REPORT TO:	**AUDIT COMMITTEE**	**DATE**: **21st March 2016**
HEADING:	**ACCOUNTING POLICIES 2015-16 AND OTHER STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS MATTERS**	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	N/A	

KEY DECISION: **NO** **SUBJECT TO CALL-IN:** **NO**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report requests approval by the Audit Committee of the accounting policies that the Council proposes to adopt for the current financial year in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts 2015/16.

The report also outlines the impact of changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations on the production of the 2015/16 Statement of Accounts process.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:-

1) the Audit Committee approve the Accounting Policies detailed at Appendix A to this report.
2) Members are requested to note that any proposed amendments or changes to these policies and associated relevant financial implications will be reported back to this Committee.

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3. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To comply with statutory and constitutional requirements.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED (with reasons why not adopted)

The Council is required to have appropriate Accounting Policies within its Statement of Accounts. Officers have developed what they consider to be an appropriate set of policies based upon those adopted in previous financial years. The preparation and consideration of this report is part of a process intended to ensure that alternative options are given appropriate consideration.

5. BACKGROUND

Introduction

5.1 The Accounting Policies adopted by the Council determine the accounting treatment that is applied to transactions during the financial year and in the preparation of the Statement of Accounts at the year end. They determine the specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices that will be applied by the Council in preparing and presenting its financial statements. The accounting policies are published within the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Government Accounting and incorporate the requirements of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

5.2 The approval of the Accounting Policies to be applied by the Council demonstrates that due consideration has been given to the policies to adopt and apply and that those charged with corporate governance are fully informed prior to the commencement of the Statement of Accounts preparation. .

Accounting Policies

5.3 Officers have assessed the Accounting Policies that are considered necessary to explain clearly and underpin the accounting treatment of transactions within the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2015/16.

In undertaking this assessment a review of all accounting policies previously agreed has been undertaken to check their relevance, clarity, legislative compliance and that they are in accordance with the latest version of the code of practice and IFRS requirements. With regard to the policies proposed in respect of 2015/16 there has been a limited number of minor changes which are seeking to clarify the policies, however, there have been no significant amendments from the policies adopted in respect of 2014/15.

5.4 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) intend to issue an accounting Bulletin giving further guidance on matters for the production of the Statement of Accounts. At the time of going to press, this guidance hadn't been issued but will be taken into account when producing the statements.

5.5 CIPFA/LASAAC have confirmed that transport infrastructure assets owned by Local Authorities will be required to be included in the accounts from 2016/17. This would require prior period adjustments for 2015/16, including the opening position at 1st April 2015. This requirement is referenced within KPMG's Technical Update document.

5.6 In 2015 the Council collated a list of all assets which may be considered to be Transport Infrastructure Assets. This list included various walkways, footpaths, streetlamps and unadopted roads. The vast majority of these assets are connected to the various housing courts the Council own throughout the District.

5.7 The Council's approach for valuing these assets i.e. taking a representative sample of the assets and applying this sample to all assets within that category, was sent to the Highways Asset Management Financial Information Group (HAMFIG) who confirmed the council's valuation approach was correct.

Through various CIPFA workshops attended it has been established that to be treated as a Highways Network Asset an asset needs to be "a network and grouping of inalienable components, expenditure on which is only recoverable by continued use of the asset created, ie there is no prospect of sale or alternative use." The assets that are owned by the Authority are not networked and therefore are not classed as Highways Network Assets.

The Internal Valuer has confirmed that the value of the walkways, footpaths, streetlamps and unadopted roads is included in the valuation of the Housing Courts owned by the Council and any remaining assets would have an immaterial value.

The Council will therefore not have any relevant assets for inclusion in the 2015/16 Statement of Accounts or subsequent statements, unless there is a change in requirements.

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015

5.8 The main changes to the production of the statements as a result of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 are outlined below with the Council's intended action:-

1) The requirement to replace the Explanatory Foreword with a Narrative Statement. The Statement must include comment by the Council on its financial performance and economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources over the financial year.

   Officers have already reviewed the update to the CIPFA Accounting Code of Practice on this matter and plan to ensure compliance.

2) The requirement for the draft accounts to be available for audit inspection 30 working days after which the obligations in terms of accounts production have been fulfilled.

   The Council will ensure that these requirements are fulfilled. Commencement is likely to be the day when the papers for Audit Committee are circulated but this will be confirmed at a later date.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. Corporate Plan:
Production of timely and accurate Statement of Accounts is a statutory requirement. Achievement of this reflects sound financial management supporting the Corporate Plan.

2. Legal:

The agreement of appropriate Accounting Policies is part of the process of ensuring that the Council satisfies its legal obligation to prepare a Statement of Accounts. The report also demonstrates how compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations is to be achieved.

3. **Financial:**
The report outlines the policies to be adopted for production of timely and accurate accounts and demonstrates consideration of other legal and accounting issues attributable to their production.

4. **Health and Well-Being / Environmental Management and Sustainability:**
The findings of this report have no direct impact on the Council's environment or sustainability.

5. **Human Resources:**
There are no HR implications.

6. **Diversity/Equality:**
There are no diversity or equality issues relevant to this report.

7. **Community Safety:**
With reference to Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended) there are no crime and disorder implications contained within this report

8. **Other Implications:**
None

REASON(S) FOR URGENCY
N/A

EXEMPT REPORT
N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS
None

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APPENDIX A

Statement of Accounting Policies

1. General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year 2015/16 and its position at the year-end 31st March 2016. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. These Regulations require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2015/16 and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2015/16 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.

2. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

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

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council;

- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council;

- 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 for the income that might not be collected.

3. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than one working day.

Cash Equivalents are short term investments that are of a highly liquid nature. The Council has deemed that deposits held within call accounts are categorised as Cash Equivalents unless they are held as part of the Council's investment strategy in which case they are treated as short term investments.

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

4. Exceptional Items

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

5. 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.

6. Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets

Service revenue accounts, support services and trading accounts are charged with the following amounts to record the real cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- 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 Reserves against which the losses can be written off.
- Amortisation of intangible assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise Council Tax to cover depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Council in accordance with statutory guidance. Depreciation, revaluation, impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the 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.

7. Employee Benefits

a. Benefits payable During Employment

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

b. 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 Non Distributed Costs line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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.

c. Post Employment Benefits

Most employees of the Council contribute to the Nottinghamshire Pension Fund, the Local Government Pension Scheme administered by Nottinghamshire County Council.

The scheme provides defined benefits (retirement lump sums and pensions) earned as employees work for the Council.

The Nottinghamshire Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme:

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

- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices using a discount rate based on an appropriate rate of return on high quality corporate bonds.

- The assets of the Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.

    a) Quoted securities – current bid price
    b) Unquoted securities – professional estimate
    c) Unitised securities – current bid price
    d) Property – market value

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

- Service Cost comprising

    a) Current Service Cost - the increase in liabilities as result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account to the services for which the employees worked
    b) 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 Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account as part of Non-Distributed Costs
    c) Net interest on the net defined liability (asset), i.e. the net interest expense for the Council - the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

    d) Remeasurement comprising:

        - the return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
        - actuarial gains and losses - changes in the net pension 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 .

e) Contributions paid to the Fund - Cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Council to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards.

In the Movement in Reserves Statement this means that there are 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 to the fund but unpaid at the year-end.

The negative balance that arises on the Pensions reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact on 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 are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

8. Events after the Reporting Period

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

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events,

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

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts. For the purposes of consideration, Post Balance Sheet events can occur up to approval of the Statements by the Audit Committee.

9. Financial Instruments

a. 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 interest rate of interest for each 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 borrowed

For most of the borrowings that 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.

Borrowing

Borrowing is classed as either a long-term liability, if it is repayable after 12 months or longer, or a current liability, if it is repayable within 12 months. Borrowing is shown in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate that applies to the individual loans that comprise the total borrowing held by the Council, plus where appropriate, the amount of external interest accrued on loans where an effective interest calculation has not been made. This applies generally to outstanding PWLB loans, where the rate of interest on the loan does not vary over the life of the loan. Generally, the interest that is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement financing section is the amount due in the year under the loan agreement, except where this is adjusted under effective interest rate calculations to meet the requirements of the 2015/16 Code.

Gains and Losses on Debt Re-structuring

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 Authority 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. 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.

b. Financial Assets

Loans and Receivables

Loans and receivables are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority 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 loans that the Council has made, 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.

Investments are classed as either long-term assets, if repayable after 12 months or longer, or current assets, if repayable within 12 months. Investments are shown in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate that applies to the individual loans that comprise the total borrowing held by the Council. The amount shown in the Balance Sheet represents the outstanding principal due to be repaid to the Council and the interest that is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable in the year under the loan agreement.

10. 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-ring-fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

Non-specific Grants

These are general grants allocated by central government directly to local authorities as additional revenue funding. They are non-ring fenced and are credited to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Examples include New Homes Bonus and Council Tax Freeze Grant.

11. Intangible Assets

Expenditure on assets that do not have a physical substance but are identifiable and controlled by the Council are capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Council.

These assets are held at cost and written off over their economic lives to the relevant service lines within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Where there is an indication that the asset is impaired any loss recognised will also be charged to the relevant service. Software development costs that are directly attributable to bringing a computer system or other computer operated machinery into use are treated as being of the cost of the related hardware, rather than as a separate intangible asset. During 2015/16 no assets met the 'Intangible Assets' definition.

12. Interests in Companies and Other Entities

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

(a) Joint Crematorium Committee

The Council is a constituent member of a joint crematorium committee with neighbouring authorities of Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood District Councils. Current activities are split between all the councils based on the number of residents of each district area cremated. The balance sheet is apportioned based on an average of the last 5 years' cremations from each area. The Council's share of running costs and income has been included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the share of assets included within the Balance Sheet using these apportionments. Due to the nature of the relationship of the Council within the committee Group Accounts are not required for this entity. Information on the Council's share of the income and expenditure and associated assets and liabilities is shown in note 39 to the Core Financial Statements.

(b) Ashfield Homes Limited

The Council has a 100% interest in Ashfield Homes Limited through the issues of a single £1 share. The Company was formed on 26th September 2001 to carry out the housing management function on behalf of the Council with effect from 1st April 2002. Group Accounts are prepared to include the activities of this company as it is fully controlled by the Council.

13. Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included on the balance sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

14. Investment Properties

Following the guidance of the International Accounting Standard 40 with regard to investment properties, it has been established the Council does not hold any properties for investment purposes, as the premises leased to third parties are primarily for job creation and economic development, not capital appreciation or rental growth.

15. Leases

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

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and building 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.

a. Operating Leases

The Council as Lessee

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

The Council as Lessor

The Council does act in the capacity as lessor for the leases of land and properties it owns. Rents due under operating leases are accounted for on a straight line basis as they become due. Land and property leased under operating leases are held as non-current assets within the Balance Sheet and valued in accordance with appropriate valuation practices.

b. Finance Leases

The Council as Lessee

Plant and Equipment held under finance leases are recognised on the Balance Sheet at the lower of the fair value of the asset at the lease inception and the present value of the minimum lease payments. The value of the asset is matched by a liability to pay the finance lessor.

Lease payments are apportioned between a capital repayment to write down the finance lease liability, and a financing charge.

Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to the depreciation charge being applied over the lease term.

The Council is not required to raise Council tax to cover depreciation on leased assets. Rather, a prudent annual contribution is made from the revenue fund toward the cost of the capital investment. Adjusting transfers are made to the Capital Adjustment Account within the Movement in Reserves statement to reflect the difference between the two charges.

The Council as Lessor

The Council does not have any finance leases where it acts as lessor.

16. Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to those that benefit from the supply or service in accordance with the costing principles of the CIPFA Service Reporting Code of Practice 2015/16 (SeRCOP). The total absorption costing principle is used, the full cost of overheads and support services is shared between users in proportion to the benefits received with the exception of:

- Corporate and Democratic Core, which are costs relating to the Council’s status as a multi-functional democratic organisation;

- Non distributed costs which are the cost of discretionary benefits awarded to employees retiring early and any impairment losses chargeable on Assets Held for Sale.

These two cost categories are defined in SeRCOP and accounted for as separate headings in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, as part of Net Cost of Services.

17. Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the provision of services or for administrative purposes on a continuing basis are classed 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 extend the previously assessed standard of performance of an asset (e.g. repairs and maintenance) is charged to revenue as it is incurred.

Property, Plant and Equipment may also include assets held under finance leases, which have been capitalised and included in the Balance Sheet at a value reflecting the fair value of the asset.

A de-minimis asset value of £10,000 has been set and expenditure on new assets of less than this amount is charged to the service revenue account as a proxy for depreciation, unless the expenditure forms part of a larger scheme.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, which comprises all expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing an asset into working condition for its intended use. The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction Assets are then carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

Asset Category	Basis of Valuation
Property, Plant and Equipment	Fair value determined in the existing use of the asset
Dwellings	Fair value in the existing use value for social housing
Infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction	Depreciated historic cost once the asset becomes operational

Where there is no market based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate for fair value. Where assets have a short useful life then depreciated historical cost is used as a proxy for fair value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value are re-valued where there have been material changes in their value, but as a minimum every 5 years. The Council's housing stock is re-valued annually by applying an appropriate housing price index to a series of beacon values at the start of the financial year.

Increases in valuations are matched by a credit to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of an impairment loss previously charged to a service revenue account.

Where decreases in value are identified they are accounted for by a debit to the Revaluation Reserve to the extent that an accumulated gain has been recorded against that asset; where there is no balance or an insufficient balance on the revaluation reserve for that asset the write down of the asset value is charged against the relevant service within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

<u>Impairment</u>
Assets are assessed at each year end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where there is an indication that there is a material impairment in the value of an asset when compared to the carrying value an impairment loss is recognised. The impairment loss is written down to the revaluation reserve to the extent that any balance for that asset is held within the revaluation reserve. Where there is no balance or an insufficient balance then the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

<u>Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale</u>
When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than continued service use then it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is re-valued immediately before classification and then carried at the lower of this amount or fair value less costs of disposal. Where there is a subsequent decrease in the valuation determined on classification to Asset held for sale then a loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in the fair value of assets held for sale are only recognised to the extent that they reverse a previous loss recognised within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying value of the asset 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 are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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 relating to the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. A proportion of receipts relating to housing disposals is payable to the Government. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). Receipts are appropriated to the Capital Receipt Reserve within the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment over a period of their estimated useful lives; freehold land is determined to have an infinite economic life and is not depreciated, assets under construction are not depreciated until they become operational in providing services. Depreciation is calculated using the straight line method. Assets are depreciated over the estimated economic life of the asset which has been assessed as being the following periods:

Council dwellings	40 years
Other HRA assets	10 - 80 years
Other Buildings	10 - 80 years
Vehicles, plant and equipment	3 - 10 years
Infrastructure	10 - 40 years
Community Assets	20 years

Revaluation gains are also depreciated. The difference between the depreciation on the current value and that which would have been charged on the historic value is transferred each year from the Revaluation Reserve to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Componentisation

The Council allocates the costs of an individual asset to its various components to calculate depreciation charges where the value of the asset exceeds £500K and more than one individual component exceeds 20% of the asset value. The impact on depreciation charges for assets below the threshold is not considered material. The componentisation is based on the following elements of the asset:-

- Boilers, heating and plant systems
- Lifts
- Roofs
- Windows and doors

In terms of Council Dwellings, these assets are collectively valued in excess of £500K. However, when comparing the value of depreciation charged on a component basis compared to the current 40 year life straight-line methodology, the difference is not considered material. Council Dwellings are therefore not currently subject to componentisation but the policy is to be reviewed on an annual basis.

18. Heritage Assets

The Council's Heritage Assets held are Historical Monuments, Statues and Artwork. Heritage Assets are recognised and measured (including the treatment of revaluation gains and losses) in accordance with the Council's accounting policies on property, plant and equipment. However no depreciation is charged on Heritage Assets as they are deemed to have an indeterminate life and have a high residual value.

Historical Monuments
The Council has seven Cenotaphs that are located at various outside locations throughout the Council. These monuments are reported in the Balance Sheet on an average replacement cost basis which has been agreed following discussions with our internal valuer.

Statues and Artwork Collection
The collection includes Statues, Sculptures and Mosaics situated within the local town and village streets throughout the Council. The collection depicts the Council's mining and engineering history to ensure the knowledge, culture and understanding of our heritage is preserved for future generations. An artwork example would be The Flight of Fancy sculpture that represents the Rolls Royce Flying Bedstead thrust measuring machine that was developed to research the use of direct lift. These items are reported in the Balance Sheet on an historic cost basis or on an insurance valuation basis and were mainly purchased from grant funding.

Non Balance Sheet Items
The Council also holds a collection of items which are not recognised on the Balance Sheet as cost information is not readily available and the Council believes that the benefits of obtaining the valuation for these items would not justify the cost. These items are believed to have a value of £10k or less. The majority of the collection is street mosaics, murals and sculptures purchased through grant funding or produced by the public art events. The Council has also received a number of donations including a Knitting machine and a Stocking machine dating back to the 18th and 19th century, both of which are believed to be fore runners to the Spinning Jenny. It is difficult to obtain a valuation on these two items as there is no comparable item that provides a market value. Most assets are located on public streets, in parks or on display within public council buildings. A few items are stored securely in the Council's Council Offices and not currently available for public viewing however ways of making these items more accessible are being developed.

Heritage Assets – General
Heritage Assets are reviewed by the Council for impairments such as where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage. Any impairment is measured and recognised within the Revaluation Reserve. The Council works closely with the Ashfield War Memorial Committee to preserve and maintain the local historical monuments. All other Heritage Assets are reviewed and maintained as required.

Disposal proceeds are disclosed separately in the notes to the financial statements and accounted for in accordance with statutory accounting requirements relating to capital expenditure and capital receipts.

19. Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

a. Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Council an obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits, but where the timing of the transfer is uncertain. For instance, the Council may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate service revenue account 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 set up in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year; where it becomes more likely than not that a transfer of economic benefits will not 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 of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be met by another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income in the relevant service revenue account if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the obligation is settled.

b. Contingent Liabilities

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

c. 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.

20. Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate revenue account 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.

The level of reserves and balances is reviewed annually to ensure they are appropriate. The General Fund Balance, Earmarked Reserve and Reserves arising from Capital Receipts together with Capital Grants Unapplied are deemed to be usable reserves in that they may be used to fund future expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments retirement benefits and employee benefits, these are termed unusable reserves and are not available to be used to fund future expenditure.

21. 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 non-current assets has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Statement of Income and Expenditure in the year. Where the Council has decided 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 reverses out the amounts so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

22. Value Added Tax

Value Added Tax (VAT) is excluded from all income and expenditure received and paid by the Council except where it is classed as irrecoverable by HM Revenue and Customs.

23. The Collection Fund

i) Council Tax

The Council includes its share of the accrued Council Tax due for the year within its Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The difference between this sum and the local precept for Council and parish activities is reversed through the General Fund Balance to ensure only the level of Council Tax required to pay for Council activities is credited to the General Fund in the year. The balance is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account, within the Balance Sheet.

Amounts collected on behalf of the other preceptors of Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police Authority and Nottinghamshire Fire Authority are treated as either debtors or creditors depending upon the respective share of the Collection Fund attributable to these bodies at 31st March.

ii) Business Rates

The Council includes its share of accrued Business Rates due for the year within its Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The difference between this sum and the forecast amount due to the Council is reversed through the General Fund Balance to ensure only the level of Business Rates required to pay for Council activities is credited to the General Fund in the year. The balance is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account, within the Balance Sheet.

Amounts collected on behalf of the other partners of the pool (Central Government, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottinghamshire Fire Authority are treated as either debtors or creditors depending upon the respective share of the Collection Fund attributable to these bodies at 31st March.