint under the Localism Act 2011. We have a standards Committee and separate Codes of Conduct for members and officers. • A report is submitted to Annual Council each year regarding the Council Constitution. The report is prepared by the Monitoring Officer and details the work of the Standards Committee and any other governance changes. https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s35565/Constitution%20report.pdf • We maintain registers of gifts & hospitality and member & officer interests, with reminders being issued on a regular basis. • Operate ethical procurement policies to ensure that commitment to our values and integrity is delivered by external suppliers delivering services on our behalf. <p>We have anti-fraud and corruption procedures. All our staff are expected to help prevent fraud and corruption, and are encouraged, supported, and protected to speak up if they encounter potential wrongdoing. https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s40038/BuryAntiFraudCorruptionStrategyJuly2023.pdf</p>
<p>Principle B - Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>Ensuring Openness</p> <p>All Council and Committee meetings are held in public (other than in limited circumstances where consideration of confidential or exempt information means that the public are excluded), with agenda and reports available on the Council's website. Live-streamed webcasts of Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Planning and Licensing committee meetings are available</p>

	<p>online, as well as in an archive which can be accessed on-demand. https://councilstream.com/burycouncil</p> <p>The Council publishes a forward plan, notices of key decisions to notify the public of the most significant decisions it is due to take. This is available online.</p> <p>The Council also publishes its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Policy Statement to support the Annual Budget • Constitution • Council Cabinet and Committee Reports • Information on payments over £500 • Information on senior structure and senior roles. <p>Engaging Comprehensively with Institutional Stakeholders</p> <p>The Council has led the development of a ten-year vision for the borough which engages partners across the borough in delivery – Team Bury. The Strategy defines the vision; outcome measures and delivery plan to achieve a challenging vision for the borough – to achieve faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation. To direct the Council’s contribution to this strategy a Corporate Plan has been produced, and quarterly monitoring reports are produced for the Council’s Cabinet.</p> <p>The Council leads wider stakeholder and community involvement in the Borough strategy through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Team Bury Leadership Group, chaired by the Leader of the Council, engages Chairs / Non-Executives leaders of key Bury Partnership organisation’s in long term strategy, ideas and innovations. • The Team Bury network of the Bury system at Chief Executive level, which aims to represent the wider partners in delivery of the strategy and the work of the Council. • Engagement of health and care system leaders through the Bury Locality Board, which has a focus on the effective operation of the health and care system in Bury, and the Health and Wellbeing Board which has a clear remit around tackling health inequalities. <p>In addition to the above, the Council is a constituent District of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) which exercises several new powers devolved from the Central Government. The GMCA meetings are also held in the public domain and streamed live. The Leader of Bury Council is a</p>
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	<p>constituent member of the GMCA.</p> <p>Members sit on GMCA committees representing Bury including Waste & Recycling, Audit, Bee Network, GM Skills, scrutiny committee represented by the leader of the Conservative Party, The leader co-chairs the Bee Network committee with the GM Mayor.</p> <p>There is regular contact with the other nine constituent districts through the meetings of the GMCA. Lead Members and Officers feedback issues to the constituent districts on pertinent matters. Separately the Statutory Regulatory Officers for Finance and Monitoring Officer of each of the districts meet regularly to consider matters of common interest and agree a common approach on shared issues including companies where the Authorities are key shareholders.</p> <p>The Council has continued to build on its approach to engagement with staff this year through all-staff 'pulse surveys' which have provided an opportunity for all employees to provide feedback which has, in turn, supported the development and progression of the Council's Organisational Development priorities. The organisation's internal communications approach has also continued with a clear monthly rhythm of communications in place including emails, staff briefings, poster distribution to major staff sites and standard computer desktop backgrounds and email signatures. This has been further enhanced on 2024/25 with more in-person engagement opportunities for staff within and across Departments.</p> <p>The Chief Executive and Senior Leaders have met with services and spent time with staff in Departments to discuss hot topics, Council strategy and discuss service delivery with staff.</p> <p>All services hold service sessions and communicate with staff in a wide variety of ways from weekly, monthly meetings, newsletters and away days.</p> <p>Engaging with Individual Citizens and Service Users Effectively</p> <p>To ensure its message is effectively communicated to its citizens the Council's Communications function proactively prepares appropriate press releases to support activities undertaken by the Council and keep residents informed. The Council's website has been updated throughout the year; The Council use their social media platform to share key messages with residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://x.com/BuryCouncil/status/1402245388317433863 • https://www.facebook.com/BuryCouncil/
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.instagram.com/burycouncil/?hl=enWe ensure that the Council website and buildings are accessible to the public. We publish details of our committees, dates of meetings, and publication of reports in advance of meetings. <p>We operate the following scrutiny committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and scrutiny • Children and Young Persons Scrutiny • Health Scrutiny • The public participation guidance sets out how the public can engage with our meetings, and participate in matters with the Council – Final Public Participation Guidance.pdf • We live stream our Cabinet and Council meetings Bury Council - Council Stream • The Council ensures compliance with the requirements of the Transparency code. • The Council web site is accessible, providing details of Council meetings, its policies procedures and the Council constitution. • All budget papers are accessible online including our Medium term financial strategy . • We publish an Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Auditors report to inform stakeholders and service users of the previous years outcomes. • Our Standards and Audit Committees both contain Independent Members. • We have a publication scheme - Freedom of Information publication scheme - Bury Council • Our forward plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Executive Cabinet, individual Executive Members or Officers expect to take during the next four-month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public 14 days before the beginning of each month. • We publish our forward plan. Forward plan - Notice of Key Decisions - published January 2025 - Bury Council • A key decision is a decision taken at a Cabinet meeting, by an individual Cabinet Member, or a Joint Committee of the Cabinet and is: <p>Any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function concerned. A decision will be considered financially significant if it results in incurring expenditure or making savings of £500,000 or greater; unless the specific expenditure or savings have previously been agreed by full Council.</p>
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	<p>Any other executive decision which in the opinion of the Monitoring Officer is likely to be significant having regard to:</p> <p>(a) the number of residents/service users that will be affected in the Wards concerned;</p> <p>(b) whether the impact is short term, long term or permanent.</p> <p>(c) the impact on the community in terms of the economic, social and environmental well-being.</p> <p>Maintain and develop relationships with Organisations across the public and voluntary sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will consult at an appropriate time with our stakeholders; we will seek the views of Residents when we bring forward specific proposals requiring consultation. We will review and evaluate all responses we receive. • Bury VCFA is a local infrastructure organisation providing Volunteering and Development support to the VCSE sector in Bury, enhancing their ability to support local communities. Bury VCFA also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with other stakeholder. • The Council further supports the VCFA by providing funding for micro and small voluntary community or social enterprise. • Ensuring effective relationships with our joint venture partners and company arrangements with oversight of the Commercial Board. • The Council has established a joint venture partnership with two large, national developers to deliver regeneration at scale in both Prestwich and Bury Town Centres. <p>Co production</p> <p>Bury is committed to co production with our communities to ensure that its services are developed with input from the people who use them. This approach has been used across a number of areas including childrens services, adult services and homelessness prevention. The co production outputs create policies help shape our services and improve outcomes ensuring the voice of our residents is heard.</p> <p>Examples of co production include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the Children and Younger person plan – Young people helping to shape policy development and participation in strategic planning groups • Special Education Needs and Disability support – People centred planning our parents, carers and children are involved in planning and reviewing support
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with partner groups such as Bury2gether is fundamental to our approach, and strengthens our work on the SEND improvement programme • Adult social care – The council commits to peer support review of services • Homelessness – People with lived experience of homelessness help shape our prevention strategy and future response
<p>Principle C - Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<p>Defining Outcomes</p> <p>The Let's Do It Strategy and associated Corporate Plan sets out the immediate and long-term vision for Bury and the work of the Council and its partners. This planning framework seeks to drive and continually measure progress against seven overarching outcomes for the borough, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved quality of life. 2. Improved early years development. 3. Improved educational attainment. 4. Increased adult skill levels and employability. 5. Inclusive economic growth. 6. Carbon neutrality by 2038. 7. Improved digital connectivity <p>The 2024/25 budget supported this strategy. We will continue to help deliver these priorities through new ways of working.</p> <p>Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits</p> <p>Bury Council declared a Climate emergency in 2019 and set a target to be carbon neutral by 2038. The Council developed and adopted a Climate Action Strategy in 2021 and an Action Plan which was updated in March 2024. The Climate Action Board receives quarterly progress updates facilitating partnership working with all sectors.</p> <p>https://www.bury.gov.uk/pests-pollution-and-food-hygiene/pollution/lets-go-green-carbon-neutral-bury/burys-climate-action-strategy-and-action-plan</p> <p>The Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan that will guide future development in the borough. Together with the Places for Everyone (PfE) joint development plan, the Local Plan will form a key part of Bury's overall development plan, and once adopted, this will be the basis for determining future proposals for the next 20 years. The PfE deals with strategic planning matters that are of significance across the Joint Plan area (such as identifying future levels of housing and employment growth), Bury's Local Plan will contain a range of locally-specific planning policies and identify local sites where development should be</p>

	<p>built as well as areas where development should be restricted or controlled. The PfE joint development plan was approved in March 2024.</p> <p>A procurement strategy has been established which sets out our approach to procurement activity. Procurement will support economic development, supply chain resilience, and help deliver real outcomes to the people of Bury through social value. Bury Council will embrace Social Value to ensure that all the businesses we contract with are supporting our local communities and adding value beyond their contractual requirement. Bury Council will also ensure that we champion Social Value in all that we do. Bury Council is committed to Social Value and supports the Greater Manchester Social Value Framework and Driving Social Value in GM Public Procurement paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will engage and consult with residents, partners and other key stakeholders when designing key strategies. • The Let's Do It Strategy sets out a clear ambition for Bury 2030: to stand out as a place that is achieving faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation. Bury Council play a significant role in driving the delivery of this ambition. Let's Do It was codesigned with a wide range of stakeholders and partners, including the Bury business community who have a critical role to play here in supporting the delivery of this ambition as partners across our borough. • Let's Do It! strategy - Bury Council • Our Let's outcomes are tracked and each year a state of the borough report is considered for approval by Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is presented to Team Bury. This drives the Team Bury work plan alongside our quarterly performance updates on our strategic plan. • Ensure that outcomes are focused on achieving delivery of the overall vision for the and to be transparent about financial limitations. • Develop a Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets out financial assumptions and provides a set of goals for financial decision making for the planning period ahead. • Delivery of our social value strategy, climate change policies and providing leadership on our equality, diversity, and inclusion priorities. • Our Social Value Strategy will be driven by a Steering Group bringing together representatives from all Council Departments, the Bury VCFA and business community. The Steering Group is responsible for assuring delivery and recommend an annual set of TOMS that aligns with our corporate strategy.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cabinet will also receive an annual report on social value activity and achievements (economic, social, and environmental benefits) in all of its commissioning/procurement, and this is mandated within Contractual Standing Orders. • Ensure our strategic partners share our important Corporate Parenting mission by working closely with large Private Sector organisations with which we have Strategic Partnerships and Joint Ventures to ensure our Looked After Children and Care Experienced young people receive direct benefits from large scale activities occurring within the borough. • Ensure that services are clear about their role in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (S149 of the Equality Act 2010). When required, Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out to assess the impact of proposals which may have a differential effect on individuals with protected characteristics and communities across the borough, these reports will be appended to our Cabinet reports. • Commit to progressing EDI for our workforce, informed by our Employee Groups and the Trade Union
<p>Principle D - Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	<p>D1 - Determining Interventions</p> <p>The Constitution defines and documents the roles and responsibilities of Officers and Members and delegation arrangements, protocols for decision making and codes of conduct for Members and staff. The underpinning Scheme of Delegation is subject to appropriate updates. Further specific delegations may be granted, through recommendations in public reports to Committees.</p> <p>All decisions are formally recorded. In addition, decisions taken under delegated powers are also recorded electronically and are reported via the Council's Electronic Decision Recording System. The Council has a number of meetings which are streamed live, this includes Council and Cabinet.</p> <p>D2 - Planning Interventions</p> <p>The Council plans its activity at a strategic level through its budget and business planning cycle and does so in consultation with internal and external stakeholders to ensure services delivered across various parts of the organisation and partners complement each other and avoid duplication. The plan is reviewed, and this is report to Cabinet, please see attached links.</p> <p>Corporate Plan 2024-25 V2.pdf Cabinet Report - Corporate Plan Performance Report Q1 V2.pdf</p>

	<p>All Executive Directors prepare a service plan which demonstrates how they will deliver their responsibilities within the Corporate Plan, as well as business as usual activity. Plans were included in the Corporate Plan which was presented to Full Council with the budget for the year. The plans were agreed by Council in February 2024. This, in turn, informs Departmental plans and, individual objectives through the Employee Review process.</p> <p>D3 - Optimising Achievement of Intended Outcomes</p> <p>The Council integrates and balances service priorities, affordability, and other resource constraints, supporting it to take into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term, including both revenue and capital spend budgets. This includes a medium-term financial plan.</p> <p>Cabinet report Agenda item - THE COUNCIL'S REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - Bury Council</p> <p>The Council has a clear set of Equality Objectives and an Inclusion Strategy which it is continuing to drive. 2023/24 has seen strong focus on workforce inclusion in particular and the commencement of work on a new, four year, set of equality objectives which will be agreed in 2024/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure our corporate planning is clearly focused on delivery • Ensure consistent and effective service planning, with each service completing an individual plan. Services will ensure that their priorities and activities set out in their service plan all contribute towards delivery of our Corporate Plan, and that there is also a focus on continuous improvement. • Collectively tackle alongside our partners our plans in the Let's Do it strategy <p>Plan our activity at a strategic level through our budget and business planning cycle, in consultation with internal and external stakeholders. We work with our external stakeholders through Bury Together to ensure services delivered across different parts of the organisations and partners complement each other and avoid duplication.</p>
<p>Principle E - Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership</p>	<p>Developing the Organisation's Capacity</p> <p>As the Council continues to face financial pressures, a series of Departmental reviews and restructures have taken / are taking place. Additionally, transformation projects are taking place to review and streamline processes in place to drive improvement in the services provided, by using new technologies, ways of</p>

<p>and the individuals within it</p>	<p>working and new delivery models. Training is provided to develop and support staff whose roles may change as restructures take place.</p> <p>The Council has active engagement with the Trade Unions and there are regularly convened Corporate and departmental Joint Consultative Committees to discuss restructures and specific service matters. The Trade Unions also play an active role in consultations with staff and feedback comments to the Council. Staff capacity development is supported through development planning, which is at the core of the Employee Review process. A range of development opportunities are available to all staff, including accredited qualifications supported through the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy which was refreshed this year.</p> <p>There is a specific focus on leadership and management development with a core management development programme in place which has now had circa. 300 participants.</p> <p>A Members Development Group is in place which oversees Member training and development activity. This includes clear expectations in relation to core training as well as specific development for portfolio holders and Committee Chairs. In response to the December 2023 LGA Peer Review a strengthened Member Development offer has been created, which includes a clearer and enhanced core programme of support as well as specific leadership development opportunities for senior Members, provided by the LGA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an induction programme for all newly elected members. • We provide a members development programme for all Members which is reviewed and updated annually, the programme provides a training programme for the municipal year and specific programmes for Members to develop their Leadership skills. Mandatory Training is provided to Members sitting on Audit, Planning and Licensing Committee. Members are asked to complete core training modules each year including corporate parenting training but also have access to a range of online training. <p>Developing the Capability of the Organisation's Leadership and Other Individuals</p> <p>The Council is committed to a program of leadership development and now has a well-established rhythm of meetings and engagement through the Executive Team (Executive Directors), the Strategic Leadership Group (Departmental Management Teams / Assistant Directors and above) and the Senior Managers' Forum, (Heads of Service and other senior</p>
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	<p>managers). These groups support personal as well as collective organisational development through building relationships across Departments. As noted above, the Council is also continuing to deliver its core management development programme with circa. 300 managers having now benefited from this.</p> <p>The Council has many policies and procedures relating to HR and these are available on the Council's intranet site and are easily accessible. We have a staff handbook to ensure consistent and high-quality people management across the Council. Underpinning this, a comprehensive programme of review is underway across all workforce policies, with 9 policies formally reviewed and agreed this year.</p> <p>Services are required to have regular team meetings, and one to ones with line managers, and these are in addition to the annual performance setting discussions that inform key priorities and outcomes for the year (the Employee Review). There is an Executive team briefing, and regular weekly staff e-mail communications providing staff broadcasts and wellbeing support. Locally, engagement activity is delivered within Departments and Services aligned to their specific ways of working.</p> <p>Immediately following local elections, new Council Members receive an induction into the work of the Council and their role as local members. The format and content are reviewed annually with members at the Member Development Group. The induction training is also open for existing members to attend. All Members are provided with training before sitting on any regulatory committee. In addition, the Council provides a mock Council training session for new members and existing Members to attend; the Leaders of the Groups support this training.</p> <p>The Council is committed to promoting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the workforce through both specific interventions and opportunities and as a central part of the role of all managers. There is a dedicated intranet page with a wide range of support and guidance for staff and their managers as part of the Council's 'Live Better, Feel Better programme' covering a wide range of health and wellbeing topics across including mental, physical and financial wellbeing underpinned by a 24/7 Employee Assistance Programme (phone line and online support) providing a range of support. During the past year, the Council has launched its new Occupational Health Provider and transitioned to a new Employee Assistance Programme. An all-staff roadshow was also held in the Town Hall so staff could engage with the range of wellbeing and benefits available to them.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff Members have an annual personal development review. • Staff are required to complete a suite of mandatory training modules, compliance is reviewed regularly, Managers are provided with a dashboard providing this information. • A full induction is provided to all new starter and all staff moving roles. <p>There is a programme of briefings to all staff, the Chief Executive has a regular VLOG All staff members have access to our Employee Assistance programme.</p>
<p>Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>F1 – Managing Risk</p> <p>The Council operates a risk management framework that aids decision making in pursuit of the organisation’s strategic objectives, protects the Council’s reputation and other assets and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations. The Corporate Risk Register is part of this framework and is an articulation of the key risks impacting the Council. It is used to inform decision making, provide assurance over actions being taken to manage key risks and to inform directorate level risk management planning and mitigation activities. Named risk managers are identified in the Register for its key strategic risks. The corporate risk register is presented to, and discussed by, the Executive Team throughout the year, and is regularly presented to the Audit Committee.</p> <p>In addition to this, internal audit report findings on audits are presented to the Audit Committee throughout the year. Other senior officers throughout the organisation report to both the Council’s Cabinet and the Locality Board as well as various Overview and Scrutiny Boards.</p> <p>Reports to Committees also include a section that sets out the risks to any proposals and recommendations. Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken, where required and documented as part of all formal Committee Reports to ensure the Council is acting in accordance with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>All reports presented to Cabinet are signed off by both the Monitoring Officer and the S151 officer (or nominated individual) to ensure appropriate financial and legal oversight is provided on all recommendations. Legal and financial implications are set out in all reports to ensure that the implications of recommendations are fully understood prior to a decision being made.</p>

F2 – Managing Performance

The Council puts in place Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor service delivery whether services are internal or through external providers. An Integrated Monitoring and Corporate Plan report is provided to the Executive team monthly. This brings together analysis of performance against the Corporate Plan to highlight any challenges so that they can be addressed. The Cabinet receives quarterly reports on our performance against the Corporate Plan.

F3 - Effective Overview and Scrutiny

- **Scrutiny and challenge by Council and its Committees** - The Council has bodies responsible for monitoring and reviewing the Council's governance:
 - 1) **The Cabinet** - Proposes the budget and policy framework to Council and makes decisions on resources and priorities relating to the budget and policy framework
 - 2) **Audit Committee** - Approves the Council's Annual Accounts, oversees External Audit activity and oversees the effectiveness of the Council's Governance, risk management, and internal control arrangements
 - 3) **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** - Considers the implications of financial decisions and changes to corporate, partnership and city region governance arrangements
 - 4) **Health Scrutiny committee** - To review the policies and performance of the Council and external organisations in relation to the following areas:
 - Adult social care (including adult safeguarding Health and wellbeing board)
 - Housing
 - Public health
 - Adults and Communities budget and policy framework
 - Statutory health scrutiny powers including the review and scrutiny of any matter relating to the planning provision and operation of health services for children and young people, including transitional health care services, affecting the area and to make reports and recommendations on these matters
 - 5) **Childrens scrutiny committee** - To review the policies and performance of the Council and

	<p>external organisations in relation to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Schools • Children and Young People Support and Safeguarding Services • Children and Young People Specialist Services • To scrutinise individual Cabinet decisions relating to the above areas. • To monitor the Council's performance in the above areas. • To scrutinise statutory inspection reports and oversee the implementation of any recommendations arising from such reports. • Transitional arrangements between children and adult services • Statutory education scrutiny powers <p>6) Standards Committee - Promotes high standards of ethical conduct, advising on the revision of the Codes of Corporate Governance and Conduct for Members.</p> <p>The three Scrutiny Committees which hold decision makers to account and play a key role in ensuring that public services are delivered in a way residents want - the agenda, reports and minutes are publicly available on the Council website. All scrutiny committees have a forward plan outlining the matters the Committee will scrutinise. Scrutiny Chairs meet regularly as a group to review their plans.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a finance and performance subgroup that carries out deep dives into performance and finance matters. The effectiveness of governance arrangements is monitored and evaluated throughout the year.</p> <p>F4 – Robust Internal Control</p> <p>The Council Annual Corporate Risk Management report, and its Internal Audit Plan set out the view on the internal control environment. The report sets out areas in which the internal control environment required strengthening.</p> <p>Audit plan 2024 - Audit Report</p> <p>The Council has an Audit Committee, in line with CIPFA's 'Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police (2018)', which provides an independent and high-level</p>
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	<p>resource to support good governance and strong financial management.</p> <p>The Council maintains clear policies and arrangements in respect of counter fraud and anti-corruption. These are the Anti- Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy; Whistleblowing Policy; Anti Money Laundering Policy and the Anti Bribery Policy. These policies were last refreshed in December 2025 along with the production of an updated strategy.</p> <p>https://www.bury.gov.uk/my-neighbourhood/fraud</p> <p>F5 – Managing Data</p> <p>The processing of personal data is essential to many of the services and functions carried out by local authorities. The Council complies with data protection legislation, which includes GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). This will ensure that such processing is carried out fairly, lawfully, and transparently. https://www.bury.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-protection/data-protection-legislation</p> <p>The Council reviews and supplements its policies, and keep its processing activities under review, to ensure they remain consistent with the law, and any compliance advice and codes of practice issued from time to time by the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO).</p> <p>The Council ensures that officers handling personal data are trained to an appropriate level in the use and control of personal data. It is made clear that all staff and Members are personally accountable for using the Council’s information responsibly and appropriately. All staff must undertake protecting information e-learning training on an annual basis, and this forms part of the induction process for new staff. Data protection also forms part of the induction program for new Members and is included in the Council’s new starters induction pack.</p> <p>Information Governance is overseen by the Director of Law and Governance who is the Senior Information Risk Officer for the Council (SIRO). The Council’s performance on managing data is reported to the Audit Committee on a bi-annual basis.</p> <p>The Council makes information available to the public via the information access regimes provided for by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, provides individuals with various rights. The Council ensures that all valid requests from individuals to</p>
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exercise those rights are dealt with as quickly as possible, and by no later than the timescales allowed in the legislation. Information regarding Freedom of Information requests and Environmental Information Regulations can be found online by accessing the following link:

<https://www.bury.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/requesting-information>

- A suite of policies are in place [03 Data Protection Policy September 2024.pdf](#)
- Two Caldicott Guardians are in place for Children and Adults they provide leadership and guidance on complex matters.
- An electronic system is in place for the reporting of data breaches.
- The DPO provides advice on Privacy Impact Assessments and Data Processing agreements.
- The Council maintain a Record of Processing Activity.
- The Council operate of system of Information Governance champions.
- The DPO works with other DPO/Leads across GM and alongside the GMCA team ensuring that good practice is maintained.

F6 – Strong Public Financial Management

The Council's approach to Financial Management ensures that public money is safeguarded at all times, ensuring value for money. Its approach supports both long-term achievement of objectives, and shorter term financial and operational performance.

The Director of Finance (S151 Officer) ensures that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, proper financial records and accounts are kept and oversees an effective system of internal financial control. The Director of Finance ensures well developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control including management of financial risks, systems, and processes. The Constitution (Part 4 Section 6) details the financial regulations which underpin the financial arrangements.

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s39461/Section%206%20Financial%20Regulations.pdf>

The Financial Management Code (FM Code) sets out the standards of financial management expected for local authorities and is designed to support good practice and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The FM Code was launched in 2019, with the first full year of compliance being 2021/22.

	<p>Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires that when a local authority is making its budget calculations, the Chief Finance Officer ('CFO') of the authority must report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda item - The Council's 2025/26 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2026/27 through to 2027/28 - Bury Council • Financial management led by the Finance Board, which is Chaired by the s151 Officer Director of Finance. • Ensure advice is given on all financial matters; proper financial records and accounts are kept and oversees an effective system of internal financial control. • When making our budget calculations, ensure that the Chief Finance Officer S151 reports to Council on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations, and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. • Follow CIPFA's Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code of Practice which set out the risk framework through which the Council manages its balance sheet and makes capital investment decisions. • Maintain strategies and processes detailing our approach to decision making on capital investments, and treasury management <p>The Council delivers a range of partnerships which involves working with others, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint venture arrangement for the development of the Millgate Estate; A board is in place attended by the Bury Council Chief Executive, the Council Leader and the Executive Director of Place. Strategic financial advice and legal support is provided by the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. A Council officer is assigned to provide day to day support to the Joint Venture. • Joint venture arrangement in place for the development of Prestwich Town Centre. A board is in place which is attended by the Bury Council Chief Executive, the Council Leader and the Executive Director of Place. Strategic financial advice and legal support is provided by the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer. A Council officer is assigned to provide day to day support to the Joint Venture. <p>The Council also has relationships with:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bury MBC Townside Fields, a wholly owned subsidiary set up to develop Townside Fields, including Q park, 3KP, Townside Fields, Premier Inn. • Townside Fields Management Company, a company in which Bury MBC owns a third of the shareholding. • Six Town Housing Limited – A wholly owned subsidiary company of the Council and Private Registered Provider of Social Housing owning and leasing 149 social housing homes which it lets and sublets to its own social housing tenants under the assured tenancy regime governed by the Housing Act 1988. • Persona – a Local Authority Trading Company established to provide a range of adult social care services. <p>It is a requirement of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting that ‘Where an authority is in a group relationship with other entities and undertakes significant activities through the group, the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control should include its group activities.’</p> <p>Arrangements are in place for the Council and the group companies to work together in setting priorities and overseeing and reporting on performance. The internal audit service also carries out audits of these organisations as part of the requirement to fulfil statutory S151 duties.</p> <p>CIPFA’s Prudential Code of Practice and Treasury Management Code of Practice sets out the risk framework through which the Council manages its balance sheet and makes capital investment decisions. Alongside the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) guidance on minimum revenue provision, and the guidance on borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) which seeks to limit borrowing solely for yield, the Council has a strong regulatory framework that it adheres to. There is a Capital Board which is chaired by the S151 Officer, and the Capital Strategy and capital approval process detail the approach to decision making on capital investments, and the Treasury Management Strategy details the approach for debt management and cash investing, both of which contribute to strong, ongoing financial management of the Council’s balance sheet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate an effective risk management framework, ensuring that a system of risk recording is across all areas of the Council to inform the corporate risk register. • Clear performance metrics against the corporate plan are reported to Members on a quarterly basis, under pinned by a system of Boards and Members Assurance Group. • Effective Overview and Scrutiny committees providing a check and balance and critical friend role.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal controls to assist in the management of risks. Response to internal and external audit reports including responding to any recommendations from our Auditors. • Internal control processes, which support the achievement of our objectives while managing risks. The current approach will be set out annually in Risk and Internal Audit reports to Audit Committee and supported by our governance Boards. • Maintain and communicate clear policies and arrangements in respect of counter fraud and anti-corruption. • Maintain an Audit Committee which oversees the effectiveness of governance and risk management arrangements, internal systems of control, and antifraud and anti-corruption arrangements. • Annually report to Audit Committee our internal auditor’s findings into the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control. • Ensure robust and integrated risk management arrangements are in place, we have risk registers supported by a risk tool kit. Our corporate risk register is reviewed by our Audit Committee • Maintain financial regulations to ensure consistency and clear financial protocols • Maintain a transparent complaints and feedback procedure. • Internal Audit annual risk-based programme of internal audits informed by the council’s risk register. • Ensure effective information governance arrangements are in place to support compliance with existing and emerging legislation for data protection and privacy. <p>Regular Finance and performance reporting – quarterly budget monitoring to Members.</p>
<p>Principle G - Assurance and Effective Accountability</p>	<p>Implementing Good Practice in Transparency</p> <p>The Council follows the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, which includes requirements and recommendations for local authorities to publish certain types of data. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-government-transparency-code-2015</p> <p>The Council’s website is set out in a clear and easily accessible way, using infographics and plain language. Information on expenditure, performance and decision making is sited together in one place and can be accessed quickly and easily from the homepage. https://www.bury.gov.uk/</p> <p>G2 – Implementing Good Practices in Reporting</p> <p>The Council produces a detailed, annual Corporate Performance Delivery Report, which charts the boroughs progress towards its</p>

vision and priorities. The Executive have oversight of performance, finance and workforce matters, regular finance reports are brought to this meeting.

<https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s35746/Bury%20Corporate%20Plan%20Performance%20and%20Delivery%20Report%20Quarter%20Four%20End%20of%20Year%202022-23.pdf>

- We follow the Local Government Transparency Code, which includes requirements and recommendations for local authorities to publish certain types of data. The council is committed to being open and transparent about its financial affairs.
- Details of all council expenditure over £500 are published on the council's website
- Our pay policy statement is published online as is details of senior officer remuneration
- We publish our contract register which contains details of all contracts for the supply of goods and services to the council that have a value in excess of £5,000.
- Internal audit independently and critically evaluates the council's internal control framework and, where necessary, makes recommendations for improvement and the introduction of best practice.
- The Head of Internal Audit presents an annual report to Audit Committee to provide an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's internal control environment.
- The Audit Committee meet to receive the reports of both Internal and External Audit.

Implementing good practice in reporting

- We report on finance and performance against our plans on a quarterly basis to Cabinet.
- We ensure that the Executive Leadership team receive reports from our Governance Boards to ensure identified challenges can be addressed.
- We produce an annual State of the borough report

Assurance and effective accountability

Prior to the introduction of the Boards in January 2025, assurance was obtained through Member and Officer meetings and Senior Executive Leader and with the Strategic Leadership team.

Assurance and accountability in this period was subject to oversight by the Executive team who throughout this period met on a weekly basis.

	<p>Committees and council provided the framework for monitoring and reviewing Council governance. Cabinet leading on the budget and policy framework, making decisions on resources and priorities relating to the budget and policy framework. Adult committee providing oversight of the internal control arrangements, governance and risk management. Our scrutiny committees Overview & Scrutiny, Health Committee. Childrens scrutiny committee all met regularly throughout this time. In addition constitutional reviews were provided to Council and standards committee undertook its work programme. Statutory Officers met monthly.</p> <p>Senior officers across the Council met at wider leadership team meetings, managers were further supported by a management development programme which also ran throughout this timeframe. Although this activity was undertaken the recommendation from our Internal Auditor led the Council to reflect, review and make proposals to strengthen the governance arrangements.</p> <p>Assurance – Post establishment of the Boards in January 2025</p> <p>The improvement plan and report from our internal auditors has led to a revised approach to internal governance.</p> <p>Six Assurance Boards have been established from January 2025. The Boards report into Executive Leadership Team and Members Assurance Group through a monthly highlight report (which is shared with the Cabinet Members). The Boards are chaired by an Executive Director and attended by Directors and Directorate leads. The assurance boards meet monthly, with clear Terms of Reference, work programmes, a lead Officer and action notes/action tracker. The Assurance Boards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial • Finance • Governance and Assurance • Performance, Delivery and Transformation • Property and Estates • Regeneration <p>Executive Leadership Team meet weekly, chaired by the Chief Executive and with formal action notes and action tracking by the Chief Executives PA. Attendance to include all Executive Directors and statutory officers. The standing agenda will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of the improvement plan (from January 2025)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate assurance, through a highlight report from each Board on a rotating basis and updates on workforce and budget monitoring • The decision-making forward plan and meeting preparation • The GM interface • Communications messages for dissemination <p>From January 2025 a weekly Member Assurance Group is held to facilitate private political briefing and challenge on key areas of risk, membership to include, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Chief Executive. Action notes and action log are to be produced and shared weekly at Executive Leadership Team. Other Officers to attend by invitation – key areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal audit recommendations • Financial transformation • Estates, including the corporate landlord, and estates compliance • Project Safety Valve <p>Elected Member Oversight will be provided via regular reporting into the Council’s Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A standardised agenda is used for all Cabinet Portfolio Meetings, which will include internal audit reports and assurance board highlight report.</p> <p>A consistent structure, including a standardised agenda is applied to Departmental Management Teams, which will support the Board structure by providing oversight and assurance of Business-as-Usual activity including workforce and budget management. Standard Agenda to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational overview and update, including update/feedback to Directors from Executive Leadership Team • Actions/issues from Assurance Boards • Highlight reports from corporate business partners, provided on at least a quarterly basis • Decision making <p>The Strategic Leaders’ Group of Council Directors meet on a quarterly basis with a specific remit to develop a high-performance culture.</p>
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5. Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the Governance Framework

The Council has a legal responsibility to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the systems of internal control. After conducting this review, the Council has assurance that its

governance arrangements and systems of control are not sufficiently robust and require strengthening.

The Council's external Auditors, Forvis Mazars, presented the outcome of their audit work in relation to their judgements in the area of the Council's Value for Money arrangements for the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial years to the December Audit Committee meeting. They identified three significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements. These weaknesses are across all three reporting criteria that they are required to consider under the Code of Audit Practise, namely, financial sustainability, governance and for improving the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of services.

They drew attention to the Council's failure to:

- Properly understand its financial position during 2021/22 and 2022/23, and to continue to rely on the use of reserves to support the provision of services, which are at risk of being exhausted.
- Manage risks, including with respect to the existence of RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) in the Council's estate.
- Improve internal controls so that weaknesses identified and reported to management by Internal and External audit and other regulators are addressed promptly.
- Prepare materially accurate financial statements supported by adequate supporting working papers.
- Secure action to improve services to children.

Forvis Mazars determined that use of their statutory reporting powers under the Local Audit Accountability Act 2014 was necessary and issued a statutory recommendation formally to the Chief Executive on 12 December 2024.

They recommended that:

"The Council should, as a matter of urgency, develop a comprehensive Council wide improvement plan to reflect the transformation and cultural change needed across all departments, to ensure the Council can deliver the range, level and quality of services that it deems appropriate and within its statutory responsibilities in a financially sustainable way. As part of this, appropriate senior leadership and management is required to ensure the improvement plan delivers the required changes. Member oversight is needed to ensure the changes are embedded into the organisation."

5.1 Council's response & Improvement Activity

The Council responded to the recommendation and prepared an improvement plan. The plan was endorsed by Audit Committee at a Special meeting on the 9th of January 2025 and subsequently reported to Council. The plan set out the following improvement actions, the plan addressed the areas raised in the improvement notice. Please see agenda and improvement plan. ([Public Pack](#))[Agenda Document for Audit Committee, 09/01/2025 19:00](#)

The improvement plan and Council progress has been reviewed at each Audit committee meeting ensuring that Members are updated and can track progress. In addition, the plan will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

[Audit Committee Report - Councils Improvement Plan.pdf](#)
[Agenda for Audit Committee on Tuesday, 8th April, 2025, 7.00 pm - Bury Council](#)

The improvement plan articulates the activity required to address the issues raised by our External Auditors. The progress against the plan is reviewed regularly. Alongside the improvement plan each Board has key activities to deliver improvements.

The governance arrangements set up to support the delivery of the improvement plan are now the Councils business as usual governance structure. The Council will continue to drive improvements through the Boards, this work will continue and the work of the Boards was reviewed six months from establishment. The review prepared a Board scorecard reviewing documentation to the Boards, supporting risk registers, attendance and highlight reports. It was noted that Officers and Members were positive about the progress of the Board however it identified the need to ensure that the highlight reports are aligned to the improvement plan alongside document consistency across the Boards. The Council will ensure the terms of reference for the Boards are regularly updated.

The work to deliver improvements is ongoing and will continue alongside the setting of the 2025/26 budget and finance control improvement delivery.

5.2 Governance

Six new Assurance Boards have been established, reporting into Executive Leadership Team and Members Assurance Group through a monthly highlight report which will also be shared with the Cabinet Members. The Boards will each be chaired by an Executive Director and attended by Directors/Assistant Directors and Senior service leads. The assurance boards will meet monthly, with clear Terms of Reference, work programmes, a lead Officer and action notes/action tracker. The Assurance Boards are:

- Finance Board – Chaired by the Director of Finance
- Governance and Assurance Board – Chaired by Director of Law & Governance
- Regeneration Board – Chaired by Executive Director of Place
- Commercial activity Board – Chaired by the Director of Finance
- Performance Delivery and Transformation Board - Chaired by the Executive Director of Transformation
- Property & estates Board – Chaired by the Executive Director of Place

The assurance framework which supports these boards has been developed further and finalised with a detailed Improvement Work Plan accompanied by quarterly milestones which are tracked through each Board's Highlight Report. The assurance framework details roles and responsibilities of Chairs, Deputies

and Leads of the Board. It determines attendance and sets out meeting expectations. Improvement activity is on-going across all Boards below sets out the improvement activity being undertaken by each Board.

A weekly Executive Leadership Team meeting has been established, chaired by the Chief Executive and with formal action notes and action tracking by the Chief Executive's PA. Attendance to include all Executive Directors and statutory officers. The standing agenda will include:

- Delivery of the improvement plan
- Corporate assurance, through a highlight report from each Board on a rotating basis and updates on workforce and budget monitoring
- The decision-making forward plan and meeting preparation
- The Greater Manchester interface
- Communications messages for dissemination

A weekly Member Assurance Group is held to facilitate private political briefing and challenge on key areas of risk, membership to include, the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and the Chief Executive. Action notes and action log are to be produced and shared weekly at Executive Leadership Team. Other Officers attend by invitation. Key areas of focus include:

- Internal audit recommendations
- Financial transformation
- Estates, including the corporate landlord, and estates compliance
- Project Safety Valve

A consistent structure, including a standardised agenda will be applied to Departmental Management Teams, which will support the Board structure by providing oversight and assurance of Business-as-Usual activity including workforce and budget management. Standard Agenda to include:

- Operational overview and update, including update/feedback to Directors from Executive Leadership Team
- Actions/issues from Assurance Boards
- Highlight reports from corporate business partners, provided on at least a quarterly basis
- Decision making

The Strategic Leaders' Group of Council Directors will continue to meet on a quarterly basis with a specific remit to develop a high-performance culture. Elected Member Oversight is provided via regular reporting into the Council's Audit Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. A standardised agenda is used for Cabinet Portfolio Meetings, which will include internal audit reports and assurance board highlight report.

5.3 Financial Strategy

The delivery of the 2025/26 budget is of vital importance to the organisation and to ensure leadership and oversight of this the Director of Finance Chairs a monthly strategic finance board, made up of senior officers from all of the service directorates, with responsibility for monitoring delivery of the in-year revenue budget and capital delivery programme and production of the subsequent years' revenue budget, capital programme and medium term financial strategy.

The Council has a Financial Transformation programme, the key elements to this are:

- Zero based budgeting
- Finance service improvement including restructure of the finance service
- New Procurement and Contract management operating model
- Balanced 2026/27 budget set
- Introduction of automation and self service in financial processes
- Greater use of Unit 4 and moving it to a cloud-based system which is due for launch April 2026.
 - It has been recognised that the current Financial Management System is nearing the end of its lifecycle, which limits efforts to modernise. Challenges include fragmented financial processes, reliance on manual tasks, and a lack of self-service options for staff and suppliers.
 - There are also number of inherent risks and compliance concerns regarding the existing system alongside high reliance on manually based financial transaction activities which is affecting the efficiency of the finance service and the wider organisation.

[Unit 4 Contract Cabinet Report 25 September 2024 PART A.pdf,](#)
[Decision - Unit 4 System Upgrade & Transformation Strategic Partner Contract Award - Bury Council](#)

The Finance Board has a detailed 2026/27 budget timetable agreed setting out the approach, workstreams and timelines supporting production of proposals to address the structural funding gap. This will build on the agreed strategy and involve a zero based budget review of all council services and identification of proposals that will enable a balanced budget to be set without recourse to reserves over the current medium term financial strategy. The timetable and approach will include the identification of additional capacity requirements to support the budget work and be funded from the ongoing capital receipt flexibilities in place to support council and service transformation.

Development of budget proposals, involving the wider workforce, on a service basis through consideration of:

- The key cost drivers affecting their services.
- Current service performance levels including a productivity assessment and how they compare to benchmark councils and 'best in class'.

- Current service standards being operated to and the scope for changes in those standards including any elements of the service that could be stopped or reduced.
- Consideration of different models of service delivery.
- Opportunities from implementing different ways of working, including self-service if appropriate.
- The impact of their proposals on other service areas i.e. either in requiring their input and support in delivering the change or in potentially increasing costs elsewhere.
- Opportunities for additional income generation.
- The impact of their proposals on the customer

The finance service restructure has a number of key milestones which are overseen by the Boards:

- Consult on Phase One of new Finance Structure
- Begin recruitment to Phase One of new Finance Structure
- Develop Phase Two of new Finance Structure for consultation informed by the Unit 4 upgrade transformation programme.

5.4 Corporate Core

During the year the core has established and coordinated the new Board governance structures and ensured that the programme of improvement is driven by the organisation with Executive and statutory officers working to the Chief Executive.

During this period there have been organisational changes within the core to improve it's approach and ways of working. The appointments of a new S151 officer and Director of Housing have strengthened the delivery of services. The Legal Services Team continue to hold the LEXCEL accreditation. The Housing Team have undertaken a preparedness for regulation review details of which are set out below. The Housing Advisory Board has continued to work to deliver service improvements for our tenants including ensuring a strong tenant voice in coproduction of our policies. In addition, Cabinet decision making has approved a number of reports delivering improvements to our tenants, including delivery of the major project works.

The corporate peer review which took place on December 2023 was published in 2024, The peer review found that the Council had “really stepped up” in its place leadership, had a clear vision for inclusive growth and was a strong partner in regeneration schemes. The team noted improvements in the financial position whilst noting the challenges that remained. The leadership of the Leader and Chief Executive was noted alongside their role in Greater Manchester. Following the Peer review the Council has updated its Corporate Plan to reflect this feedback.

5.5 Place Directorate

On 4th December 2024 Cabinet agreed to structural changes which has formed the Place Directorate, in doing so the Council moved from five Directorates to four through Business Growth and Infrastructure merging with the Operations Department. Extensive staff consultation took place. The service has undertaken a

number of staff engagement sessions and used a coaching ethos to develop its teams.

The service has adopted the revised governance arrangements however the major projects work have continued to be overseen by the Regeneration and Sustainability Board; a revised Estates Board operates with a broader remit alongside reporting to Executive Leadership Team and Members Assurance Group.

5.6 Adult Social Care

In February 2025, the Local Government Association carried out a peer review, which was to provide a preparation for the forthcoming CQC inspection of the services. The review was with the Council and our partners, the challenge was to assess the ability of the adult social care service to deliver good services to people, as well as its preparedness for a Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment. The purpose of a peer challenge is to help an authority, and its partners assess current achievements, areas for development, and capacity to change. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government and adult social care to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, and material that they read. The team were on-site in Bury for three days from the 11–12 February 2025.

[LGA ASC Preparation for Assurance Peer Challenge Report](#)

The peer challenge team produced a feedback report which identified strengths and also makes some suggestions for actions. It found:

- A passionate and committed workforce
- A clear and well-articulated improvement journey
- Staff reported feeling well-equipped to carry out their roles effectively, with access to the necessary resources and support
- Strong and self-aware leadership and visible and approachable
- Financial commitment to adult social care
- Effective management of waiting lists
- Exemplary integration with health services
- Strong provider relationships and quality assurance
- Effective safeguarding partnership working
- Commitment to co-production
- Robust oversight of data, quality, and finance

The following recommendations were made:

- Embedding safeguarding awareness across all teams
- Enhancing support and engagement for carers
- Embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across all teams
- Improving website accessibility and communication clarity
- Expanding commissioning beyond accommodation-based support

5.7 Children Services

During 2024/25, Ofsted completed their 6th and final monitoring visit under the ILACS framework. Monitoring visits are thematic in nature but always consider the impact of leaders which includes workforce, performance management, quality assurance and management oversight. Our 6th monitoring visit took place in October 2024 and was focused on the 'front door' including contacts, referrals and re-referrals, step-up from and step-down to Early Help, child in need assessments, management of allegations against professionals who work with children and the emergency management of concerns for children outside normal office hours.

Inspectors noted positive progress in ensuring that children are helped and protected at the earliest opportunity:

“Continued significant council investment has increased workforce capacity and management stability at all levels. A refreshed and dynamic approach to recruitment is attracting more social workers into Bury. The pace of improvement has stepped up since the appointment of a permanent director of social care and early help in May 2024, and this is bringing a renewed positivity across the workforce and supporting a clarity of vision and clearer expectations about practice standards. There is increased visibility of the senior leadership team, and social workers are now more involved in service planning.

There is now consistent application of thresholds at the front door. The relocation of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) back into local authority offices is enabling stronger relationships with the initial response team (IRT), richer multi-agency information-sharing and a timelier response for children. A refreshed approach to performance management is supporting improvements in the quality and timeliness of assessments, visits, initial child protection conferences and supervision.

There is more to do to ensure that the police consistently refer concerns relating to incidents of domestic abuse to the MASH in a timely way.”

There have been two DfE Reviews completed in the reporting period, in April 2024 and January 2025. These are part of the arrangements under the Improvement Notice issued to the Council in December 2021 and are led by Bury's DfE Adviser and DfE Senior Case Lead.

In April 2024, the review included discussions with senior leaders from Childrens Social Care, Education, Health and Police and focus groups of practitioners. The review recognised continued progress around recognised areas for development, including improved working relationships across different areas and improved links with education both the Virtual School and also within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Partners highlighted a need to strengthen the Early Help offer and processes and a need to improve communications particularly in respect of the Family Safeguarding model.

In January 2025, DfE met with practitioners, independent scrutineer and Family Safeguarding Strategic Partners and saw a committed leadership team making positive progress. They noted good engagement and communication with staff in direct response to feedback in the previous review. Progress in relation to

embedding the Family Safeguarding model had been impacted by churn in staff including leaders in this area.

DfE reviews always include meetings with the Chief Executive, Lead Member for Children's Services, Executive Director for Children's Services and Director for Early Help & Children's Social Care. They felt our self-evaluation demonstrates that we know ourselves well. They saw evidence of a mature safeguarding partnership with strengthened challenge and improved grip across the partnership.

In addition, in August 2024 Mark Riddell MBE, the DfE National Adviser for Care Leavers, undertook a follow-up visit focusing on our care leavers service. Feedback was positive, recognising a shift in our leadership and management approach and clear evidence of progress since the original review in May 2023.

In February 2025, we received a visit from Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) as part of their work with Local Authorities to support work in preventing youth homelessness. They met with staff and young people to explore what is working well in Bury and how we can strengthen practice.

Following the Local Area SEND inspection of February 2024 and the subsequent Improvement Notice issued in May 2024, the post-inspection action plan was formed in consultation with all local partners, including the parent carer forum, drafted and approved without amendment by the DfE/Ofsted in June 2024. Following this, an improvement board formed, independently chaired by an experienced ex-Director of Children's Services and on which all partners are members, including members from the Department for Education, NHS England and parent/carers. There has been one DfE stocktake assessing progress being made overall (December 2024), and 2 'deep dives', focusing on specific areas within the post-inspection action plan (Preparing for Adulthood and the Graduated Approach). All have been positive on the progress being made by the local area.

We also continue to work with the Department for Education in relation to Project Safety Valve which with Bury being one of the first councils to enter into a formal Safety Valve agreement on 19 March 2021 and was put in place to address the financial pressures on the high needs block (SEND) caused by escalating demand. Whilst there is currently a significant deficit on this block and which reflects the national challenge of increasing demand, the council has undertaken extensive work in repairing and rebuilding Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services within the borough as part of the Safety Valve programme which has included rebuilding the Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) team, reworking the EHCP process and launching a graduated approach.

The work undertaken to date has had a positive impact compared to many other councils who are reporting significant increases in their deficits, however demand pressures remain. This increase in demand has resulted in a necessary change in the deficit reduction profile with the council working with the DfE to agree a revised DSG Management Plan that will remain under close scrutiny and review through the Finance Board and Member Assurance Group.

This is a national issue and one which is being actively monitored and reviewed. At present there is a statutory override which means the Council does not have to fund the deficit. There is no confirmed national solution to this challenge at present, and the override expires at the end of 2027/28, the future of this arrangement is dependent on the outcome of the government SEND reforms. As part of its financial planning the Council holds a DSG reserve which covers these costs. However, going forward if the statutory override is removed the deficit would become a significant financial challenge to the Council. Given the size of the national deficit with the majority of councils forecasting increases in their deficits, it is anticipated that there will be a solution identified by government to address the risks to many council's future financial sustainability should the override be removed.

We continue to work with other local authorities as part of the DfE funded Sector Led Improvement Programme (SLIP). In the last 12 months, this has included:

- Continuing work with Hertfordshire around our Family Safeguarding model of practice, including delivery of culture workshops and support to senior leaders.
- Additional sector-led support with Lancashire County Council to support the implementation of our Family Safeguarding model by working alongside practitioners.
- Salford support to our Care Leavers service, working with managers and practitioners to support practice improvement with a focus on pathway planning for our young people
- Peer review of our Fostering service from Warrington

Learning and recommendations from all the activity described above is woven into our Improvement Plan and other relevant plans – this includes our Corporate Parenting Plan and service plans

5.8 Head of Audit and Risk Management Annual Opinion 2024/25

Based upon the results of the audit work undertaken during the year, the Head of Audits opinion is that the Authority's control environment provides limited assurance that the significant risks facing the Authority are addressed.

Some fundamental and significant recommendations have not been fully implemented during the year. However, the recommendations made had been accepted by management and are in the sight of the Governance and Assurance Board (GAB) and the Members Assurance Group.

Towards the end of the 2024/25 year, whilst a number of Limited Assurance reports were still being issued, the Internal Audit Team were starting to see an improvement on numbers of recommendations being addressed by the time the second follow up has been completed, thus fewer recommendations being reported as outstanding to the Governance and Assurance Board. This suggests that the work of the Governance and Assurance Board is positively contributing to the improvement of Governance across the Council however further improvement is needed.

- External Auditor’s Review of the Effectiveness of Governance Arrangements - The Council’s external auditor is Forvis Mazars. They submit progress reports and their Annual Audit Report to Audit Committee.
- CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019 (FM Code) - a series of financial management standards set out the professional standards needed if a local authority is to meet the minimum standards of financial management acceptable to meet fiduciary duties to taxpayers, customers and lenders. The Financial Management Code (FM Code) is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist local authorities in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The code is not a set of rules to be followed but a set of principles in a format that matches the financial management cycle and supports governance in local authorities. The authority carried out an assessment to note the level of compliance with the CIPFA Financial Management code in 2022/23, that was presented to Audit Committee on the 12 October 2022. A number of areas were identified where improvements were required, and these are currently being addressed through a Financial Improvement Plan which is monitored through the Member Assurance Group. A new assessment will be undertaken in 2025/26.
- The Chief Finance Officer has examined the major assumptions used within the budget calculations and associated risks. The Medium-Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy have been updated to reflect the 2024/25 budget position. The 2024/25 budget was approved by Council on 21 February 2024 and balanced with the use of £15m reserves. The Finance Improvement Board is supporting the Council to identify savings to meet the MTFP budget gap and remove requirement to use reserves to meet future years budgets.
- Annual Report to Annual Council - this report is submitted regarding the Council Constitution. The report also covers the work of the Standards Committee and any other Governance changes.

6. Action Plan: Governance Challenges for 2024/25 Update

The review of governance arrangements identified 7 main areas where the Council would focus its efforts during 2024/25, to address changing circumstances and challenges identified. These are set out in the section below.

Action	Activity
Adult Social Care - Policy review, and policy and strategy development to be guided by national and regional learning and best practice associated with preparedness for CQC inspections. Continued transformation of Adult Social Care in the borough in the face of increasing demand and significant financial challenge.	Reports to Cabinet setting out performance and improvements made by the Department Cabinet Report ASC Performance report Q4 24-25.pdf Adult Social Care Performance Quarter Four Report 202324.pdf Adult Social Care Performance Quarter One and Quarter Two Report 202324.pdf
Joint Adult Social care and Childrens Services on preparation	In January 2025 there was a SEND deep-dive with the DfE focusing on

<p>for adulthood for those likely to be eligible for adult care under the Care Act.</p>	<p>preparation for adulthood where we shared our progress to enhance provision along the Preparing for Adulthood journey including a workshop with colleagues from education, health and social care supported by the NDTi (National Development Team for Inclusion). Work has started to improve take-up of supported internships; and expand provision and meetings with CAMHS and other health services focused on improving transitions.</p> <p>We have also continued with the work started prior to the SEND Local Area inspection in adult transitions including a dedicated social work team, joint boards and a best practice protocol. Our SEND Employment Forum has been established with first meeting scheduled for September.</p>
<p>Refresh the Highways Asset Management Plan</p>	<p>The Council has produced a highway asset management plan, Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP) - Bury Council</p>
<p>Prepare for the inspection of social housing by the regulator following the introduction of the Social Housing Regulation Act.</p>	<p>The Council in October 2024 had a mock inspection carried out by Altair. Altair produced a report with recommendations, the Council has a plan with oversight from the Director of Housing to ensure that the Council is fully prepared for the inspection. Political Leadership is provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing. Using the new Consumer Standards, no major issues were found, and several good practices were highlighted. Altair praised our Property Compliance and our fair treatment of tenants. They also appreciated how we listen to tenant voices and make sure our services meet residents' diverse needs.</p> <p>As expected, areas for improvement were identified across the housing service, focussing on repairs, ASB, engagement, data, governance and the website. This has helped us to</p>

	<p>prioritise our action plans going forward more effectively.</p> <p>Preparing for Regulatory Inspection - Bury Council</p>
<p>Develop the risk management strategy</p> <p>Develop and provide staff training on anticipated Procurement Act changes, due to be implemented Spring 2025.</p>	<p>The Audit committee receive regular risk updates and the Governance and Assurance Board received reports, the Council's risk manager is a member of the Board.</p> <p>Risk Management strategy - Risk Management Strategy June 2024.pdf</p>

7. Governance Challenges for 2025/2026 Onwards

In developing the action plan for 2025/26 the Council has taken in to account the improvement notice from our external auditor and has considered wider sources to identify the key challenges this includes matters from regular meetings of statutory officers, consideration of risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register and emergent challenges identified by the work of Internal Audit.

Action	
Improvement plan activity – delivery of the improvement plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Boards • Audit committee – consider improvement plan at each meeting • Overview & scrutiny Committee – to scrutinise delivery of the improvement plan
Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the PMO & governance framework. • Design a new Chart of Accounts aligned with Transformation objectives • Upgrade the Unit4 ERP system to prepare for migration into the Cloud • Initiate procurement transformation and organisational redesign projects • Develop a comprehensive change management plan to guide staff through process & system change. • Integrate & modernise financial management • Implementation & recruitment

	<p>to a new finance service structure to address capacity issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure stabilisation, system upgrade and enhance existing systems • Implement Unit4 Cloud based ERP system.
<p>Governance oversight of the close down of Six Town Housing Company</p>	<p>Internal governance to oversee the closure and full compliance with the Regulator requirements. All processes from development of a plan and timetable including regular reports to commercial Board Cabinet oversight and decision making. Housing Advisory Board updated and to oversee tenant engagement.</p>
<p>Preparedness for the children’s statutory changes</p>	<p>The proposed Government changes – families first will bring about a whole system approach to reform bringing together family support workers in to a single service. Local safeguarding partnerships will need to publish refreshed threshold document and updated local protocols.</p>

8. Conclusion

The Council’s governance arrangements have been subject to significant strengthening during the final quarter of the year due to a lack of robustness in it’s internal control arrangements. This report sets out the arrangements in place pre and post January 2025. The report notes the work undertaken to reflect and review the Council’s governance framework. The Authority is committed to ensuring this is effectively monitored and tested. The arrangements set out in the report will continue to be subject to robust check and challenge. Although progress have been made within the final quarter following the adoption of the revised arrangements further work is required to fully embed these changes.

The Council remains committed to delivering high standards of governance and ensuring that its systems and processes support the achievement of strategic objectives and the delivery of quality services to residents.

Leader of the Council

Chief Executive



Classification: Open	Decision Type: N/a
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Report to:	Audit Committee	Date: 17 February 2026
Subject:	Internal Audit Progress Report	
Report of:	Section 151 Officer	

Summary

1. This report outlines the work undertaken by Internal Audit from 1 October to 31 December 2025 which includes the progress to date to complete the 2024/25 audit plan and commence the 2025/26 audit plan. The report enables Members to monitor the work of the Internal Audit service, raise any issues for further consideration and provide an opportunity to request further information or to suggest areas for additional or follow up work.

The conclusions drawn from the report are:

- Work on the 2024/25 plan is completed, and the 2025/26 plan has commenced, with 11 reviews ongoing, 1 report at draft stage and 4 audits allocated to auditors.
- 8 audit reports have been issued during the quarter 3 period.
- 5 first follow up exercises and 8 second follow up exercises have been completed between the period 1 October to 31 December 2025.

Recommendation(s)

- Members note this report and the work undertaken by Internal Audit.
- Members to approve the changes / amendments to the 2025/26 audit plan.

Report Author and Contact Details:

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Position: Senior Auditors

Department: Corporate Core - Finance

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1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report outlines the work undertaken by Internal Audit from 1 October to 31 December 2025.
- 1.2 Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining appropriate risk management processes, control systems, accounting records and governance arrangements i.e., the control environment. Internal Audit plays a vital role in reviewing whether these arrangements are in place and operating properly and providing advice to managers. On behalf of the Council, Internal Audit review, appraise and report on the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of these arrangements and provide assurance to the organisation (Chief Executive, Executive Directors, and the Audit

Committee) and ultimately the taxpayers, that the Council maintains an effective control environment that enables it to significantly manage its business risks. The service helps the Council achieve its objectives and provides assurance that effective and efficient operations are maintained.

- 1.3 The assurance work culminates in an annual opinion given by the Head of Fraud, Audit Insurance and Risk on the adequacy of the Council's control environment, based on the work undertaken, and this opinion feeds into the Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.4 The Internal Audit Plan for 2025/26 provides for 689 days to be delivered across all Council departments and Persona. The Audit plan covers a range of themes and was approved by Audit Committee at the meeting on 8 April 2025.
- 1.5 Work has been concluded on the outstanding reviews from 2024/25, and work is progressing on the 2025/26 audit plan. Regular progress reports are produced, informing Members of audit activities, and this is the third report of the 2025/26 financial year covering the period from 1 October to 31 December 2025 which includes 13 completed weeks.

2.0 UPDATE

2.1 Annual Audit Plan

- 2.1.1 The 2025/26 audit plan is shown at Appendix A and has been updated to show the position at the 31 December 2025.
- 2.1.2 All audit carried forward from the 2024/25 audit plan have now been completed. 79 days were allocated to complete these audits. As at 31 December 2025, 159 days had been used, which identifies an overspend of 80 days. Reasons for the overspend include 4 additional audits that had to be carried forward that were not anticipated. 6 of these audits resulted in a limited assurance opinion and these reviews needed additional unexpected level of testing and meetings to be undertaken.
- 2.1.3 Amendments required to the 2025/26 audit plan as follows:
 - The Elton High School – request to remove this 14-day audit as the school is due to convert to Academy status in September 2026. Consequently, Internal Audit would not be able to complete the full audit cycle including follow ups prior to conversion.
 - Capital Programme – request to remove this 17-day audit and to consider for the 2026/27 audit plan due to no major capital schemes being completed in within the 2025/26 financial year.
 - As of 31 December 2025, the contingency for Investigations / Whistle blowing is overspent by 27 days. Request to transfer 30 days from the contingency for unplanned work and advice and guidance allocation, to the Investigations / Whistle blowing allocation.
- 2.1.4 The 2025/26 audit plan provided for 36 audit days to be allocated to reviews to be undertaken for Persona. A plan has now been agreed, and the audits are identified in Appendix A.

2.2 Audit Plan Progress

This report summarises the outcome of reviews undertaken, including work reported to Audit Committee in this period, work currently ongoing and draft reports which have been issued to Audit clients.

Audits completed and Reports Issued

2.2.1 During the period from 1 October to 31 December 2025, 8 audits have been finalised and issued since Audit Committee last met in October 2025. These 8 reports include audits that complete the 2024/25 audit plan as well as audits that form part of the 2025/26 audit plan.

- Adult Financial Assessments
- Freedom of Information / Subject Access Requests
- ISO 27001 Gap Analysis – Consultancy Report – no recommendations
- Additional Hours & Overtime Payments – Adult Services
- Purchase Card Expenditure
- VAT Submissions
- CCTV Compliance with the Code of Practice 2025/26
- Leaving Care – Finance Policy

One of the reports identified above provided limited assurance, one report had a moderate assurance, three reports had a substantial assurance, and two reports provided a full assurance rating.

All reports have been circulated to Audit Committee Members, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Members.

2.2.2 Any level of assurance given to each audit is a balanced judgement based upon the established system of controls, the subject's approach to risk management and the nature of any recommendations and actions agreed. See Appendix B for explanations of the various levels of assurance.

Recommendations are classified over the categories of Fundamental, Significant and Merits Attention. See Appendix B for explanations of the various levels of priority.

2.2.3 The agreed actions to address the recommendations from the audit are designed to improve the control environment and / or improve "value for money" within the client's area of responsibility and we can report that the actions made in this period have been agreed by management.

Our audit reports include an action plan that records the detail of our findings, the agreed action that management intend to take in response to these findings and the timescale to undertake such action. This provides a record that progress can be measured against when we undertake our follow up audits.

2.3 Follow ups.

All audit reports are subjected to a follow up review. For those reports issued with limited assurance, a follow up review is undertaken three months after the report has been finalised, and for all other reports, a follow up is undertaken after six months. The recommendations which have been graded fundamental or significant are subjected

to a detailed follow up which includes audit testing. Since April 2025, recommendations graded merits attention are now also followed up, with the officer identified in the management action plan, and assurance is obtained that the recommendation has been implemented.

A second follow up is undertaken six weeks after the first follow up, to pick up on any recommendations that have not been implemented or only had partial implementation. Updates are provided to Audit Committee.

A recommendation tracker is in place and all recommendations that are still either outstanding or partially implemented after the second follow up are reported to the Governance & Assurance Board, which is headed by the Council Monitoring Officer.

There are no plans for a third follow-up process. Any reviews with recommendations which have not been implemented / only partially implemented are then passed to the Governance & Assurance Board to progress. Additionally, recommendations with outstanding actions are currently being monitored on an ad hoc basis by the Members Assurance Group.

In addition, after the second follow up audit has been completed, the Chair of the Audit Committee has the discretion to request the relevant Director to attend the Audit Committee meeting.

5 first follow ups reviews and 8 second follow up reviews have been completed in the period 1 October to 31 December 2025.

All reports have been circulated to Audit Committee Members, the Leader of the Council and all Cabinet Members.

The Governance & Assurance Board has met 3 times to discuss outstanding recommendations since the last progress report. The December 2025 meeting received updates of 18 recommendations, 2 fundamental and 15 significant and 1 merits attention, which are still either partially implemented / not implemented. Whilst the total number of recommendations has decreased since the last progress report, the direction of travel of total number of recommendations being classed as implemented at second follow up is still positive.

2.4 Other work

This section details other work completed by the audit team.

Assurance work – Ongoing reviews

2.4.1 There are 11 audits in progress from the 2025/26 plan. Audits which are currently taking place are:

- Catering Services provided to Secondary Schools
- Creditors – Deep Dive
- Revenues Recovery & Enforcement
- Trusts Managed by the Council
- Payroll – Voluntary Deductions
- GDPR Officer Compliance
- St Andrew C of E Primary School Ramsbottom
- St Andrew C of E Primary School Radcliffe

- Persona – Grundy Day Care Centre
- Persona – The Green Café
- Housing – Complaints Procedures

Assurance work – Draft reports

2.4.2 The following reviews have been completed, and draft reports have been issued to the client:

- Hollins Grundy Primary School

Assurance work – Allocated

2.4.3 Work has also commenced to deliver the audits detailed in the audit plan for 2025/26. The following audits have been allocated to an Auditor and preparation work is being undertaken.

- Income & Bank Key Controls 2025/26
- Main Accounting Key Controls 2025/26
- Payroll – Leavers Deep Dive
- Direct Payments – Adults

Grants

2.4.4 The Bus Operator Grant 2024/25 verification exercises have been completed, signed off and submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

Supporting Transformation and Change

2.4.5 The Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 includes a provision of 74 days to be made available to support services throughout the year by providing consultancy advice or independent assurance as / when our input is appropriate.

Advice given in the period 1 October to 31 December 2025:

- Work is undertaken with Registrars on a quarterly basis to securely destroy any spoil certificates
- Anti-money laundering checks
- Peel Tower – Income Collection
- Attendance to the Procurement Continuous Improvement Group (PCIG)
- Attendance to the Finance Transformation Board
- Support to the IG Team with a Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) enquiry.
- Support to the Data Protection Officer (DPO) at Mersey Drive Primary School.
- Support to IG team in relation to a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for Beebot AI Limited.
- Support in relation to a purchase card error by Business & Investment team.

2.5 Investigations / Fraud / Whistleblowing

The team continues to be available to support the business with internal investigations providing technical skills and advice when called upon and managing the whistleblowing hotline / online referrals.

Details of investigations are reported separately to Audit Committee in part B of the meeting.

2.6 School Audits

For 2025/26 the annual plan includes 50 days to undertake individual school reviews. The audit team have consulted with colleagues from Children's Services and have developed a school audit plan to be delivered. 4 school reviews are now to be undertaken.

In addition, arrangements remain in place that Internal Audit will undertake School Audits on requests received, during the year, from the Executive Director of Children's Services and / or Director of Finance, where it is thought an audit review would be beneficial to the School and the Council.

An Education and Skills Leadership team has also been established within the Council and Internal Audit are represented on this group, providing advice to the group on specific issues which may arise at schools.

2.7 Collaboration

We have ongoing representation on sub-groups of the Northwest Heads of Internal Audit Group. The groups have been established to share good practice across the region.

- IT Audit Group
- Schools Audit Group
- Chief Audit Executive Group

2.8 Performance Measures and Targets

Please find at Appendix C performance measures & target results up to the end of quarter 3 (1 April to 31 December 2025) where applicable. The results so far are not highlighting any major areas of concerns.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

- Internal Audit undertakes assurance work to all Departmental Directors and Statutory Officers regarding the systems in place, making recommendations for improvements to control and protect the assets and resources of the Council. The control and mitigation of the loss of funds gives the assurance that public money is used in an appropriate manner to deliver the Corporate Priorities.
-

Equality Impact and Considerations:

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Internal Audit provide assurance to Committee Members and the public that the organisation is delivering services in line with agreed policies and procedures which have considered the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

- N/a – no decision required.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Risks are highlighted in Audit Plans and in the terms of reference for each Audit review.	Internal Controls are reviewed in each audit to mitigate identified risks. Actions are reported to managers and progress is monitored and reported on a regular basis.

Legal Implications:

- The Council must have a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of its functions, including risk management. This is both a legal requirement and a requirement of the Financial Regulations set out in the Council’s Constitution. This report provides information on the work of the Council’s Internal Audit Service, in ensuring compliance.

Financial Implications:

- There are no financial implications arising from this report. The work of the Internal Audit Service however supports the governance framework.

Background papers:

- Internal Audit Plan 2025/26 (Appendix A)
- Explanation of Opinion ratings (Appendix B)
- Performance Measures and Targets 2025/26 (Appendix C)
- Internal Audit and Follow Up Reports issued throughout the course of the year

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
ISO	The International Organisation for Standardisation
CCTV	Close Circuit TV
VAT	Value Added Tax
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
DfT	Department for Transport
PCIG	Procurement Continuous Improvement Group
LGO	Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment

Appendix A Internal Audit Plan 2025/26

Updated to show position as at end of December 2025

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND RISK					
Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Corporate Core	GDPR - Officer Compliance	Non-compliance to GDPR legislation	Review GDPR compliance with regards to information held within Council Buildings and Depots	12	Audit is in progress
Financial					
Corporate Core - Finance	Creditors - Deep Dive	Non-compliance with Contract Procedure Rules within departments	Review a sample of purchases between £10-50K crosscutting all departments to ensure 3 quotations have been obtained	25	Audit is in progress
Corporate Core - Finance	Income & Banking Key Controls	Errors and omissions could result in weaknesses in the integrity of financial data and statements	Review of controls within the key finance systems, looking at transactions processed during 2024/25, to support closure of accounts process	12	Audit has been allocated
Corporate Core - Finance	Main Accounting Key Controls	Errors and omissions could result in weaknesses in the integrity of financial data and statements	Review of controls within the key finance systems, looking at transactions processed during 2024/25, to support closure of accounts process	12	Audit has been allocated

Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Corporate Core - Finance	VAT	VAT submissions are inaccurate and are not supported by adequate documentation	To review and assess the process for making submissions to HMRC	12	Audit completed
Corporate Core - Finance	Grants Register	Grants are not being processed correctly on the Unit 4 system. No assurance that grant applications are being appropriately authorised before submission	Review grant register and a sample of grants applications to ensure that correct processes are being adhered to	12	Area never been audited
Corporate Core - Finance	Trusts managed by Council	Trusts managed by the Council are not being administered in line with conditions	Establish all trusts managed by the Council and ensure compliance with the agreed conditions	12	Audit is in progress
Corporate Core - Finance	Housing Rent Collection & Control	Responsibility for rent collection has transferred from Six Town Housing to the Revenues & Benefits team. Assurance required that systems and processes are suitable	A full review of the current systems and processes following the transfer from Six Town Housing to the Revenues & Benefits team	17	Deep Dive

Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Corporate Core - Finance	Revenues Recovery & Enforcement	Lack of consistency in the application of post liability orders	Post liability order process for CTAX & NNDR	12	Audit is in progress
HR Systems					
Corporate Core - HR	Payroll - Deductions	Lack of consistency in the way that deductions are being processed	To review employee approved deductions to ensure transactions are being processed consistently	17	Audit is in progress
Corporate Core - HR	Payroll - Leavers Deep Dive	Ex employees and agency staff potentially still having access to IT systems, equipment and buildings	Review a sample of leavers from each department to ensure that the leavers process is consistently applied	12	Audit has been allocated
Grants and Verification					
Children & Young People	(GM) Supporting Families (TFG)	Failure to comply with grant requirements and failure to deliver programme objectives	Routine annual review. GMCA have been granted devolved powers over the programme and are collaborating to develop a more traditional / risk-based approach to the annual assurance work. Reviews to be undertaken once /	12	Annual work for GMCA Removed from plan, audit not required.

			twice a year as directed by GMCA and the devolution agreement		
Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Corporate Core – Finance	Grant Claims	Failure to comply with grant arrangements	Certification of those grant claims required to be certified by the Council's Head of FAIR and/or Chief Executive during 2025/26	10	Annual work Reduced from 15 days allocated within 2024/25 audit plan Audits have been completed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus Operators Grant 2024/25
SERVICE AREAS					
Children & Young People	Care Leavers - Finance Policy	New finance policy is not being adhered to	Review the finance policy and sample test cases to ensure that it is being adhered to.	12	Audit completed
Children & Young People - Schools	Schools	Appropriate processes and control are not maintained over school finances	Provision for undertaking reviews at schools.	50	Proposed to undertake audits at the following schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Elton High School – Removed from plan as due to convert to

					<p>Academy status in September 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Andrews C of E Primary School, Radcliffe – Audit visit undertaken • St Peters C of E Primary School • Hollins Grundy Primary School – Draft report issued • St Andrews C of E Primary School, Ramsbottom – Audit visit undertaken
Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Housing	Complaints Procedures	This is not part of the Councils process. Complaints not being monitored or actioned	Review of system for receiving and dealing with complaints.	12	Identified within departmental risk register Audit is in progress
Housing	Day to Day Repairs	Repairs are not completed in a timely manner and to a satisfactory standard	Review the processes in place for the day-to-day repairs of the Council Housing stock	17	Identified within departmental risk register

Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Operations	Waste Management	Inadequate arrangements in place for the provision of waste services which may result in reputational damage	Review the processes and procedures in relation to the management and the delivery of the Waste Management Service.	17	Roll forward from 2024/25 New IT system being implemented
Operations	Catering Service provided to Secondary Schools	Traded service is not cost effective	Review of the Service Level Agreements, invoicing and overall service costings provided into Secondary Schools within the Bury area	17	Audit is in progress
Health & Adult Care	Quality Assurance on Care Market Providers	Inadequate arrangements in relation to the quality assurance visits undertaken on Care Market Providers	Review of quality assurance process undertaken by the commissioning team	12	
Health & Adult Care	Direct Payments - Adults	Misappropriation of public funds intended for vulnerable adults	Review the processes and procedures to ensure that Direct Payments are being managed effectively to reduce fraud and corruption and ensure transparency and accountability.	17	Audit has been allocated

Directorate	Topic	Potential Control / Governance Issue	Proposed Audit Coverage	Indicative Days	Comments
Corporate Core	CCTV	Failure to adhere to the agreement and follow the CCTV Code of Practice could impact on the Council's reputation and reliance placed on the CCTV function in supporting other agencies and community safety.	Annual review as required by CCTV agreement.	7	Annual Review Audit completed
Place	Capital Programme	Failure to meet corporate objectives and ineffective use of resources	Identify a capital scheme that has taken place. Review to ensure that best practice was followed, considering project initiation, procurement of works, ongoing monitoring, and administration of payments, record keeping and post project implementation review.	17	Roll forward from 2024/25 Removed from 2025/26 plan due to major schemes still on-going. Will be considered for inclusion in the 2026/27 plan.
			TOTAL	355	

OTHER COMMITMENTS		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Indicative Days</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<p>Completion of audits commenced in previous year: <u>2024/25</u></p> <p>Corporate Purchase Cards – Unit 4 expenditure</p> <p>Emergency Duty Team</p> <p>Persona – Supporting Living – Client Finances</p> <p>Housing – Legionella – Performance Data Quality</p> <p>Debtors – Invoice Processing</p> <p>Chapelfield Primary</p> <p>Complaints Procedures</p> <p>Bury & Whitefield Jewish Primary</p> <p>Persona – Safeguarding</p> <p>Housing – Asbestos – Performance Data Quality</p> <p>Persona – Governance of the Persona Board</p> <p>FOI / Subject Access</p> <p>Payroll – Additional Hours / Overtime Payments</p>	79	<p>13 carry forward audits from the 2024/25 plan were originally identified however, 17 draft audits were carried forward into the 2025/26 year.</p> <p>The additional 4 audits carried forward are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Lady of Grace RC Primary School • Register of Processing Activities • Recruitment Process • Adult Financial Assessments <p>As at the end of December 2025, the 17 audits carried forward have all been finalised:</p>
<p>Audit work for Persona (separate audit plans)</p>	36	<p>Three 12-day audits have been agreed with Persona. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Café – Audit is in progress • Grundy Day Care Centre – Audit is in progress • Employment Pathway Team

Post Implementation Reviews and Action Tracking First and Second follow ups	105	Up to the end of December 2025, 63 days have been used carrying out first follow ups and 26 days on second follow ups. Total days used = 89 days
Contingency for Audit Investigations / Whistleblowing Investigations	40	Reduced from 60 days allocated in 2024/25 plan as only 28 days used up to and including period 12. Up to the end of December 2025, 67 days have been used to investigate several investigation / whistleblowing / cases.
Contingency for reactive or unplanned work, management request, consultancy work, working group attendance and advice & guidance request	74	Up to the end of December 2025, 40 days have been used for reactive / unplanned work and to provide advice and guidance to departments.
Audit Service Management and administration, including service development, assurance mapping, Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme, Internal Audit Charter and Strategy, audit planning and Committee's support	200	
Provisions for annual leave / training / sickness	362	
Provision of ICT review – by Salford Computer Audit Services (System Licencing)	20	Planning meeting to be arranged with Salford Computer Audit to agree work to be undertaken for this financial year.
Total:	916	
Combined Total:	1271	
Audit days to be delivered	689	(Exclude 200 + 362)

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Explanation of Opinion ratings:

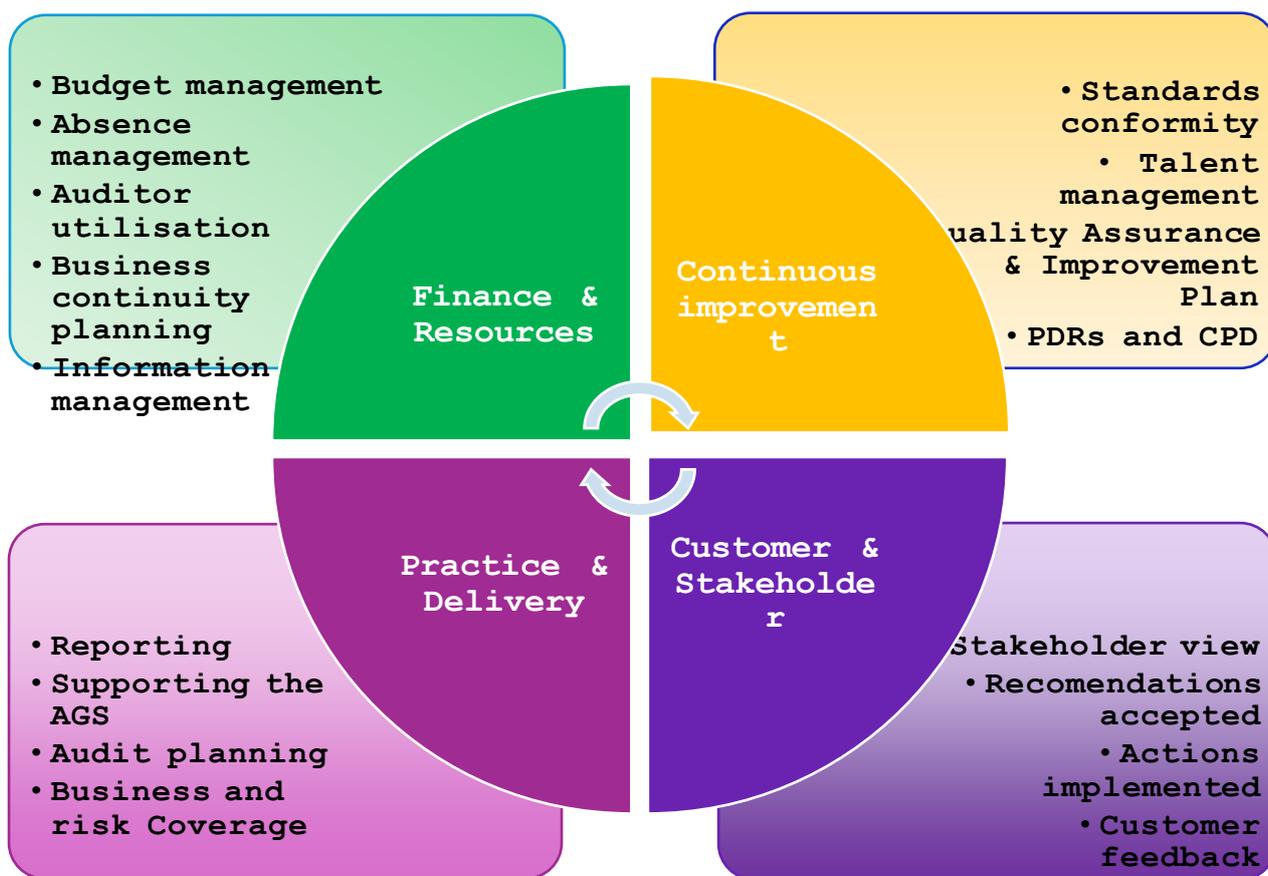
Overall Opinion	Explanation
Full	<p>The framework of governance, risk management and control is adequate and effective.</p> <p>No recommendations have been made or a small number of recommendations rated as merits attention have been identified within the action plan.</p>
Substantial	<p>Some improvements are required to enhance the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and control.</p> <p>A maximum of 2 significant rated recommendations have been identified within the action plan.</p>
Moderate	<p>There are significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk, management and control such that it could be or could become inadequate and ineffective.</p> <p>More than 2 significant rated recommendations have been identified within the action plan.</p>
Limited	<p>There are fundamental weaknesses or 7 or more significant weaknesses in the framework of governance, risk management and control such that it is inadequate and ineffective or is likely to fail.</p> <p>A fundamental recommendation rating or 7 or more significant recommendations have been identified within the action plan.</p>

Explanation of Recommendation ratings:

Recommendation	Explanation
Fundamental	Action required to address a fundamental breakdown of control and / or to prevent a serious financial loss.
Significant	Action required to address a significant control weakness and /or to significantly improve operational efficiency.
Merits Attention	Action required to enhance control and / or to improve operational efficiency.

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Balanced Scorecard



Finance & Resources

Aspect	Detail	Target	Quarter 1-3 Results
Budget management	The budget has been set at a level agreed to fully staff the service to deliver a volume of work to enable delivery of the audit plan.	Between "On Target" and less than 5% "underspend"	N/A
Auditor utilisation (audit days)	Pro rata based on 184 'chargeable' days delivering audit work per FTE employee	> 95%	N/A
Absence management	Planning includes contingency of up to a maximum of 6 'sickness' days per employee	< 5 'sick days' per FTE per year	5.8 FTE. 25 days as at end of quarter 3.
Business continuity plan	Business continuity plan reviewed and updated	Met	The Business continuity plan has been reviewed and updated.
Information management	Retention schedule complied with	Met	Met

Customer & Stakeholder

Aspect	Detail	Target	Quarter 1-3 Results
Feedback	Post audit surveys are issued and the result analysed to provide an indication on quality	90% Positive	19 issued and 8 received back as at end of quarter 3 42% response rate with 100% positive feedback
Stakeholder view	Feedback from Directors and AC (confirmed verbally at meetings)	Met	Met
Recommendations accepted	Recommendations for action are accepted by management and developed collaboratively into agreed actions	95%	99% 1 recommendation not accepted due to capacity
Improvement (actions implemented)	Agreed actions are implemented (or substantial progress being made toward implementation) at time of follow-up	95%	74% 38 recommendations followed up 28 recommendations implemented

Continuous Improvement

Aspect	Detail	Target	Quarter 1-3 Results
Quality Assurance & Improvement Plan	QAIP updated and reported to the autumn quarter's AC	Met	Reported at December meeting
Conformity (GIAS)	Assessment against the Standards undertaken	100%	To be reported at April or July 2026 meeting
PDRs / CPD	Annual PDRs of team members completed	Met	Met
Talent management	Needs assessment completed and training plan developed	Met	Training Assessment have been undertaken but still to be analysed

Practice & Delivery

Aspect	Detail	Target	Quarter 1-3 Results
Supporting the Annual Governance Statement	Annual report & HOIA Opinion provided in time to inform the AGS	Met	Met

Audit planning	Draft plan prepared in time for March / April Audit Committee	Met	Met
Reports issued promptly	Draft report prepared and provided to the client within 10 days of fieldwork completion	90%	61% Due to absences within the team during Quarter 2 and additional whistleblowing investigations and additional management responsibility being taken on by Senior Auditors.
Business and risk coverage (assurance)	Sufficient coverage of business areas and risk to inform the HOIA opinion	Met	Met

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REPORT FOR DECISION



DECISION OF:	Audit Committee – 17th February 2026 The Council – 21st February 2026
DATE:	Audit Committee – 17th February 2026 The Council – 21st February 2026
SUBJECT:	Audit Committee Terms of Reference
REPORT FROM:	Chloe Ashworth - Assistant Democratic Service Manager
CONTACT OFFICER:	Chloe Ashworth - Assistant Democratic Service Manager
TYPE OF DECISION:	Non key decision
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain.
SUMMARY:	This report provides a Terms of Reference for Bury Council's Audit Committee
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the Terms of Reference 2. To propose amendments to the proposed Terms of Reference 3. To not approve the Terms of Reference.
IMPLICATIONS:	No implications.
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Yes
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	
Equality/Diversity implications:	N/A
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	

Wards Affected:	All Wards.
Scrutiny Interest:	

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In line with Bury Council's published Constitution, there is a requirement for there to be Audit Committee Terms of Reference and to review them regularly.
- 1.2 The attached Terms of Reference set out in detail the Audit Committee membership, function, key responsibilities, meeting frequency and quoracy.
- 1.3 Attached are the proposed Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

That Audit Committee:

1. Recommend to full Council the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee and recommend that the Constitution be updated to reflect these.

That Council:

2. Approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee, and the Constitution be updated to reflect these.

List of Background Papers:-

None identified

Contact Details:-

Chloe Ashworth – Assistant Democratic Service Manager
 Email – C.Ashworth@bury.gov.uk

**Audit Committee
Terms of Reference**

January 2026

Document Control

Title	Audit Committee – Terms of Reference
Document Type	Terms of Reference
Author	Judith Smith, Senior Auditor Adrian Blackshaw, Senior Auditor and Chloe Ashworth, Assistant Democratic Service Manager
Owner	Democratic Services
Subject	Terms of Reference
Date Created	December 2025
Approval Date	To be confirmed.
Review Date	December 2026

Audit Committee Terms of Reference.

The Audit Committee is responsible for providing assurance on the Council's audit, governance (including risk management and information governance) and financial processes in accordance with the functions scheme. The Audit Committee will appoint two independent people.

1. MEMBERSHIP

The meeting will be Chaired by a Member of the Audit Committee duly appointed by the Council. If at any meeting the Chair appointed by the Council is absent, and if no Deputy has been appointed by the Council, the meeting shall appoint a Chair for that meeting only. The meeting Clerk or his/her representative shall at the start of the meeting invite nominations for Chair and will take a vote on a show of hands for those members nominated for Chair.

Members of Cabinet cannot be a member of the Audit Committee. No member may be involved in scrutinising a decision in which they have been directly involved, or for a decision in the Cabinet portfolio they provide support to as a Deputy Cabinet Member

The Audit Committee may co-opt a maximum of two non-voting people. Any such co-optees will be agreed by the committee having reference to the agreed work plan and/or task and finish group membership.

The Membership of the Audit Committee will comprise of the following:

Voting Members:

Nine Councillors, appointed in accordance with the principles of political balance

None Voting Members:

Two independent Members

2. FUNCTION

The powers and responsibilities of the Audit Committee fall in the areas described below:

- The audit committee is a key component of Bury Council's corporate governance. It provides an independent and high-level focus on the audit, assurance and reporting arrangements that underpin good governance and financial standards.
- The purpose of the audit committee is to provide independent assurance to the members of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides independent review of the council's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the

financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit, fraud, risk, information governance and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

3. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

Governance, risk and control

- To review the council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework and consider annual governance reports and the local code of governance and to recommend their adoption when satisfied.
- To review the Annual Governance Statement prior to approval and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control and to recommend its adoption when satisfied.
- To maintain an overview of the council's Constitution in respect of Contract Procurement Rules and Financial Regulations.
- To consider the council's arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- To consider the council's framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the council.
- To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the council.
- To monitor progress in addressing risk-related issues reported to the committee.
- To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the council from fraud and corruption.
- To monitor the counter-fraud strategy, actions, and resources.
- To monitor the performance of Information Governance across the Council and review requirements.

Internal audit

- To approve the internal audit charter, mandate and strategy at least annually.
- To review proposals made in relation to the provision of internal audit services and to make recommendations.
- To approve the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.

- To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of FAIR to ensure that there are sufficient resources to fulfil the internal audit mandate and achieve the internal audit plan. To consider the impact of insufficient resources on the internal audit mandate and plan.
- To obtain assurance annually from the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) that the Head of FAIR position is held by a suitably qualified and competent person in line with the requirements of the Global Internal Audit Standards.
- To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Head of FAIR. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- To consider reports from the Head of FAIR on internal audit's performance during the year, including the performance of external providers of internal audit services. These will include:
 - a) Updates on the work of internal audit including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of internal audit work.
 - b) Regular reports on the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme.
 - c) Reports on instances where the internal audit function does not conform to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note, considering whether the non-conformance is significant enough that it must be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
- To consider the Head of FAIR's annual report:
 - a) The statement of the level of conformance with the Global Internal Audit Standards and Local Government Application Note and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit.
 - b) The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the council's framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion as these will assist the committee in reviewing the Annual Governance Statement.
- To consider all Internal Audit reports and follow up reports.
- To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of FAIR has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the authority or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- To receive any reports from the Head of FAIR of any instances where management have failed to act in accordance with the council's ethical expectations.
- To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.

- To consider a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to support the Annual Governance Statement, where required to do so by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- To support the development of effective communication with the Head of FAIR. To provide free and unfettered access to the audit committee chair for the Head of FAIR via a private meeting with the committee members. A private meeting will be scheduled at least annually, but additional meetings may be scheduled during the year at the request of members.
- Where appropriate, to refer matters of concern to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Scrutiny Committee.
- The Audit committee has the power to call a relevant officer to attend the committee to account to the committee the reason(s) for non-implementation of agreed internal audit recommendations.

Fraud

- To review and approve the annual Fraud plan ensuring it has appropriate processes for identifying and responding to fraud risks.
- To review and approve significant interim changes to the Fraud plan.
- To review and approve the Anti-Fraud & Corruption Strategy, Fraud and Corruption Prosecution Policy, Anti-Bribery Policy, Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Whistleblowing Policy.
- To consider reports from the Head of FAIR on the Fraud team's performance during the year, including key findings, issues of concern and action in hand as a result of the Fraud team's work.

Risk Management

- To provide independent assurance to the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management framework and associated control environment. The Committee will review the risk management strategy, monitor its implementation, and ensure that significant risks are identified, assessed, and managed appropriately. It will also oversee the integration of risk management into governance and decision-making processes.
- To regularly review the Council's Corporate Risk Register and scrutinise risks where the impact has the potential to disrupt the achievement of the Council's priorities and seek assurance that appropriate controls are implemented to manage these risks.
- The Audit committee has the power to request officers to attend the committee where a deep dive into a specific risk has been requested.

External audit

- To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised by Public Sector Audit Appointments.
- To consider the external auditor's annual letter, relevant reports, and the report to those charged with governance.
- To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

Financial reporting

- To review the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit, that need to be brought to the attention of the council.
- To review and approve the council's financial statements and Letter of Representation to the External Auditors
- To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.

Accountability arrangements

- To report to full council on an annual basis on the committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the committee in meeting its purpose.
- To publish an annual report on the work of the committee to the Council.

4. MEETINGS

The Audit Committee is a Committee of the Local Authority. The Committee will meet a minimum of four times per municipal year. The date and timings of the meetings will be fixed as part of the agreed schedule of meetings. Additional meetings may be convened at the request of the Chair, and with the agreement of the Council Leader.

A **quorum** of three voting members will apply for all meetings of the Audit Committee.

Members will adhere to the agreed principles of the Councillors Code of Conduct.

Decisions are to be taken by consensus. Where it is not possible to reach consensus, a decision will be reached by a simple majority of those present at the meeting. Where there are equal votes the Chair of the meeting will have the casting

vote, there will be no restriction on how the Chair chooses to exercise his/her casting vote.

The Director of Finance will act as the **lead officer**. Lead officer responsibilities will include ensuring that agendas are appropriate to the work programme of the Audit Committee. A Work Programme to be determined annually by the Committee.

The agenda and supporting **papers** shall be in a standard format and circulated at least five clear working days in advance of meetings. The minutes of decisions taken at the meeting will be kept and circulated to members as soon as possible. Minutes will be published on the Council web site.

It is important to ensure that all councillors are kept aware of the work of the Committee and a copy of the minutes will be available to view on the Council's website to view. The Committee is regarded as a Council Committee for Access to Information Act purposes. Freedom of Information Act provisions shall apply to all business.

All meetings will be held in **public** with specific time allocated for public question time.

Any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests held by members should be declared in accordance with the Councils Code of Conduct on any item of business at a meeting, either before it is discussed or as soon as it becomes apparent. Interests which appear in the Council Register of Interests should still be declared at meetings, where appropriate.

The Committee will retain the ability to **exclude representatives** of the press and other members of the public from a defined section of the meeting having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, publicly on which would be prejudicial to the public interest (Part 5A and Schedule 12A, Local Government Act, as amended).

Meetings will be **clerked** by a representative of Democratic Services.

In exercising the above powers and responsibilities, the Audit Committee shall have delegated power to make decisions and act on behalf of Cabinet

5. COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with CIPFA guidance and legislative requirements.

Reference documents:

- CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police (2022)
- CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees.

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of the Local Government Act 1972.

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