

2022/2023

**Annual Financial
Report and
Statement of
Accounts**

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**Worcestershire County
Council Annual Financial
Report 2022/23**

Leader's Introduction

2022/23 was a challenging year for Local Authorities, as inflationary rises in the wider economy, coupled with the continuing recovery from the pandemic, combined to put our services and budgets under significant pressures. Our financial controls have enabled us to return a £7.316 million net revenue overspend, which is 1.9% of our net budget. Our proactive forecasting and reporting alerted Council to a likely overspend position very early within the year, which has enabled us to identify one-off mitigations for 2022/23 to reduce the overspend position and retain the level of our General Fund balances.

In addition to managing our budgets as effectively as possible, Councillors and Staff have worked hard to deliver improvements against our corporate priorities. Some notable successes included:

- Increasing grant funding to start-up business through the Enterprising Worcestershire programme, to help grow the local economy and increase job opportunities. Our economic development programmes have supported hundreds of Worcestershire businesses in 2022/23.
- A year of huge achievement in terms of our Highways and Infrastructure schemes, with completion of the A4440 Southern Link Road dualling, the A38 roundabout at Upton-on-Severn, the continuation of works on the new Kepax Bridge, and the opening of the new Pershore Northern Link Road being just some of the highlights delivered by the Council this year.
- Keeping Worcestershire moving safely over the winter months with the Council's fleet of gritters spreading more than 5,000 tonnes of salt to cover almost 70,000 miles of roads in total.
- A further £5.6 million spent on street lighting improvements across the County, including our ongoing LED rollout programme which generates efficiencies in energy usage and reduces our carbon footprint.

- Managing increased demand in Children's Social Care, Home to Schools Transport and Adult Social Care Services, ensuring individuals are safe, protected and have access to the right advice, information and support. We have done this alongside improvements to our services and by identifying new ways of working with partners to grow capacity in the system.
- Investments to support the resilience and capability of our IT and Digital Service, completing the implementation of IT systems aligned with the Council's Collaboration Strategy, including our new website, to enable effective collaboration both inside the Council and with external partners.
- Funding other infrastructure projects around the County, including improvements to Redditch Rail Station and the surrounding area, the route enhancement programme for the Bromsgrove A38, and investments in other Public Rights of Way.
- Continuing our commitment to reducing the County Council's carbon emissions, including this year installing enough solar panels on Council premises to match the carbon reduction impact of more than 2,000 trees.

Looking forward to 2023/24 and beyond, we will continue to face financial pressures and we have set a balanced and realistic budget for the year ahead, helped by the increases in the Local Government Settlement. Nonetheless it is important that we continue to strengthen our financial resilience and controls; as well as keeping focus on our refreshed Corporate Plan for 2022-27, which sets out the vision and priorities for the organisation and wider county over the next five years.

Simon Geraghty

Leader of Worcestershire County Council

Chief Executive's Introduction

In my fifth year as Chief Executive, Councillors and Staff have worked tirelessly to deliver services to support our residents and businesses in tough economic conditions and I wish to begin by thanking all staff who have contributed to our results for 2022/23.

The Leader's Foreword covers many of the Council's outputs for our residents and businesses which have been delivered by teams through smarter ways of working; supported by investment and developments in IT systems and structures to enable effective collaboration through hybrid working models.

I am extremely proud of staff for the continued excellent delivery of services in 2022/23 in a tough economic climate, against a backdrop of continued recovery from the pandemic and the legacy impact on Health and Social Care demand.

I am also delighted that Worcestershire, alongside our District partners, spearheaded the 'One Worcestershire' approach to welcome Ukrainian guests into the County, working hard to find school places and homes, and to provide outreach support.

Our Adult Social Care teams have continued to work collaboratively with colleagues in the NHS and partners to try to achieve the best possible outcomes for the residents of Worcestershire. Through our Section 75 and Better Care Fund budgets, we deliver £137m of integrated and joined-up services, and we are committed to continuing this partnership working as the government implements the new Urgent Care Strategy, aiming to improve response times, hospital admissions and discharge turnarounds in 2023/24.

Having proved popular during COVID, our Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) has continued to deliver activities during school holidays across all six Worcestershire districts, supporting families with children aged 5-16. We have worked with over 200 organisations to deliver this programme, targeting school holidays which can be pressure points for families.

Worcestershire Children's First has continued to sustain improvement of our services to Children Services across the county. This was recognised by the DfE by the lifting of the statutory direction in November 2021 and the early removal of the "Support and Supervision" phase in June 2022. This is a result of significant hard work and improvement since Ofsted's 2016 inspection, evidenced throughout the monitoring and focused visits by Ofsted and our reporting to the DfE. Our SEND Accelerated Action Plan twelve-month review took place in March 2023. Positive feedback was provided including recognition of the amount of work that has taken place, the investment to increase capacity in the workforce, and our engagement with parents, and a clear commitment of stakeholders to co-production in improvements. There is still more to do and there be a further review in September 2023.

We are continuing to invest in our staff through improvements in our Workforce Strategy and investment in the development and well-being of staff. Our Wellbeing Weeks have proved popular with staff, and we have also launched our new 'Recognising You' programme which will allow us to further highlight the fantastic work of our teams.

I'm pleased to say 98% of children received an offer from one of their top three choice schools. Over 93% of pupils will be heading to their first choice of primary or first school to start their important education journey in September.

A recent survey revealed that 75% of respondents wanted Worcestershire services to be designed by Worcestershire Service Users. With this in mind, we have launched our 'Building Together' project, which will enable those with direct experience of our services to become more involved in their design

Going forward, the Council's priorities are to deliver improvements across the four key areas of the Corporate Plan with a balanced budget, supported by a strong financial base.

Paul Robinson
Chief Executive

Chief Financial Officer's Narrative Report

Worcestershire is a County with a proud heritage. Home to nearly 600,000 people with a mix of urban and rural communities and a thriving economy.

In a year of sustained financial challenges including high inflation and increased demand for Social Care services, the Council has played a vital role in supporting the residents and businesses of Worcestershire in their recovery from the social and economic impact of the pandemic, whilst successfully delivering the Council's objectives. The Council has continued to make arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources; supporting informed decision making and managing key operational and financial risks to deliver corporate objectives and safeguard public money.

Through robust financial monitoring and prompt management action to allocate resources where pressures were identified, the Council achieved a small overspend of £7.3 million against its net £373.2 million budget (1.9%). The following table shows the final outturn position for each Service area, comparing actual net expenditure with approved budget. This outturn position is reconciled to the figures shown in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement in Note 2: Expenditure and Funding Analysis and discussed in the following pages.

Service area	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m
People – Adults	138.909	145.350	6.441
People – Communities	20.601	20.138	(0.463)
People – Public Health	0.124	0.124	0.000
Children's Services/WCF	109.108	115.652	6.544
Economy & Infrastructure	59.225	58.508	(0.717)
Commercial & Change	7.686	7.161	(0.525)
Chief Executive/HR	3.382	2.470	(0.912)
Sub Total: Services	339.035	349.403	10.368
Corporate Savings Target	(0.500)	0.000	0.500
Finance /Corporate Items	34.662	31.110	(3.552)
Total	373.197	380.513	7.316

School balances overall reduced by £0.9 million to a net surplus of £4.4 million. The net position comprises 30 schools in deficit (£10.8 million) and 82 schools in surplus (£15.2 million). Schools' funding remains an area of concern and the Council and Worcestershire Children First are working to support schools in achieving their financial plans as well as lobbying Central Government. The non-schools Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will carry forward a deficit of £20.3 million (£11.3 million deficit at 31 March 2022); this increase is largely due to unfunded SEND and High Needs demand arising from statute changes in 2014. This will continue to be carried forward and offset against future DSG income.

COVID-19 Funding and Expenditure

In 2021/22, £17.9 million of unspent grants were carried forward to support vulnerable individuals as well as households and businesses most in need, as the pandemic recovery continued. These grants were primarily ringfenced for specific purposes, including many relating to Adult Social Care. The majority of this was spent in 2022/23 in line with the plan approved by Cabinet in September 2022 with £1.5 million remaining in the Concessionary Fares reserve for support for transport providers in future years, £3.7 million transferred to the Finance Risk Reserve to cover potential ongoing risks arising in 2023/24 leaving a balance on the Health and Well-being reserve of £2.9 million to fund the Council's ongoing commitments relating to the Integrated Well-being Offer and Here to Help.

Financial Resilience and Sustainability

The Worcestershire Pension Fund continues to build on the successes of previous years. The most recently completed triennial actuarial valuation confirmed its 101% funding on a solvency basis. An improvement from the previous valuation funding level of 90%. This is a significant achievement considering the macroeconomic and geopolitical pressures that The Fund has faced during that time. In addition to robust financial performance, The Fund has continued to strengthen its stewardship credentials through enhanced commitment to Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) and Responsible Investment (RI) principles, working closely with external experts. As a result, The Fund successfully retained its signatory status to the UK Stewardship Code 2020 and its overall listed portfolio is now considered to be over 30% more carbon efficient than the benchmark. During the year, The Fund deepened its investments in UK Forestry assets to enhance its ESG beliefs to other areas of its portfolio too. A key area of focus for the future will be to further reduce the carbon footprint of the overall portfolio in conjunction with setting an internal decarbonisation target to 2025.

Looking forward, 2023/24 onwards remains an uncertain period for Local Government funding. In addition to the long-awaited

implementation of the fair funding review and a reset of the business rates baseline, the current national financial pressures in respect of pay and price inflation are likely to have a significant impact on the Council's medium-term financial plan.

To support financial resilience, the Council has adopted a prudent approach to the use of reserve balances and has managed to retain earmarked revenue reserves at 91.4% of March 2022 levels. We will once again review our medium-term financial plan during 2023/24, taking account of the need to support the most vulnerable individuals in society, by identifying savings and reductions in spend and increasing income to improve outcomes for the residents and businesses of Worcestershire. To meet the challenges facing the County, it is imperative that we continue to put effective financial governance and competence at the core of decision making to deliver a strong, resilient and sustainable financial position. This strive is reflected in the Annual Governance Statement.

Finance staff continue to work closely with key stakeholders and our external auditors Grant Thornton to ensure an efficient close-down process and produce the statutory accounts within statutory deadlines, and I express my thanks for their continued hard work.

Further in-depth highlights of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts are contained in the Finance and Performance Review section that follows.

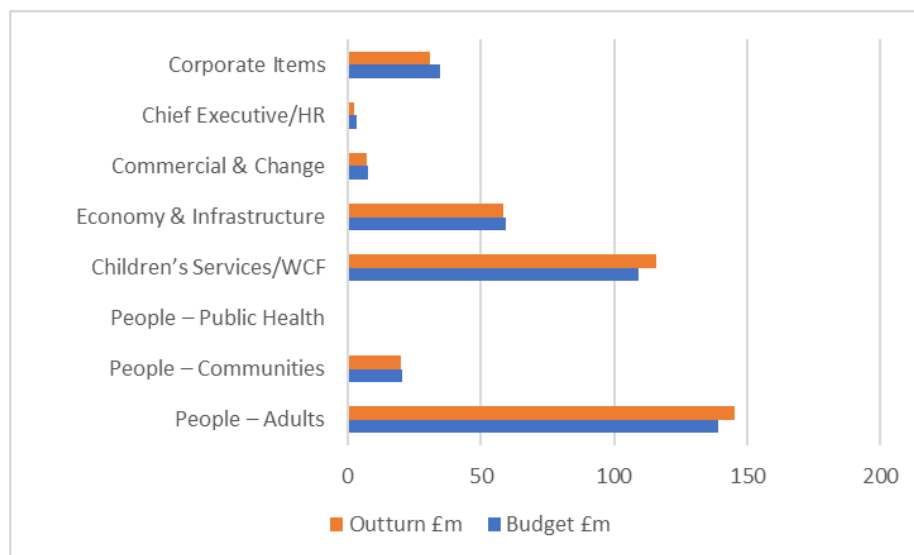
Phil Rook CPFA FCCA
Chief Financial Officer

Finance and Performance Review

2022/23 Financial performance

The County Council's net budget for 2022/23 was £373.2 million.

In line with budget monitoring throughout the year, the County Council overspent its £373.2 million budget by £7.3 million (1.9%) in 2022/23, with pressures in Adult and Children's Services, arising mainly due to inflationary pressures in care packages and transport contracts, as well as demand increases above expectations for some key services. The graph below shows the net budget performance for each Council Directorate.



The key financial and performance information for each directorate is detailed in the following paragraphs.

People Services – Adults

As reported and forecast during 2022/23 the Adult Social Care service out-turned with a net overspend of 4.6% against its £138.9 million net budget. Demand in all services has continued to increase over the year, alongside significant inflationary pressures

in the price of care packages. These pressures were partially mitigated in-year by use of carried forward COVID grants, and Continuing Health-Care income from our NHS partners.

People Services – Communities

The Communities budget returned a £0.5 million underspend as a result of small savings identified across several services, including identifying where grant funding can be effectively used to mitigate against using base budget.

Children's Services

The Council's Children's Services budget had a net overspend of £6.5m in 2022/23. This budget mainly comprises the contract payment to the Council's wholly owned subsidiary Worcestershire Children First (WCF).

Children's social care placements demand and costs continued to increase in 2022/23, at a rate higher than projected at budget setting, and this resulted in an overspend of £5.0 million attributable to increases in both the number of placements and their costs during the year. In addition, there are national pressures in Home to School Transport relating to both increased demand and due to providers facing rising costs in both fuel and workforce, and this area of the budget overspent by £6.4m in 2022/23.

The continuing increasing cost and demand of high needs provision, alongside changes in the 2014 Children and Families Act, has placed significant pressure on the Dedicated School's Grant (DSG) funding as well as the Council. The overall DSG deficit at 31 March 2023 is £20.3 million and this will be carried forward against future DSG income. The Council continues to work with schools to optimise pressures within funding, whilst lobbying Central Government for the issue to be addressed nationally.

Economy and Infrastructure

The directorate has delivered a small underspend of £0.7 million on its £59.2 million net budget after one-off adjustments for capitalisation. The outturn position includes overspends within

Planning and Regulation due to increases in agency costs, and within Street Lighting contracts where overspends are linked to energy price inflation. This additional expenditure has been offset by additional income generation within the areas of Passenger Transport and Network Management.

Waste services had an underlying pressure of £6.0 million, consisting of contract saving targets, alongside cumulative increases for inflation and housing growth. This was mitigated in-year by an underspend in Waste Management, a reduction in the overall contract price following successful extension of the contract and budgeted use of the waste reserve, bringing the waste service overall to a break-even outturn position. Following the signing of the revised contract in 2023, any residual underlying pressures have been incorporated into the 2023/24 budget setting.

Commercial and Change

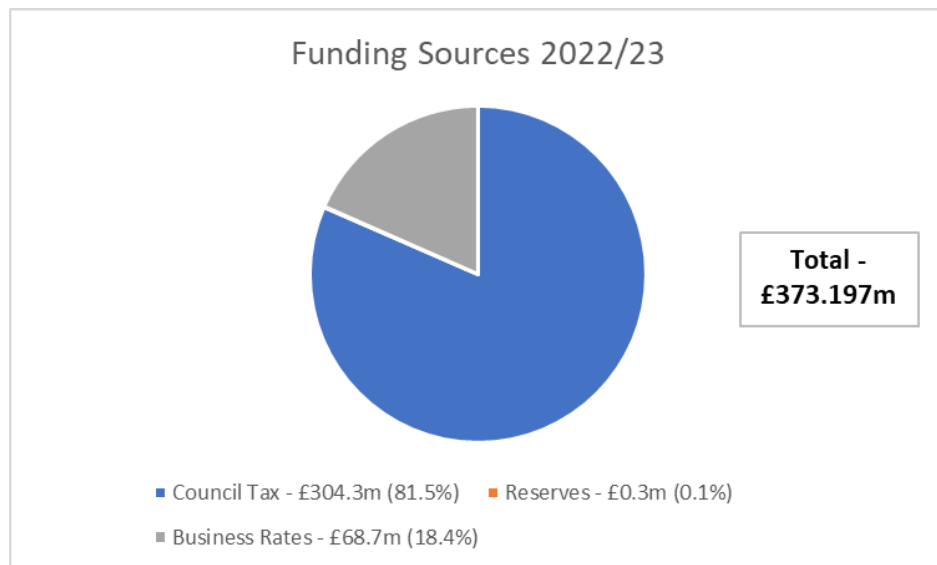
The directorate has delivered an underspend of £0.5 million (7% of its net budget) as a result of underspends in Executive Support. There were increased costs in Legal and Democratic Services of around £0.5m, which were mitigated with one-off income and this budget has been increased in 2023/24 to take account of the recurring nature of the increased reliance on legal services, in particular those relating to childcare cases.

Finance, HR & Chief Executive

Services within these budget headings underspent by £4.0m. This is largely down to slippage on capital programme resulting in lower than budgeted costs for borrowing and MRP, alongside a decrease to the corporate bad debt provision. These underspends were partially offset by non-achievement of £0.5m Corporate Savings targets.

Funding sources

The Council's core revenue expenditure was funded by a combination of locally raised funds and resources allocated from central government.



The Council Tax Band D equivalent was set at £1,396.78, which included £169.47 relating to the ring-fenced Adult Social Care precept.

Services also received funding from specific grants, contributions and fees and charges. Key grants continue to be the Improved Better Care Fund, Social Care Grants, Public Health Ring-fenced Grant and Dedicated Schools Grant.

Impact on the Council's Assets and Liabilities

The value of our property plant and equipment has increased by a net £79.9 million in 2022/23. This is made up of a net £88.7 million expenditure and increase in valuations offset by £8.8 million of disposals, including four schools which have converted to academy status during 2022/23 (transferred at nil consideration).

We secured £8.5 million of capital receipts which have helped us manage our borrowing requirement and fund transformation. At the same time, we are reporting a further £8.9 million of assets held for sale.

The County Council's Local Government Pension Scheme balance has improved from a deficit of £430m at March 2022 to a balanced position in March 2023 as a result of the performance of the fund and an actuarial review of fund assets and liabilities.

We have continued our focus on income management and debt collection processes during 2022/23, working with strategic partners, with support from colleagues in legal services to facilitate the efficient resolution of queries in respect of debts that are over 30 days old. We report collection rates and progress on a quarterly basis to the Audit and Governance Committee. The County Council has reviewed the recoverability of debtor balances at 31 March 2023 and has applied a professional judgement to reflect any additional risk to collection.

Performance in respect of our time to pay creditors continues to be high (99% of all creditors paid within 30 days). The reported decrease of our trade creditors at 31 March 2023 from £71.5m to £54.0m is mainly related to the timing of payments at the year end.

Our earmarked and other usable reserves have decreased marginally over the year by £2.6 million to £235.6 million. This reflects the strong financial controls, corporate savings and the improved performance of business rate income despite the service pressures in 2022/23.

Financial risks and our reserves

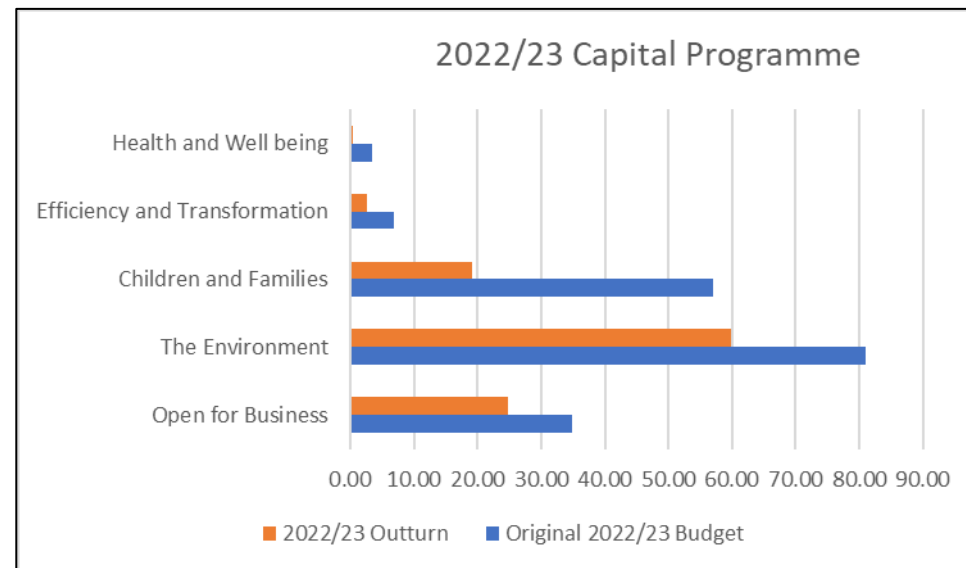
Up until a few years ago the Council faced a risk due to underlying cost pressures, use of specific grants and planned use of reserves reducing our earmarked reserves. Our strong financial management is now starting to see that trend reversing. Whilst overall our earmarked reserves have dropped slightly this year, our General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2023 remains unchanged from the previous year (£14.3 million). The decrease in

2022/23 is largely down to the utilisation of ring-fenced grants reserves. Looking forward, the total revenue reserves available are £144.1 million, as noted in the table below.

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Movement in- year	Balance at 31 March 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Priority Reserves	56.5	0.7	57.2
Grant Reserves	44.4	(10.7)	33.7
Corporate Funding/Insurance	43.5	3.7	47.2
Schools Reserves	5.4	(0.9)	4.5
PFI Reserves	7.8	(6.3)	1.5
Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves	157.7	(13.6)	144.2
General Fund Reserve	14.3	0.0	14.3
Capital Receipts Reserve	2.7	(2.7)	0.0
Capital Grants Unapplied	63.5	13.6	77.2
Total Usable Reserves	238.3	(2.6)	235.7

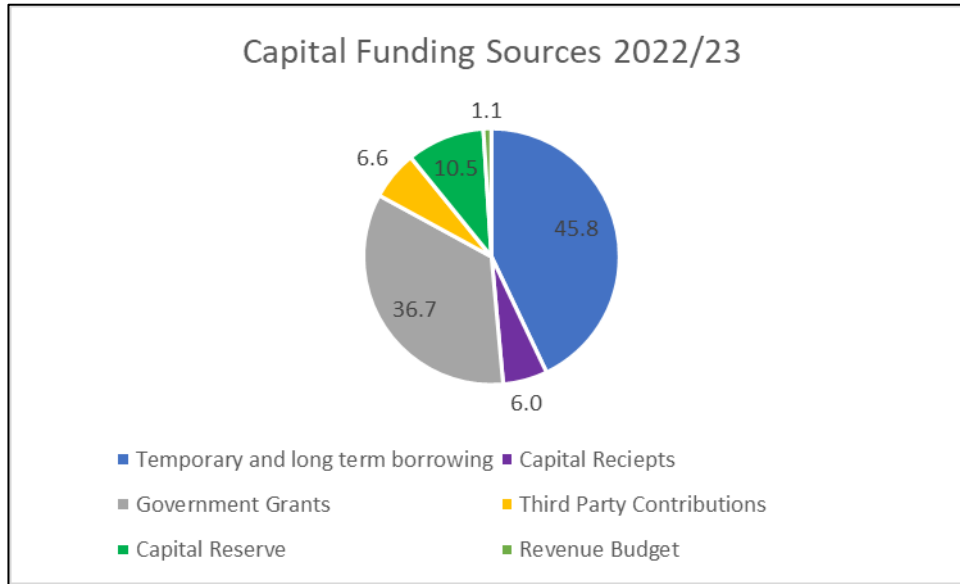
Capital Programme

The approved capital programme for 2022/23 and beyond totals £432.7 million, with £183.3 million originally profiled for 2022/23. Total outturn on the programme for 2022/23 was £106.9m. Expenditure is most significant in the Economy & Infrastructure Directorate which includes expenditure relating to infrastructure to support our Open for Business and Environment Priorities, as well as continued investment into highways, footpaths and street-lighting priorities.



The more significant schemes include congestion cutting as well as highways maintenance and resurfacing works across the whole County area. There were specific improvements around the A38 near Bromsgrove, the new A38 roundabout at Upton-upon-Severn, Pershore northern access roads, and phase 4 of the Worcester Southern Link Road. Other significant schemes included the relocation of Holyoakes First School in Redditch, work to expand Bishop Perowne High School in Worcester, and the continuation of building the new Kepax footbridge.

Funding for capital schemes comes mainly from Government grants, usually for specific developments, and borrowing, as shown in the following pie chart:



Impact on Treasury Management and cash flow

Our short-term borrowing has increased by £40.9 million whilst our long-term borrowing has increased by £6.5 million. This is in line with our Treasury Management Strategy. All of our Treasury Management activities are reported separately and regularly to Cabinet and Council. All transactions have been completed in accordance with our Treasury Management Strategy for the year.

Delivering the Corporate Plan

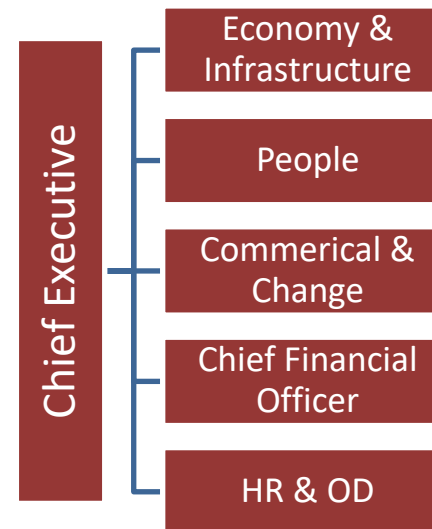
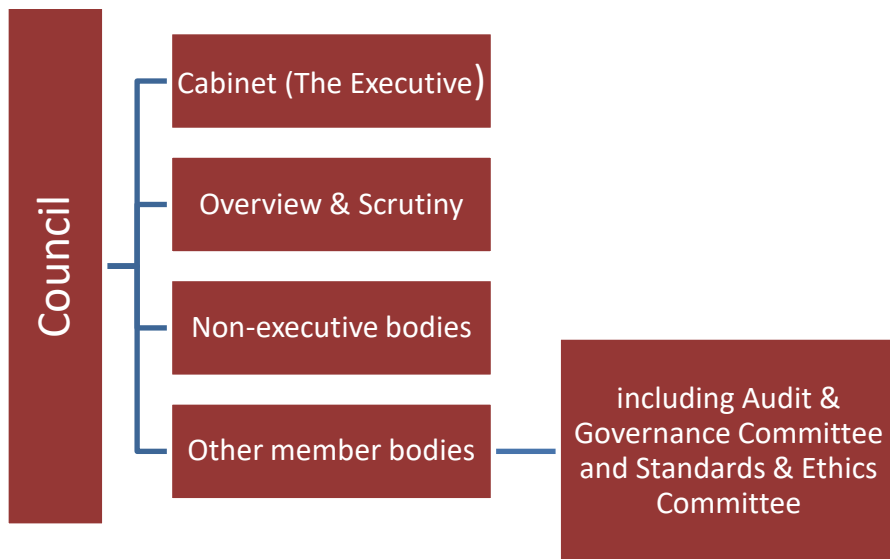
The Council's 2022-27 Corporate Plan – Shaping Worcestershire's Future, continues to build on progress made in recent years and maintains its emphasis on the four key priorities. There is an even stronger focus on partnership working and building local capacity to empower communities to live prosperous, independent lives. The drive towards financial self-sufficiency and maximising limited resources goes on, with the County Council continuing its journey to becoming an enabling authority. Key aspects of this include:

- Expanding the Here2Help scheme, delivering enhanced access for residents and organisations to information, advice, tools and guidance, and to signpost local support options
- Improving operational and environmental sustainability, including adopting flexible and mobile working arrangements, developing local capacity and resilience to ensure the County Council only intervenes when necessary, and disposing of waste sustainably
- Prioritising investment in areas identified as important to communities and businesses such as highways and transport infrastructure, and investing heavily in Adults and Children's Social Care, maximising its impact by working to manage demand for the most costly services
- Improving digital connectivity and infrastructure, including provision of faster broadband, and embracing digital solutions for services which can speed up processes and reduce costs

Political structure

The County Council is run by 57 elected Councillors who are responsible for making sure that the services we provide meet the needs of residents and those who work in the county. They do this by setting the overall policies and strategies for the County Council and by monitoring the way in which these are implemented.

Full Council meetings are held regularly throughout the year. Council is responsible for agreeing the main policies and priorities for all services, including the County Council's budget. Cabinet is responsible for most day to day Council decisions. The Leader of the Council, Simon Geraghty, appoints councillors to the Cabinet and these Cabinet members have specific areas of responsibility. There are currently nine members of Cabinet. Cabinet makes its decisions in line with overall policies, priorities and budget. All of its decisions are made in accordance with governance arrangements and details of Cabinet meetings are available on the County Council website in the County Democracy and Councillor Information section. The work of Council is supported by a number of other committees:



Further information about the County Council's governance arrangements can be found on the County Council website in the Council, Democracy and Councillor Information section and in the Annual Governance Statement which forms part of this document.

The County Council is operationally managed by the Strategic Leadership Team, comprising the Chief Executive, directors from the three directorates and the Chief Financial Officer.

Looking ahead

The 2023/24 budget was approved at Council on 16 February 2023 with the detailed proposals presented to Cabinet on 2 February 2023.

This budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan were approved taking account of the inflationary pressures the Council faces. Future funding levels remain uncertain as the Council awaits confirmation from central government of funding for 2024/25 onwards. Further delays to the long-awaited fair funding review and a reset of the business rates baseline as well as the current national financial pressures in respect of inflation and cost of living are likely to have a significant impact on the Council's medium-term financial plan.

The Council refreshed its Corporate Plan in 2022; considering an estimate of national and local economic recovery, alongside confirmation of the extent of any increased cost pressures or reductions in income.

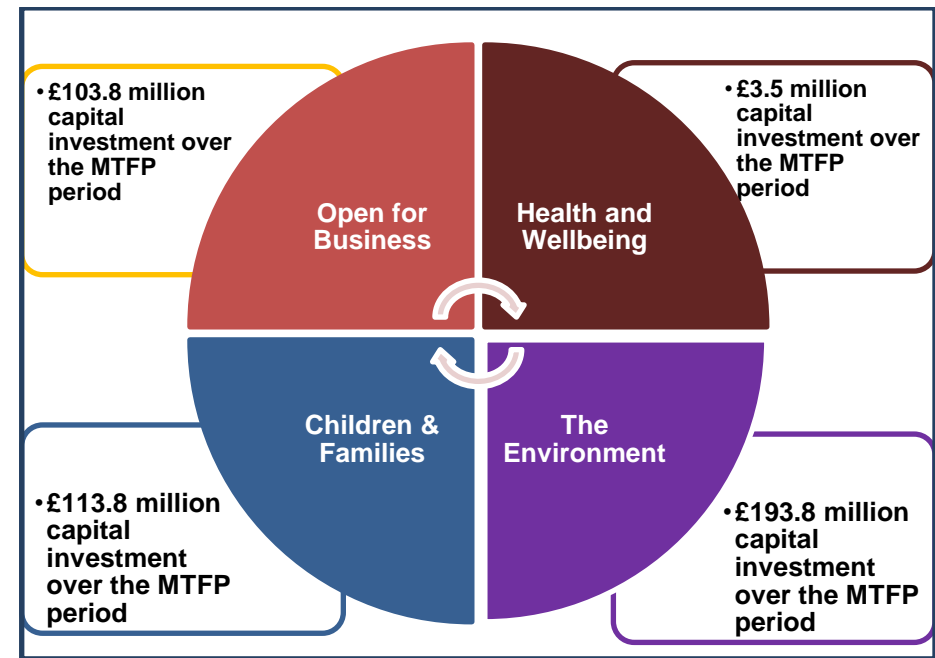
All of this means that maintaining sound and resilient Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balance is crucial.

The paragraphs below set out details of the current budget for 2023/24.

Expenditure

The net revenue budget requirement for 2023/24 is £400.8 million. That is a net £27.6 million more than 2022/23. However, to achieve a balanced budget a programme of efficiency, reform and income proposals totalling £22.4 million were approved by Council in February 2023.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan confirms the commitment to continue to resource the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. It includes a capital programme of £432.7 million to deliver regeneration, infrastructure and other changes during 2022-24.



We are supporting this with a commitment to invest £17.8 million to ensure that the County Council is operating efficiently, new ways of work in a post pandemic environment, including more digitally enabled operations and closer working with our key partners.

Funding

The main sources of the County Council's income are collected locally, with local taxation through Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept accounting for close to 80% of core funding income in 2023/24.

Funding Sources 2023/24



- Council Tax £318.2m (79%)
- Reserves & Grants £5.5m (1%)
- Business Rates £77.1m (20%)

Children First through group accounts and these can be found at pages 141 to 150 in the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

In 2022/23, the County Council and six District Councils plus Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority were members of a pool formed under the Business Rates Retention Scheme which resulted in a benefit to Worcestershire residents of around £4.0 million.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24-2026/27

The Medium-Term Financial Plan takes account of the Corporate Plan commitment, the cost of providing our services and current central government funding announcements. Our current assumptions will need to be updated during 2023/24 in light of likely levels of Central Government funding, local taxation income and inflation.

Worcestershire Children First

The County Council's wholly owned subsidiary Worcestershire Children First (WCF) which was launched on 1st October 2019 has returned a break-even position in their third full year of trading, as per their 2022/23 financial statements. This is after support from Council Reserves to cover the overspends discussed earlier in this narrative.

The County Council has accounted for the activity of Worcestershire

Statement of Responsibilities

This sets out the respective responsibilities of the County Council and the Chief Financial Officer in respect of preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

The Council is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this County Council, that officer is the Chief Financial Officer;
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets; and
- Approve the Statement of Accounts.

Responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the County Council's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial 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 Chief Financial Officer has also:

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

Approval of Accounts

The date that the Statement of Accounts was approved is 15 December 2023. All known material events that have occurred up to and including this date which relate to 2022/23 or before are reflected in the accounts.

In accordance with Regulation 9(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 I certify that the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the County Council at 31 March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year 2022/23.



Phil Rook, Chief Financial Officer

Date 15 December 2023

In accordance with Regulation 9(2) b of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 I certify that the Audit & Governance Committee approved the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 on 15 December 2023.



Nathan Desmond, Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee

Date 15 December 2023



Worcestershire County Council
Annual Governance
Statement 2022/23

Introduction

The Annual Governance Statement is a review of our activities to ensure that the County Council is carrying out its functions effectively. This statement explains how the County Council has discharged its governance responsibilities during 2022/23 and the key governance mechanisms in place.

Our risk management process is a key part of our governance arrangements and provides assurance that:

- our business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations;
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and
- resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.

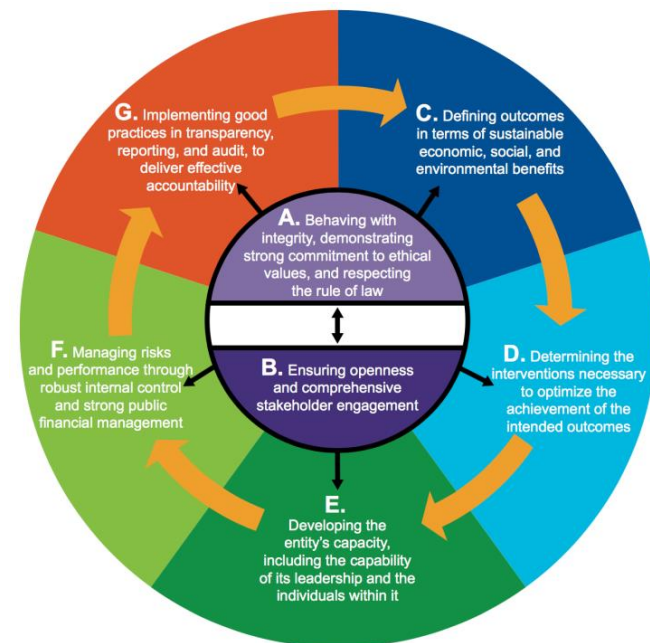
The purpose of the Governance Framework

The County Council is committed to improving governance through a process of continual evaluation and review, delivered through the seven principles of good governance as identified in the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 and supported by processes which strengthen corporate governance such as the Corporate Risk Management Group.

Our system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level and is based on an ongoing process to identify and manage risks to the achievement of policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised, and to manage

them efficiently, effectively and economically. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure but provides reasonable assurance of effectiveness.

This Annual Governance Statement is published in accordance with the CIPFA/SoLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016. The Council aims to achieve good standards of governance by adhering to the seven core principles: shown in the diagram below, which illustrates the various principles of good governance in the public sector and how they relate to each other.



Overview of Governance Framework

The governance framework outlined above has been in place throughout 2022/23 and maintained to the date of the approval of the Statement of Accounts. Key governance arrangements during 2022/23 comprised the following (full detail is provided in the County Council's Constitution).

The Council has a Leader and Cabinet executive model, with the following key responsibilities:

The Cabinet	The Leader and the Cabinet are responsible for all County Council's functions except those required by law or the Constitution to be those of full Council. Executive functions can be discharged, as delegated by the County Council's Constitution to the relevant committee, individual cabinet member or officer.
Audit & Governance Committee	The Committee oversees the audit and corporate governance arrangements of the County Council including annual audit plans and reports of internal and external auditors, the County Council's system of internal control, risk management and prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.
Overview & Scrutiny Committees	The Board's main responsibilities include commissioning work for scrutiny panels and establishing scrutiny task groups to ensure that significant issues are subject to appropriate review and scrutiny.
Standard & Ethics Committee	The Committee ensures that high standards of conduct are maintained by County Councillors and co-opted members by reference to the Council's Code of Conduct.

Functions, powers and duties are delegated to officers by the Council, Leader and Cabinet, with the following key responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership Team	The County Council's Strategic Leadership Team is collectively responsible for ensuring that effective governance arrangements are in place and are subject to regular review. The Team provide leadership, determine policy and uphold expected standards of behaviour.
Chief Officer Group	The Chief Officer Group has collective responsibility for overseeing the implementation of cross organisational strategy and the development and implementation of operational plans, policies, procedures and budgets prior to Senior Leadership Team and Committee approval. The Group promotes robust, fit for purpose governance across the County Council.



Head of Paid Service (the Chief Executive)	The Chief Executive is responsible for overseeing policy development and planning, corporate performance, and community leadership, alongside the effective leadership, management and performance of the Strategic Leadership Team.
Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (the Monitoring Officer)	The Monitoring Officer is responsible for maintaining the Constitution and ensuring that functions act in accordance with the Constitution and relevant legal requirements. These arrangements include overseeing the ethical conduct of the Council and the production of associated codes, conventions and protocols.
Chief Finance Officer	The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the oversight and delivery of financial management arrangements; achieved through a robust financial control framework, financial regulations, standing orders, a scheme of delegation and an independent and objective Internal Audit function.
Chief Internal Auditor and Head of Risk Management	<p>The Chief Internal Auditor and Head of Risk Management is responsible for ensuring effective management of the Council's risks, including evaluating controls and mitigations as part of a risk-based internal audit approach.</p> <p>The Risk and Assurance Manager, supported by the Corporate Risk Management Group, maintains the Corporate Risk Register, monitoring identified risks, controls and mitigating actions. Directorate Leadership Teams monitor and review directorate risk registers and allocate resources to ensure risks management arrangements are effective.</p>
External Audit	External Audit report on the Statement of Accounts and review the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

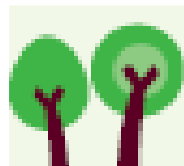
Review of Effectiveness

The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of Chief Officers and senior managers with responsibility for the design and maintenance of an effective governance environment. It is also informed by the work of Internal Audit and the annual opinion provided by the Chief Internal Auditor. The results of the annual review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23 are set out in the table below and demonstrate how the Council has complied with the seven principles of the CIPFA/Solace Framework. Areas for improvement are included as part of the assessment and a detailed action plan will be developed to ensure that work is undertaken to deliver these improvements. Progress against the plan will be reported to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

Principle	Assessment of the effectiveness of governance arrangements during 2022/23
<p>Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23:</p> <p>We have arrangements in place to provide assurance that our values are upheld, and that members and officers demonstrate high standards of conduct and behaviour to comply with laws and regulations.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codes of conduct for officers and members. This is to ensure that Members and Officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visible and consistently demonstrated thereby protecting the reputation of the Council. Both Members and Officers are bound by the seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles) The Council adopted the LGA code of conduct for members at its meeting on 18 May 2023; • The inclusion of ethical values in policies and procedures for all areas; • A complaints procedure ensuring appropriate investigation and response • A Whistleblowing Policy which enables employees and others who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's work to come forward and voice those concerns; • A commitment to equality of opportunity for all citizens, in line with the Public Sector Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010; and • Our Constitution, which sets out the conditions to ensure that all officers, key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory provisions. • Formal recognition of the Trade Unions in our processes and change.

	<p>Areas where it is recognised that governance arrangements could be further strengthened are set out below. The Council's new Monitoring Officer started on 1 March 2023 and a new S151 Officer starts on 19 June 2023. They will focus on the issues highlighted below and will provide updates on significant issues at subsequent Committee meetings :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to regularly review the Council's Constitution and related policies and procedures to ensure that Officer and Member responsibilities are clearly documented and promote a culture of accountability and strong ethical values. As a result of Covid-19 prioritisation a review is needed, this will include improvements to strengthen the monitoring of compliance with legislative and governance requirements should be included in this review with clearly communicated consequences where behaviours do not demonstrate integrity. • Alongside this a need for training of Officers and Members to increase constitutional awareness and individual responsibility for compliance will ensure that these values become embedded in behaviour. • Processes to support the delivery of the Council's ethical values should be strengthened in areas such as Declarations and Registers of Interest, using a model of training and declaration, to promote consistency and transparency. • A review of Members' roles and delegations on boards and companies.
<p>Core Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23:</p> <p>The Chief Executive, Chief Officer Group and Strategic Leadership Team value are committed to ensuring every employee is engaged and feedback is sought, listened to and acted upon. There are strong relationships with the Council's recognised Trade Unions and the Council remains committed to building and maintaining strong employee relations. Monthly Staff Briefings are held by the Chief Executive and Senior Leaders.</p> <p>Engagement includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to increased remote working, the Council has strengthened engagement with staff through regular communication from the Chief Executive and at directorate level. The use of Slido enables staff to engage directly with the Chief Executive. • Improvements in technology facilitate hybrid working practices and support the pastoral needs of staff.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Staff Survey. Responses have informed the development of the Workforce Strategy 2021-2024. Wellbeing and career development insight and feedback is shared at mid-year and end of year review points. • Feedback from events and surveys help to inform the Council’s four corporate priorities: supporting Children and families, promoting Health and Well Being, protecting the Environment and championing Open for Business. <p>Areas where it is recognised that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved co-ordination of the Council’s external inspection and regulatory report framework, to inform assurance and improve information sharing and collaboration across stakeholders. • There is a need for increased clarity, via the review of the Council’s Constitution, of elected Member responsibilities relating to engagement and communication with Officers, residents and businesses.
<p>Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council’s governance arrangements during 2022/23 include:</p> <p>Our Corporate Plan: Shaping Worcestershire’s Future 2017-22, identifies four key priorities that help us shape the future vision for Worcestershire and focus the delivery of our services. The refreshed Corporate Plan 2022-27 continues with the Council’s priorities building on the progress made in recent years to drive improvements for the County to 2027.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="margin-right: 20px;">   </div> <div> <p>Open for Business – we have a significant programme of improvements in workforce skills, employment, infrastructure and productivity. We are aiming to become a financially self-sufficient Council and to achieve this aim we are promoting and supporting businesses in the County and those looking to relocate here.</p> <p>Children and Families – we have a strong focus on improving outcomes for the children, young people and families of Worcestershire. We support schools with achieving a good or outstanding rating by Ofsted and facilitating young people achieving five or more good GCSEs and support young people moving successfully into employment. These services are delivered in conjunction with our wholly owned company, Worcestershire Children First.</p> </div> </div>



The Environment - Worcestershire's environment is one of our key features and contributes to enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors. We are committed to improving our infrastructure networks, including transport and digital technology to support business and encourage investment. We also have a key focus on minimising waste which goes to landfill.



Health and Wellbeing – we are working with local partners to support our residents to be healthier, live longer, have better quality of life and remain independent for as long as possible. Our focus on adult social care aims to keep people with care and support needs as independent as possible by providing choice in how to live their lives.

The Council's Sustainability Policy promotes the principles of sustainable development through: green economy, action to tackle climate change, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and fairness and improving wellbeing. To demonstrate its sustainability policy commitment the Council has committed to:

- Promoting sustainability at a strategic level;
- Lead by example in addressing the Council's operational impacts on the community and environment; and
- Promoting sustainable development throughout the county.

The Council reports on progress through the annual Corporate Environmental Report.

Areas where it is recognised that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:

- The need for a mechanism to enable transparent and timely performance reporting (to replace the Balanced Scorecard) linked to the priorities and objectives outlined in the Corporate Plan 2022-27.
- A focus on Environmental, Social and Governance arrangements, including specific internal audit assignments and as part of wider deliverables with a focus on measurable outcomes.

<p>Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23 include:</p> <p>The County Council's planning process works to support and optimise delivery and identify and mitigate any risks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each key area of focus identifies several aims and targets and responsibility for achieving these lies with individual directorates, and relevant aims and targets are included in individual service delivery plans. • Risks are managed by the Chief Internal Auditor and Head of Risk Management, supported by the Risk and Assurance Manager and Corporate Risk Management Group. The process has been embedded during 2022/23 with a closer link to the audit programme and an increased focus on identifying emerging risks. • The Council has robust processes in place to support financial planning and sustainability. The budget is informed by the Medium-Term Financial Plan with key risks and assumptions clearly identified and reported to members, supported by a strategy and financial planning process. Budget proposals are subject to review and scrutiny by relevant stakeholders, including elected Members as well as through meetings with Trade Union Representatives and the Schools Forum. In 2020/21, the external audit report identified no weaknesses in the Council's arrangements to ensure financial sustainability and no improvement recommendations were made. • Progress against the Corporate Plan is monitored and reported to councillors on a regular basis. <p>Areas where it is recognised that that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased strategic engagement with the risk management process, including nominating a strategic lead at SLT level to co-ordinate the identification of risks and mitigating actions, to ensure that strategic decisions are informed by effective consideration of relevant risks. • In addition to improvements in performance monitoring arrangements, there is a need for a robust system of accountability for performance against corporate, financial and management targets.
<p>Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23 include:</p>

of its leadership and the individuals within it

- To deliver our objectives, we rely on our staff to carry on the great work they already do daily which is underpinned by Our People Values:
 - **Customer Focus** - putting the customer at the heart of everything we do
 - **'Can do' Culture** – being proactive to achieve excellence
 - **Freedom within Boundaries** – courage to make constructive change
- Our Workforce Strategy 2021 - 2024 is designed to build a workforce with personal and collective organisational resilience. The strategy is to be used by each Service area to develop their annual workforce plans, supported by their HR Operations Partners
- Mandatory learning is in place for all staff and monitored by directorate leadership teams. The Council has launched a new learning management system for 2022/23, which supports the Workforce Strategy by enhancing the learning experience of staff and enabling greater transparency for employees and managers.
- Our Annual Performance Review Cycle forms a key part of our organisational workforce planning. Employees and line managers meet regularly to plan and monitor progress against personal and organisational objectives and support employee wellbeing. Indicative ratings are recorded at mid-year review point, with formal ratings recorded at end of year performance reviews.
- CIPFA published the Financial Management (FM) Code in October 2019. The Code sets out 17 Financial Management Standards against which local authorities are required to perform a self-assessment. The results of the 2021/22 self-assessment was presented to Audit & Governance Committee in November 2022 and actions to address areas identified for improvement will be implemented during 2023/24.

Areas where it is recognised that that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:

- The capacity and capability of Members and Officers should be further developed through enhanced arrangements for tailored training relevant to individual roles and responsibilities, with core competencies including finance, HR and decision making at the fore of that.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to promote management accountability and communicate consequences for non-compliance in all Council policies. • The development of audit arrangements to review the effectiveness of the performance cycle and highlight areas for improvement.
<p>Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council’s governance arrangements during 2022/23 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management involves the identification, analysis and control of threats or events that adversely affect the achievement of the County Council's strategic and operational objectives. It also enables positive risks to be taken to innovate and improve service provision. The Risk Management Strategy details the methodology for evaluating corporate risk management arrangements and its delivery is supported by the Corporate Risk Management Group. • The County Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy embeds effective standards in countering fraud, corruption and theft. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring this Strategy is applied and that the CIPFA Code of Practice on Managing the Risk of Fraud and Corruption is followed. • The County Council supports and submits data for the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) and assesses all matches for review and, where appropriate, mitigation. • Financial Regulations form part of the Constitution and set out our financial management framework for ensuring we make the best use of the money we have available to spend. It outlines the financial roles and responsibilities for staff and Members and provides a framework for financial decision-making. Where there are specific statutory powers and duties the Financial Regulations seek to ensure these are duly complied with, as well as reflecting best professional practice and decision-making. <p>Areas where it is recognised that that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the Constitution and enhanced training across Officers and Members to ensure responsibilities are clear as noted above at Core Principal A. This should include the Council’s contract procedure rules. • Monitoring arrangements to identify and take action to address issues of non-compliance with corporate procedures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer links between the governance framework and decision making ability to ensure activity is aligned to policies and procedures and supported by robust internal controls.
<p>Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<p>Key aspects of the Council's governance arrangements during 2022/23 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large amount of information is available on the County Council website which gives details of the working of the organisation, what we spend, and how our decisions are made. • The Forward Plan provides information about the matters on which the County Council will make decisions. Formal agenda, reports and minutes for all committee meetings are published on our website which ensures that people know what decisions the County Council is planning to take, and the decisions taken. • Our Monitoring Officer has a specific duty to ensure the County Council, its officers and elected councillors maintain the highest standards in all they do. • Arrangements are in place to ensure that we fully comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit. • We are registered as a Controller under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which governs how we manage and process the information we collect and retain. We have a nominated Data Protection Officer and procedures in place that explain how we use and share information, as well as arrangements for members of the public to access information. We have also adopted the model publication scheme produced by the Information Commissioner's Office. <p>Areas where it is recognised that that governance arrangements could be further strengthened include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that there is an effective and transparent scrutiny process, a strengthening of arrangements for briefing sessions between Members and Officers. • Improved arrangements for cross-party briefings and working groups to ensure Members have sight of key issues to enable informed decision making. • Greater focus on the Council's performance measures and cohesive public reporting through improved performance monitoring and holding to account against corporate targets.

Audit and Audit Assurances

The Council's Statement of Accounts are audited by Grant Thornton UK LLP. In accordance with statutory requirements, the annual audit includes an examination and certification of the financial statements to give an opinion as to whether they are 'true and fair' and an assessment of the County Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. In 2021/22, Grant Thornton gave an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements with no significant weaknesses identified in our Value for Money (VFM) arrangements.

Internal audit services are provided by the County Council's in-house team. The team's role is to enhance and protect the County Council's value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice and insight. It is responsible for reviewing the adequacy of internal controls across all areas of the County Council and its services are managed and delivered in accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

The work of the Internal Audit team is supported by external providers for specialist reviews such as technical audits of IT systems. Further assurance is provided by reviews undertaken by external agencies including OFSTED, the Care Quality Commission, the Office of the Information Commissioner and other Local Authority Inspectorates.

The Audit & Governance Committee approve the Internal Audit Charter and Audit Plan which outline the role of Internal Audit, its responsibilities and independence and the planned programme of audit work.

A flexible audit plan has enabled work to be focused on key risks and the Chief Internal Auditor has maintained close links with the leadership of the Council to ensure that adequate assurance and organisational coverage is delivered. Based on the results of assurance and advisory work undertaken during the year, the Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion is that the control environment provides **moderate assurance** that the significant risks facing the County Council are addressed.

Significant Governance Considerations

Recurrent Considerations / Brought Forward from 2021/22	Update on Progress/Action taken to address the issue in 2022/23
<p>Serious harm or death of a child or young person Safeguarding risk because of serious harm or death of a child or failure to safeguard children. Reputational risk as a result of poor inspection or service breakdown.</p>	<p>Safeguarding issues continue to be monitored and managed through the WCF Governance Structures and partnership working with the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) and other local strategic partners. Quality Assurance measures are in place throughout the service through audit and service user feedback. Safeguarding and activity has been monitored by the WSCP Safeguarding Practice Review Board and Get Safe Partnership Board. Last year's Annual Governance statement highlighted the sustained improvement in Children's Social Care recognised by the DfE by the early removal of the "Support and Supervision" phase in June 2022. This improvement continues to be validated through the outcomes of external Inspections, adoption and fostering services in 2022-23 which were both rated "good".</p> <p>At the time of finalising the Annual Governance Statement our standard inspection of our Childrens Services is currently taking place by Ofsted (15 -26 May 2023) which we have been expecting and the service is well prepared.</p>
<p>Activity exceeds budget allocation Inadequate budgets and / or ineffective financial management will impact on the County Council's ability to effectively provide services and impair our ability to forward plan. The level of earmarked and general reserves could also be impacted by any unplanned draw down.</p>	<p>Regular budget monitoring and forecasting remain a focus of our financial management processes. Management accounts, which report actual income and expenditure against budgeted and forecast performance, have been prepared on a monthly basis and the achievement of savings targets and use of Council reserves has been monitored throughout the year as part of ongoing activity to consider financial sustainability and inform our assessment of going concern.</p>
<p>Serious harm or death of an adult with care and support needs A safeguarding risk because of serious harm / death from failure to safeguard an adult with care and support needs, whether the local authority is meeting those needs or not. We also face reputational risk as a result of service breakdown.</p>	<p>A Safeguarding Adult Board is in place with representation from safeguarding partners. A centralised Adult Safeguarding Team located within the Safeguarding Hub ensures competency of staff, information sharing and consistency in decision making. The Adult Safeguarding Team are aligned with the Area Teams and 3 Conversations processes. Staff are assessed against WSAB safeguarding competency framework. As part of the CQC assurance self-assessment (pending CQC inspection of local authority adult social care services as of April 2023) the effectiveness of both the Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Adults Board will be reviewed, and outcomes of safeguarding process and practice will be assessed against the statutory safeguarding framework and how effectively we have embedded the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' approach</p>

2022/23 New Governance Considerations	Identified Actions
<p>Non-compliance with Corporate Policies and Procedures across all disciplines.</p>	<p>A review of the Council's Constitution and supporting policies and procedures will be performed to ensure that responsibility and accountability is defined and the consequences for non-compliance across Officers and Members are clearly communicated and that action is taken where instances of non-compliance are identified.</p>

Issues identified for 2023/24

A number of the issues and corresponding action plans noted above will continue to be the key focus for the County Council's leadership in 2023/24:

- Financial Management & Resilience: ensuring that financial monitoring is supported by a robust and realistic budget and effective and timely in-year monitoring of performance against budget and delivery of agreed savings plans.
- An assurance gap analysis of decision making, including boards and roles of directors to help drive a constitutional refresh to support and strengthen effective business decision making. This will include schemes of delegation and contract procedure rules.
- Strengthen the Council's performance framework, including service plans linked to performance and medium-term financial plans.
- Further enhance the working between Officers and Members, including Officer Register of Interests.
- Focus on core competency training and development for all employees, in particular HR, finance, decision making and performance management.

Certification

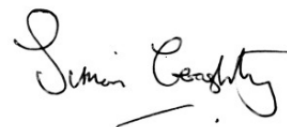
To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements, as defined above have been effective. We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation during the year and as part of our next annual review and through the County Council's Chief Officer Group, as well as the Audit & Governance Committee.



Paul Robinson

Chief Executive

Date: 15 December 2023



Simon Geraghty

Leader of the County Council

Date: 15 December 2023



Worcestershire County Council Statement of Accounts 2022/23

Introduction to the Statutory Accounts

The Statutory Accounts presents Worcestershire County Council's (the County Council) financial position in line with statutory reporting requirements. The accounts are prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 (the Code) and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended). The main objective of the Code is to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the County Council, including information about financial position, performance, the results of stewardship of management and any risks and uncertainties.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the accounting costs in year of providing services by the County Council. This is prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis note reconciles the position between taxation related expenditure and accounting related transactions. The surplus or deficit on the provision of services shows the true economic cost of providing the County Council's services.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This shows the movement on the different reserves held, analysed into usable and unusable reserves. The net increase / decrease before transfers to / from earmarked reserves shows the statutory General Fund balance before any discretionary transfers are undertaken.

Balance Sheet

This shows the value of the assets and liabilities of the County Council, with the net assets matched by the reserves held. Reserves are categorised as usable, i.e. those the County Council can use to provide services, and unusable, i.e. those which cannot be used to provide services.

Cash Flow Statement

This shows the change in cash and cash equivalents of the County Council, and classifies the cash as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the County Council are funded by way of taxation, grant income and fees and charges.

Notes to the Accounts

These give further detail in support of the information provided in the main accounts. Notes are only provided where the amounts involved are material. Materiality is determined by the nature or magnitude of the disclosure and the potential for the user of the accounts being influenced by any omission. The notes include the relevant accounting policies which explain the basis for the figures included in the accounts and details of relevant estimates and judgements. Any estimations which are likely to lead to a material adjustment next year in the 2022/23 accounts are evaluated and detailed in the notes.

Group Accounts

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

- Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement;
- Group Movement in Reserves Statement;
- Group Balance Sheet;
- Group Cash Flow Statement; and
- Notes to the Group Accounts.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

2021/22 Expenditure	2021/22 Income	2021/22 Net		2022/23 Expenditure	2022/23 Income	2022/23 Net	Note
£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m	
Service Expenditure Analysis							2,3,4,5,6.1
345.9	(205.4)	140.5	People	342.9	(194.1)	148.8	
383.1	(263.4)	119.7	Children's Services	468.9	(317.5)	151.4	
114.7	(30.3)	84.4	Economy & Infrastructure	114.8	(35.1)	79.7	
36.3	(8.7)	27.6	Commercial & Change	43.8	(0.2)	43.5	
36.2	(6.4)	29.8	Finance, HR & Chief Executive	46.5	(24.5)	22.0	
916.2	(514.2)	402.0	Net Cost of Services	1,016.9	(571.5)	445.5	
2.0	(0.4)	1.6	Other operating expenditure	5.4	(2.1)	3.3	8
86.5	(30.2)	56.3	Financing, investment income & expenditure	81.9	(40.6)	41.4	9
0.3	(431.5)	(431.2)	Taxation & non-specific grant income and expenditure	0.3	(439.3)	(439.0)	10
1,005.0	(976.3)	28.7	(Surplus) / deficit on the provision of services	1,104.5	(1,053.4)	51.0	
Other comprehensive income and expenditure:							
		(47.6)	(Surplus) on revaluation of property, plant & equipment			(92.3)	14.3
		4.9	Downward revaluations on non-current assets charged to Revaluation Reserve			33.4	14.3
		(59.1)	Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability/(asset)			(500.1)	
		(101.8)	Total other comprehensive income and expenditure			(559.0)	
		(73.1)	Total comprehensive income and expenditure (surplus) / deficit			(508.0)	

Movement in Reserves Statement 2022/23

	General Fund (Non-Earmarked) Balance	General Fund (Earmarked) Reserves	General Fund Total	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2022	14.3	157.7	172.0	2.7	63.5	238.3	(37.1)	201.2
Movement in reserves during 2022/23:								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(51.0)	0.0	(51.0)	0.0	0.0	(51.0)	559.0	508.08
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 11)	28.5	9.1	37.6	(2.7)	13.6	48.5	(48.5)	0.0
Transfer to/(from) earmarked reserves	22.5	(22.5)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase / (decrease) in 2022/23	0.0	(13.4)	(13.4)	(2.7)	13.6	(2.5)	510.5	508.0
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward	14.3	144.2	158.6	0.0	77.1	235.7	473.4	709.1
Note Reference		12				12	13	

Movement in Reserves Statement 2021/22 Comparison

	General Fund (Non-Earmarked) Balance	General Fund (Earmarked) Reserves	General Fund Total	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2021	13.0	137.9	150.9	2.7	71.3	224.9	(96.8)	128.1
Movement in reserves during 2021/22:								
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(28.7)	0.0	(28.7)	0.0	0.0	(28.7)	101.8	73.1
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 11)	44.9	4.9	49.8	0.0	(7.7)	42.1	(42.1)	0.0
Transfer to/(from) earmarked reserves	(14.9)	14.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase / (decrease) in 2021/22	1.3	19.8	21.1	0.0	(7.7)	13.4	59.7	73.1
Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward	14.3	157.7	172.0	2.7	63.5	238.3	(37.1)	201.2
Note Reference		12.1				12	13	

Balance Sheet

31 March 2022		31 March 2023		31 March 2022		31 March 2023	
£m		£m	Note	£m		£m	Note
1,146.1	Property, plant and equipment	1,226.0	14,15	(1.4)	Long-term provisions	(1.5)	
1.7	Heritage assets	1.7		(409.9)	Long-term borrowing	(416.4)	16
4.5	Intangible assets	0.0		(586.7)	Other long-term liabilities	(146.4)	21
3.0	Long-term investments	1.9	16,17	(26.2)	Grants receipts in advance	(30.4)	22
104.2	Long-term debtors	102.4	18	(1,024.2)	Long-term liabilities	(594.8)	
1,259.5	Long term assets	1,332.1		201.2	Net assets	709.1	
5.4	Non-Operational Assets	8.9	14.8				
7.9	Short-term investments	0.3	29		Financed by:		
1.4	Inventories	1.7		238.3	Usable reserves	235.7	12
85.9	Short-term debtors	106.5	18	(37.1)	Unusable reserves	473.4	13
42.8	Cash and Cash Equivalents	71.9	19	201.2	Total reserves	709.1	
143.4	Current assets	189.3					
(78.2)	Short-term borrowing	(119.1)					
(91.1)	Short-term creditors	(81.3)	20				
0.0	Cash and Cash Equivalents	(16.8)	19				
(8.2)	Short-term grants receipts in advance	(0.2)	22				
(177.5)	Current liabilities	(217.5)					

Cash Flow Statement

2021/22		2022/23	
£m		£m	Note
(28.7)	Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	(51.0)	
107.4	Adjust net (surplus)/deficit for non-cash movements	97.7	
(56.4)	Adjust for items included in the net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	(68.1)	
22.3	Net cash flows from operating activities	(21.5)	23.1
(1.9)	Net cash flows from investing activities	(2.8)	23.2
(44.9)	Net cash flows from financing activities	36.6	23.3
(24.5)	Net increase/(decrease) in cash or cash equivalents	12.3	
	Cash and cash equivalents		19
67.3	Balance at 1 April	42.8	
42.8	Balance at 31 March	55.1	
(24.5)	Movement in cash and cash equivalents increase / (decrease)	12.3	

Notes to the Financial Statements

These comprise further information about material items, a summary of significant accounting policies, detail of entries in the prime Statements and other explanatory information and disclosures.

- | | |
|--|--|
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1. General accounting policies

The Statement of Accounts summarises the County Council's transactions for the 2022/23 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2023. The County Council is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in accordance the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The Accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis, under the assumption that the Council will continue in existence for the foreseeable future. There is no material uncertainty in respect of this assessment of going concern.

Local authority school assets, liabilities, reserves and cash flows are recognised in the County Council's financial statements. Maintained schools comprise: Community, Voluntary Aided, Voluntary Controlled and Trust schools. Academies and Free schools are not maintained by the County Council and are not included in the consolidation.

The County Council has determined, in accordance with accounting standards and the Code of Practice on group accounts and consolidation, all maintained schools in the Worcestershire area are now considered to be separate entities controlled by the County Council. Rather than produce group accounts the revenue costs and associated balances of all maintained schools, such as accruals, provisions and cash balances, are included in the County Council's financial statements.

Consolidation of other accounts held by schools such as school funds and devolved capital accounts were reviewed and judged to be immaterial and are not recognised on the County Council's Balance Sheet. The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures based on assumptions made by the County Council. Estimates are made considering historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. Actual results may potentially be different from the assumptions and estimates used by the County Council and relevant notes include an assessment of the potential material impact of any changes in estimates which lead to significant risk of material adjustment in 2022/23.

2. Expenditure and funding analysis

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis (EFA) demonstrates how the funding available to the County Council for the year has been applied in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the County Council. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision-making purposes between the County Council's services. Income and expenditure are presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Service analysis within the accounts is based on the County Council's operational directorates.

2022/23	Net expenditure for internal reporting	Adjustments to arrive at Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund Balance	Net Expenditure chargeable to General Fund Balances	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the CI&ES
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
People	168.5	(30.8)	137.7	11.1	148.8
Children's Services	120.5	(14.5)	106.1	45.4	151.4
Economy & Infrastructure	59.6	(12.8)	46.8	33.0	79.7
Commercial & Change	8.1	20.5	28.6	14.9	43.5
Finance, HR & Chief Executive	23.8	19.4	43.1	(21.2)	22.0
Net Cost of Services	380.5	(18.3)	362.2	83.2	445.5
Other Income and Expenditure	(373.2)	24.4	(348.8)	(45.7)	(394.5)
Net (Surplus)/deficit	7.3	6.1	13.4	37.5	51.0
Opening General Fund Balance			172.0		
Less Deficit on General Fund Balance in Year			(13.4)		
General Fund Balance			158.6		

2021/22	Net expenditure for internal reporting	Adjustments to arrive at Net Expenditure chargeable to the General Fund Balance	Net Expenditure chargeable to General Fund Balances	Adjustments between the Funding & Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the CI&ES
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
People	150.7	(13.9)	136.8	3.7	140.5
Children's Services	106.8	(5.7)	101.1	18.6	119.7
Economy & Infrastructure	55.0	(9.8)	45.2	39.2	84.4
Commercial & Change	6.7	7.2	13.9	13.7	27.6
Finance, HR & Chief Executive	35.0	(3.0)	32.0	(2.2)	29.8
Net Cost of Services	354.2	(25.2)	329.0	73.0	402.0
Other Income and Expenditure	(355.5)	5.4	(350.1)	(23.2)	(373.3)
Net (surplus)/deficit	(1.3)	(19.8)	(21.1)	49.8	28.7
Opening General Fund Balance			150.9		
Less Deficit on General Fund Balance in Year			21.1		
General Fund Balance			172.0		

In respect of the net revenue outturn, the County Council's 2022/23 General Fund budget and actual spend figures are in the table below:

	Original budget	Actual	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Total General Fund (a)	373.2	386.7	13.5
Funded by:			
Council tax	(301.3)	(301.3)	0.0
Revenue grants	(2.5)	(2.5)	0.0
Business rates retention scheme	(68.7)	(68.7)	0.0
Collection fund surplus	(2.9)	(2.9)	0.0
Contribution from earmarked reserves	2.2	2.2	0.0
Total funding (b)	(373.2)	(373.2)	0.0
Movement on General Fund (a) + (b)	0.0	13.4	13.4

More details about the County Council's revenue spending on services are given in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and subsequent notes.

3. Note to the expenditure and funding analysis

This note provides additional analysis of the adjustments between the funding and accounting basis column in note 2 (Expenditure and funding analysis) and details the movement from the General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts.

2022/23										
Adjustments from management reporting and General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement amounts	Capital adjustments not included in internal reporting	Pension adjustments not included in internal reporting	Other adjustments not included in internal reporting	Recharges and internal training included in internal reporting, removed for financial statements	Reserve movements included in internal reporting, removed for financial statements	Total adjustments to arrive at net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund Balance	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
People	0.0	1.2	(5.3)	(18.4)	(8.3)	(30.8)	1.1	10.0	0.0	11.1
Children's Services	0.0	1.6	(15.1)	(1.7)	0.7	(14.5)	18.6	17.2	9.6	45.4
Economy & Infrastructure	8.7	0.5	(20.6)	(6.8)	5.4	(12.8)	29.3	3.7	(0.1)	33.0
Commercial & Change	1.8	0.4	(7.0)	22.7	2.6	20.5	11.1	3.3	0.5	14.9
Finance, HR & Chief Executive	0.0	(3.7)	16.3	4.3	2.5	19.4	(25.0)	2.9	0.9	(21.2)
Net Cost of Services	10.5	0.0	(31.7)	0.0	2.9	(18.3)	35.2	37.1	10.9	83.2
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	0.0	0.0	31.7	0.0	(7.3)	24.4	(45.7)	0.0	0.0	(45.7)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and CI&ES Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	(4.4)	6.1	(10.5)	37.1	10.9	37.5

Adjustments for capital purposes adds in depreciation, impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the service lines. For other income and expenditure includes the statutory charges for capital financing and investment and capital grant adjustments.

Net change for the pensions adjustments represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the County Council as allowed by statute and the replacement with current and past service costs.

Other adjustments not included in internal reporting include the financial accounting adjustments for employee leave accrual and PFI adjustments and the reallocation of transactions above and below the net cost of services.

2021/22	Capital adjustments not included in internal reporting	Pension adjustments not included in internal reporting	Other adjustments not included in internal reporting	Recharges and internal training included in internal reporting, removed for financial statements	Reserve movements included in internal reporting, removed for financial statements	Total adjustments to arrive at net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund Balance	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
Adjustments from management reporting and General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement amounts	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
People	0.2	1.3	(8.8)	(8.6)	2.0	(13.9)	1.0	2.7	0.0	3.7
Children's Services	1.0	1.7	(6.4)	1.3	(3.3)	(5.7)	10.3	3.5	4.8	18.6
Economy & Infrastructure	0.0	0.5	(12.3)	(3.8)	5.8	(9.8)	38.1	1.1	0.0	39.2
Commercial & Change	(0.7)	0.5	(0.3)	7.3	0.4	7.2	12.7	1.0	0.0	13.7
Finance, HR & Chief Executive	5.9	(13.6)	(13.5)	3.8	14.4	(3.0)	(17.0)	10.3	4.5	(2.2)
Net Cost of Services	6.4	(9.6)	(41.3)	0.0	19.3	(25.2)	45.1	18.6	9.3	73.0
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	0.0	9.6	(4.2)	0.0	0.0	5.4	(23.2)	0.0	0.0	(23.2)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and CI&ES Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	6.4	0.0	(45.5)	0.0	19.3	(19.8)	21.9	18.6	9.3	49.8

4.Segmental reporting

The segments below represent the County Council's directorate structure which is used for internal reporting.

2022/23	People	Children's Services	Economy & Infrastructure	Commercial & Change	Finance, HR & Chief Executive	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Income for Fees and Charges	(80.2)	(14.1)	(28.1)	(7.0)	(9.4)	(138.8)
Depreciation and Impairment	1.5	5.2	36.1	17.1	0.0	59.9
Premises Costs	12.2	14.6	(9.2)	6.1	0.8	24.4
Transport Costs	2.8	0.3	2.9	0.0	2.3	8.4
Third Party Payments	273.0	65.4	65.2	0.0	0.5	404.2

2021/22	People	Children's Services	Economy & Infrastructure	Commercial & Change	Finance, HR & Chief Executive	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Income for Fees and Charges	(86.8)	(10.9)	(27.2)	(7.3)	(6.0)	(138.2)
Depreciation and Impairment	1.3	3.6	32.7	11.9	0.0	49.5
Premises Costs	12.7	14.1	(10.3)	5.5	1.1	23.1
Transport Costs	4.1	0.7	2.2	0.0	0.1	7.1
Third Party Payments	258.8	55.6	72.6	(0.7)	1.1	387.4

5. Expenditure and income analysed by nature

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

Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised at the point that the service is provided or is charged for. It is not considered that this would be materially different from recognising revenue from contracts with service recipients when, or as, the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in 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, subject to a de minimis of £5,000.

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

2021/22	Expenditure and Income analysed by nature	2022/23
£m		£m
237.4	Employee benefits expenses	271.2
630.2	Other service expenses	693.2
49.5	Depreciation amortisation and impairment	56.2
26.8	Loss on disposal of non-current assets	11.3
60.8	Interest payments	72.3
0.3	Precepts and levies	0.3
1,005.0	Total Expenditure	1,104.5
	Income	
(118.4)	Fees and charges and other service income	(138.8)
(346.9)	Income from council tax and business rates	(370.9)
(396.2)	Grants and contributions credited to services	(425.3)
(84.6)	Grants and contributions credited to taxation and non-specific grant income	(68.4)
(30.2)	Interest and Investment Income	(40.6)
0	Other	(9.4)
(976.3)	Total Income	(1,053.5)
28.7	Net Deficit/(Surplus) on Provision of Services	51.0

*

6. Grant and contribution income

Government grants, third-party contributions, and donations are recognised as due to the County Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the County Council is acting as principal (as opposed to agent)
- the County Council will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement once the conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied. Where the conditions have not been satisfied they are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors or receipts in advance and credited to the relevant service line once the conditions are met.

6.1 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - credited to services

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
	People Services	
18.5	Improved Better Care Fund	19.0
16.2	Better Care Fund (contribution)	15.9
6.2	Disabled Facilities Grant	6.2
2.8	Independent Living Fund	2.8
12.1	Social Care Grant – Adults' Elements	15.6
0.2	Care Act	0.2
0.0	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	2.0
0.0	Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care	1.6
0.0	Shared Care Record Program Grant	0.6
0.1	Other Adult Services	0.5
30.4	Public Health	31.2
2.0	Other Public Health	2.5
5.3	Libraries & Community	12.1

2021/22		2022/23
4.7	Bromsgrove Schools PFI Grant	4.7
0.0	Homes for Ukraine - Education and Childcare Funding	2.1
3.5	Covid-19 Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	0.6
6.0	Covid-19 Hospital Discharge (CCG) Contribution	0.0
0.2	Covid-19 Test and Trace Service Support Grant	0.0
15.9	Covid-19 Contain Outbreak Management Fund	0.0
0.7	Covid-19 Testing Grants	0.0
2.4	Covid-19 Winter Grant Scheme	0.0
4.6	Covid-19 Workforce Support Grant	0.0
3.9	Covid-19 Housing Support Grant	7.9
1.5	Covid-19 Holiday Activities & Food Programme	1.7
137.2	Total People Services	127.2
Children's Services		
218.8	Dedicated Schools Grant	234.9
8.0	Pupil Premium	8.6
4.1	Other Education & Skills	3.9
3.4	Universal Free School Meals	3.6
1.4	Post 16 Learning Skills Council	1.9
1.6	Other Children's Social Care	2.3
2.1	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children	3.8
1.3	Youth Grants	1.6
0.5	Transport	0.6
0.0	Services Grant – Children's Element	3.0

2021/22		2022/23
3.6	Social Care Grant – Children’s Element	6.2
0.0	Supplementary Schools Grant	3.5
1.7	Covid-19 Grants for Schools	1.8
246.5	Total Children’s Services	275.7
	Economy & Infrastructure	
1.8	Waste Disposal PFI Grant	1.8
1.1	Transport	1.6
0.1	Environment / Winter Damage	0.1
2.1	Other	2.4
1.7	Community Renewal Fund	1.0
0.3	Covid-19 Bus Support Services Grant	0.0
7.1	Total Economy & Infrastructure	6.9
	Commercial & Change	
0.6	Other	0.1
0.6	Total Commercial & Change	0.1
	Finance, HR & Chief Executive	
1.5	New Homes Bonus	1.5
0.0	Homes for Ukraine Grant – Thank you payments & tariff	11.4
0.0	Services Grant – Chief Executive Element	1.4
0.8	Other	0.9
0.5	Covid-19 Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Grant	0.0
0.4	Covid-19 Home to School Transport Grant	0.0

2021/22		2022/23
0.6	Covid-19 Omicron	0.0
1.0	Covid-19 Practical Support for those self-isolating	0.2
4.8	Total Finance, HR & Chief Executive	15.4
396.2	Total Credited to Services	425.3

6.2 Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – credited to taxation and non-specific grant income

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
Credited to taxation and non-specific grant income:	
8.6 Business Rate Reliefs – S31 Grant	10.4
0.0 Revenue Support Grant	0.0
0.0 Levy Account Surplus Grant	0.5
4.6 Covid-19 Local Council Tax Support Grant	0.0
0.4 Covid-19 75% Local Tax Income Guarantee – Council Tax	0.0
20.8 Covid-19 LA Support Grant	0.0
0.0 Covid-19 Sales, Fees and Charges Support Grant	0.6
34.4 Total non ring-fenced Government grants	11.5

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
Capital grants	
18.7 Structural maintenance	22.4
2.4 Transport	2.4
4.9 Basic Needs	8.1
4.7 LA Schools Condition Allocation	6.3
6.0 Worcestershire Local Growth Fund	0.0
1.8 European Regional Development Fund	1.8
0.1 Broadband Project	0.0

2021/22		2022/23
4.2	Other Capital Grants	8.6
42.8	Total Capital Grants	49.6
7.4	Other contributions	7.3
50.2	Total Capital Grants and Contributions	56.9
84.6	Total credited to taxation and non-specific grant income	68.4

6.3 Dedicated Schools Grant

The County Council's expenditure on schools is primarily funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) from the Department for Education (DfE). An element of the DSG is recouped by the DfE to fund academy schools in the county. DSG is ringfenced and can only be applied to meet expenditure properly included in the schools budget, including county-wide education services and Individual Schools Budget.

The overall DSG deficit is £20.3 million and will be carried forward against future DSG income. Within the central expenditure, High Needs expenditure overspent by £11.08 million in 2022/23 (an increase from the £6.3 million High Needs overspend in 2021/22).

	Central Expenditure	Individual Schools Budget	Total
	£m	£m	£m
Final DSG for 2022/23 before academy and high needs recoupment	98.3	402.0	500.3
Academy and high needs recoupment 2022/23	0.0	(265.8)	(265.8)
Total DSG after High Needs and Academy Recoupment 2022/23	98.3	136.2	234.5
Plus: brought-forward from 2021/22	0.0	0.0	0.0
Less: carry-forward to 2023/24 agreed in advance	0.0	0.0	0.0
In-year adjustments	0.4	0.0	0.4
Final budgeted distribution for 2022/23	98.7	136.2	234.9
Actual Central Expenditure	107.7	0.0	107.7
Actual ISB deployed to Schools	0.0	136.2	136.2
In year carry forward to 2023/24	(9.0)	0.0	(9.0)
DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2021/22			(11.3)
Addition to DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2022/23			(9.0)
Total DSG unusable reserve at the end of 2022/23			(20.3)

7. Section 75 framework partnership agreements

The County Council has a Section 75 joint agreement relating to the commissioning of health and social care services in Worcestershire, which includes The Better Care Fund, between the County Council and NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB). The agreement is classified as a Joint Operation, as there is joint control, and the activity is primarily to provide services to the parties within their boundaries. Within the Section 75 agreement there are budgets primarily managed by the Integrated Care Board, budgets primarily managed by the County Council, pooled budgets (jointly controlled) and aligned budgets. Where services are primarily managed by the County Council the income and expenditure are reflected within the Net Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This also includes the County Council's proportion of jointly controlled pooled budgets. Where services are hosted by the County Council, but primarily managed by the Integrated Care Board, the income and expenditure are not reflected in the County Council's accounts.

Partnership expenditure (outturn) has been split to show what is primarily managed by the Integrated Care Board and the County Council for 2022/23. Included in the County Council contribution is £34.9 million Better Care Fund.

Partnership income	Partnership expenditure	Net partnership expenditure	ICB managed	WCC contribution		Partnership income	Partnership expenditure	Net partnership expenditure	ICB managed	WCC contribution
2021/22 £m	2021/22 £m	2021/22 £m	2021/22 £m	2021/22 £m		2022/23 £m	2022/23 £m	2022/23 £m	2022/23 £m	2022/23 £m
(121.2)	121.2	0.0	56.4	64.8	Consolidated Adult Social Care Services	(121.8)	125.3	3.5	47.4	77.9
(22.1)	22.1	0.0	10.1	12.0	Consolidated Children's and Education Services	(23.9)	23.9	0.0	10.3	13.6
(143.3)	143.3	(0.0)	66.5	76.8		(145.7)	149.2	3.5	57.7	91.5

The County Council had outstanding balances with the Integrated Care Board at 31 March 2023 of £2.1 million debtors (2021/22 £1.2 million) and £0.2 million creditors (2021/22 £0.2 million).

8. Other operating expenditure

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
0.4	Admin Expenses Pension	0.5
1.2	Loss on disposal of non-current assets	2.7
1.6		3.3

The loss on disposal relates to the removal of assets from the Balance Sheet where the County Council does not have control of the use of the asset.

9. Financing and investment income and expenditure

Financing and investment income and expenditure includes interest receivable and payable on the County Council's investment portfolio, the interest element of the pension fund liability and losses on the transfer of schools to other bodies at nil consideration.

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
28.7	Interest payable and similar charges	28.6
9.3	Net interest of the net defined pension liability	12.2
25.6	Loss on transfer of schools to other bodies (e.g. academies)	8.6
0.0	(Increase)/Impairment in value of long-term investments	1.1
(7.3)	Interest receivable and similar income	(9.1)
56.3		41.4

10. Taxation and non-specific grants

The Worcestershire district councils, in their role as billing authorities, act as agents for the County Council, the precepting authority, collecting council tax on our behalf, with transactions and balances allocated between the districts and the County Council. The Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement includes the County Council's proportion of the net surplus or deficit and the Balance Sheet includes amounts to reflect the County Council's share of council tax debtors, overpayments and council tax creditors and monies owed or paid in advance in relation to payments from the district councils.

The district councils collect business rate income on behalf of the County Council as well as amounts to be paid over to other precepting bodies and Central Government. The County Council maintains balances for National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) arrears, impairment allowances, prepayments and overpayments in its underlying accounting records. NNDR transactions and balances are allocated between the County Council, the District Councils and Central Government.

Government grants and third-party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the County Council when there is reasonable assurance that:

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

Amounts recognised as due are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contributions have been satisfied. Grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors or receipts in advance. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line or to Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income (non ring-fenced revenue grants and capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2021/22	Taxation and non-specific grants	2022/23
£m		£m
(287.2)	Council tax income	(302.4)
(59.7)	Non-domestic rates	(68.5)
(34.4)	Non-ring-fenced government grants	(11.5)
(50.2)	Capital grants and contributions	(56.9)
0.3	Environment Agency	0.3
(431.2)		(439.0)

11. Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulation

This note consolidates the adjustments required through the County Council's reserves to convert the surplus or deficit on the CIES to the movement on the General Fund Balance.

2022/23	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Movement in
	General Fund (Non-earmarked balances)	General Fund (Earmarked reserves)	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	Unusable Reserves
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Depreciation of non-current assets	53.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	(53.5)
Amortisation of intangible assets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Capital grants and contributions applied	(56.9)	0.0	0.0	0.0	56.9
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	15.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	(15.9)
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	14.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	(14.6)
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(25.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	(11.9)	0.1	0.0	0.0	11.7
Revaluation to Capital Adjustment Account	2.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	(2.5)
Capital Grants and Contributions unapplied credited to the CI&ES	0.0	0.0	0.0	56.9	(56.9)
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to Capital Adjustment Account	0.0	0.0	0.0	(43.3)	43.3
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CI&E Statement	(3.4)	0.0	8.5	0.0	(5.1)
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0.0	0.0	(11.2)	0.0	11.2
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CI&E Statement	67.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(67.0)

2022/23	Usable Reserves General Fund (Non-earmarked balances)	Usable Reserves General Fund (Earmarked reserves)	Usable Reserves Capital Receipts Reserve	Usable Reserves Capital Grants Unapplied	Movement in Unusable Reserves
Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(29.9)	0.0	0.0	0.0	29.9
Amount by which council tax income credited to the CI&E Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1.9)
Amount by which National Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CI&E Statement is different from Non-Domestic Rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(0.6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CI&E Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.6)
Transfer of in-year Schools balance deficit to Unusable Reserve	0.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	(9.0)
Total Adjustments	28.5	9.1	(2.7)	13.6	(48.5)

2021/22	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Usable Reserves	Movement in Unusable Reserves
	General Fund (Non-earmarked balances)	General Fund (Earmarked reserves)	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Depreciation of non-current assets	50.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	(50.2)
Amortisation of intangible assets	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1.5)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(50.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.2
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	13.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(13.0)
Net loss on disposal of non-current assets	28.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	(28.4)
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(16.9)	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.9
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	(0.6)	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.5
Revaluation to Capital Adjustment Account	(2.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Capital Grants and Contributions unapplied to the CI&ES	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.2	(50.2)
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to Capital Adjustment Account	0.0	0.0	0.0	(57.9)	57.9
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CI&E Statement	(1.5)	0.0	6.2	0.0	(4.7)
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0.0	0.0	(6.2)	0.0	6.2
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CI&E Statement	46.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	(46.6)
Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(28.0)	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.0

2021/22	Usable Reserves General Fund (Non-earmarked balances)	Usable Reserves General Fund (Earmarked reserves)	Usable Reserves Capital Receipts Reserve	Usable Reserves Capital Grants Unapplied	Movement in Unusable Reserves
Amount by which council tax income credited to the CI&E Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(3.6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.6
Amount by which National Non-Domestic Rates income credited to the CI&E Statement is different from Non-Domestic Rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	11.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(11.0)
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the CI&E Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(2.9)	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.9
Transfer to in year Schools balance deficit to unusable reserve	0.0	4.8	0.0	0.0	(4.8)
Total Adjustments	44.9	4.9	0.0	(7.7)	(42.1)

12. Usable Reserves

The County Council sets aside specific amounts that can be used 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 may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). Where expenditure is to be financed from a reserve, the expenditure is charged to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and an amount is then transferred from the reserve to the General Fund Balance via an entry in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	Opening Balance 01/04/22	Contributions From	To	Closing Balance 31/03/23
	£m	£m	£m	£m
General fund	14.3	0.0	0.0	14.3
Earmarked specific reserves	157.7	(115.6)	102.2	144.2
Capital receipts reserve	2.7	(11.2)	8.5	0.0
Capital grants unapplied	63.6	(43.3)	56.9	77.2
Total Usable Reserves	238.3	(170.1)	167.6	235.8

12.1 Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

The County Council sets aside amounts from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans to support specific areas of our corporate plan priorities. These amounts are then drawn down as required. Our earmarked reserves position and plans are reviewed annually and plans for future use are approved by Cabinet and Council as part of the annual budget setting process.

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2023	Purpose of the reserve
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Open for Business					
Revolving Investment Fund	7.6	(7.8)	0.7	0.5	Investment in the local economy which delivers income to support future investment
Open for Business					
Local Authority Business Growth Initiative	5.2	(1.7)	9.3	12.8	Supporting measures to grow our local economy
Sub regional mineral plan	0.5	(0.1)	0.0	0.4	Residual Local Authority Business Growth Initiative funding
Growing Places reserve	0.4	(0.5)	2.2	2.1	Funds held to support the delivery of the sub regional mineral plan
Broadband Programme	1.9	(0.4)	0.0	1.5	Supporting growth in the local economy
Other	3.9	(1.2)	0.7	3.4	Reserves to support digital connectivity
Children & Families					
Safeguarding	2.5	(1.0)	0.7	2.2	Lower value reserves covering, for example, apprenticeships
Children & Families					
Home to School Transport Risk Reserve	1.9	(1.9)	2.0	2.0	Risk reserve maintained to support unexpected safeguarding costs that could arise through the contract with Worcestershire Children First.
	0.4	(0.4)	0.0	0.0	Risk reserve to support SEND student travel provision

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2023	Purpose of the reserve
Education and High Needs	2.4	0.0	0.0	2.4	Reserve maintained to cover general education and high needs block expenditure
High Needs Transformation Reserve	0.0	(6.0)	11.0	5.0	Reserve set aside for work to tackle pressures in High Needs funding
Children's Revenue Grants	8.5	(4.8)	2.2	5.9	Grants held by the service for draw down as required
The Environment					
Regeneration and Infrastructure	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.5	Supporting measures to grow our local economy
Revenue grants unapplied	1.8	(1.4)	10.4	10.8	Grants held by the service for draw down as required
Waste Transformation Reserve	1.0	(1.0)	0.0	0.0	Reserve set aside to support waste contract and transformation services
Infrastructure Project Support	2.0	(1.0)	0.0	1.0	Supporting new infrastructure projects
Other	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.2	Lower value reserves

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2023	Purpose of the reserve
Health and Wellbeing					
Public Health	9.7	(0.9)	0.57	9.3	Balances from the Ring-fenced Public Health Grant held to support the service against future changes in funding
Revenue grants unapplied	8.3	(9.1)	10.7	9.9	Grants held by the service for draw down as required
Unused grants carried forward	17.6	(15.4)	0.8	3.0	Grants held by the service for draw down as required
Efficient Council					
Transformation / Change Reserve	3.3	(5.7)	4.4	2.0	Financing invest-to-save schemes to change the shape and design of the County Council
Communities Support Reserve	0.0	(0.2)	4.5	4.3	Grants funding the settlement of Afghan, Syrian and Ukraine visitors to Worcestershire
Digital Reserve	3.3	(2.9)	0.0	0.4	Supporting the development of digitally enabled operations as part of the organisational review
Elections	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	Annual amounts set aside to provide County Council elections, which happen every 4 years
Property Management	1.0	(0.6)	0.0	0.4	Funding for property-related expenditure
Insurance	9.1	(2.1)	1.4	8.4	Covering claims below the County Council's insurance policy excess

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2023	Purpose of the reserve
Business Rates Pool	26.2	(19.9)	3.6	9.9	To enable smoothing of the impact of changes to the Business Rates retention across the Pool and changes in national funding levels, including rate appeal losses and any fall in rates collected
Coroners Major Inquests	0.5	(0.1)	0.0	0.4	Amounts set aside to cover significant inquest costs
Councillors Divisional Fund	1.2	(0.5)	0.5	1.2	Funds to support Councillors' local discretionary spend
Fleet Surplus Reserve	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	Fleet support
Future Capital Investment	8.0	(9.9)	6.8	4.9	Monies set aside to fund future planned capital expenditure
Financial Services Reserve	1.6	0.0	0.0	1.6	Funding to support the employers' pension contributions
Finance and Whole Council Revenue Grants	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	Grants held by the service for draw down as required
Smarter Ways of Working	2.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	Monies set aside to enable new ways of working
Financial Risk Reserve	11.8	(5.4)	23.1	29.5	Amount set aside to support financial risk
Other reserves (not available for core spend)					
Schools balances held under delegation	5.4	(5.4)	4.5	4.5	Balances held for individual maintained schools

	Balance at 31 March 2022	Transfers out	Transfers in	Balance at 31 March 2023	Purpose of the reserve
Schools ICT PFI Reserve	0.1	(0.1)	0.1	0.0	PFI grant funding supporting the ongoing delivery of the programme
Bromsgrove High School PFI Advance	1.4	(0.1)	0.0	1.4	PFI grant funding supporting the ongoing delivery of the programme
Waste Contract PFI Grant	6.3	(8.1)	1.8	0.0	To fund pressures relating to the increase on household waste disposal costs as the number of households in the County increases
Total	157.7	(115.6)	102.2	144.3	

13. Unusable Reserves

These reserves are set aside but cannot be used to provide services, including those that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets were sold; and those that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

	Opening Balance 01/04/22	Contributions From	Contributions To	Closing Balance 31/03/23	Purpose of the reserve
	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Pensions reserve	(458.0)	(120.8)	577.1	1.7	Movement in remeasurement of the net defined liability, adjusted under IFRIC 14.
Accumulated absences adjustment account	(5.6)	(6.3)	5.6	(6.3)	Balances relating to the accumulated holiday due but not taken in year
Financial instruments adjustment account	(1.0)	0.0	0.0	(1.0)	Valuation gains and losses on financial instruments carried at fair value
Capital adjustment account	217.0	(86.0)	92.6	223.6	An accounting mechanism used to reconcile the different rates at which assets are depreciated
Revaluation reserve	228.6	(47.7)	99.4	280.4	Unrealised gains and losses arising from revaluations of long-term assets
Collection fund adjustment accounts	(6.8)	(5.7)	11.2	(1.2)	Surplus or deficit arising from agency arrangements
DSG Adjustment Account	(11.3)	(9.0)	0.0	(20.3)	Accumulated DSG deficit
Total Unusable Reserves	(37.1)	(275.5)	785.9	473.5	

14. Property, Plant and Equipment

Physical assets that support the delivery of our services and have a life of more than one financial year, are classified as Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE).

Recognition

Expenditure on PPE is capitalised on an accrual basis in the accounts, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits (including service potential) associated with the item will flow to the Authority, that the cost of the item can be measured reliably, and that it exceeds the Authority's de minimis threshold. This may include 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 the Authority. The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs.

Expenditure which is maintenance only in which case it is charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when it is incurred. The County Council applies a de minimis level of £5,000 for the capitalisation of expenditure on Property, Plant and Equipment. Items of expenditure below this de minimis level are charged to the relevant service within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the reporting period it is incurred. There is no de minimis level for capitalisation for Schools.

Purchased assets are initially measured at cost. Non-purchased assets (including donated assets) are measured at fair value, or at the carrying amount where there is no commercial substance (e.g. via exchange). The detailed bases for measuring assets are given below:

- Land and buildings – Current value based on existing use for operational assets where there is an active market or depreciated replacement cost for assets of a more specialist nature
- Vehicles, plant and equipment - Current value based on existing use for operational assets where there is an active market or depreciated replacement cost for assets of a more specialist nature
- Infrastructure – Depreciated historical cost
- Community assets – Depreciated historical cost
- Assets under construction – Historical cost

Capital expenditure that does not result in the creation of a long-term asset (Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute, known as REFCUS) is charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Where the cost of this expenditure is met 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 so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

Depreciation is provided for on PPE assets over their useful lives, with major components depreciated separately. Assets without a determinable finite useful life (e.g. freehold land and certain Community Assets) or that are not yet available for use (e.g. assets under construction) are not depreciated. The calculation is on a straight-line basis over the remaining useful life of the assets as estimated by the valuer. Newly acquired assets are depreciated from the mid-point of the year. Vehicles are depreciated over the life of the asset. Equipment is generally depreciated over a 5-year life, with IT equipment depreciated over 3 years.

Infrastructure Assets

Accounts are prepared to reflect the December 2022 amendment to Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) regulations 2003. The gross historical cost and accumulated depreciation for Infrastructure Assets has not been separately reported; instead, the net book value and movement in the year has been disclosed with total Property, Plant & Equipment balances reconciled to the Balance Sheet total. Further explanation of the Council's accounting policy in respect of Highways Network Infrastructure Assets is noted below.

14.1 Movements

2022/23

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment^	PFI Assets included in PPE
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2022	500.8	183.8	0.3	4.0	107.9	796.8	200.2
Additions	4.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	24.3	28.8	0.2
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in Revaluation Reserve	30.7	3.9	4.3	0.0	0.0	38.9	12.2
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in the Surplus on the Provision of Services	(2.2)	0.0	(0.1)	0.1	0.0	(2.2)	0.0
Derecognition - disposals	(9.0)	0.0	0.0	(0.2)	0.0	(9.2)	0.0
Derecognition - other	(15.0)	(63.9)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(78.9)	0.0
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	(5.1)	0.0	0.0	(0.2)	0.0	(5.3)	0.0
Assets reclassified to other categories	(4.7)	0.0	5.0	(1.1)	0.0	(0.9)	0.0
Other movements in cost or valuation	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	(81.8)	(79.7)	0.0
At 31 March 2023	501.7	123.9	9.5	2.6	50.5	688.2	212.6

^Total Property, Plant & Equipment excluding Infrastructure Assets

2022/23

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment^	PFI Assets included in PPE
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Accumulated depreciation and impairment							
At 1 April 2022	(28.6)	(76.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(104.8)	(13.3)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(4.6)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(4.6)	0.0
Depreciation charge	(4.2)	(9.2)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(13.5)	(6.3)
Derecognition - disposals	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0
Derecognition - other	14.6	63.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	78.5	0.0
Assets reclassified to other categories	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.9	0.0
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	14.5	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	19.8	6.3
At 31 March 2023	(6.0)	(16.3)	0.0	(0.0)	0.0	(22.3)	(13.3)
Net book value							
At 31 March 2023	495.7	107.6	9.5	2.6	50.5	665.9	199.3
At 31 March 2022	472.2	107.6	0.3	4.0	107.9	692.0	186.9

^Total Property, Plant & Equipment excluding Infrastructure Assets

Infrastructure Assets	£m
Opening Net book value at 1 April 2022	454.1
Additions	62.1
Other movements in cost or valuation	79.8
Depreciation charge	(35.9)
Closing Net book value at 31 March 2023	560.1

Reconciliation to Balance Sheet	£m
Net book value of PPE excluding Infrastructure Assets	682.5
Net book value of Infrastructure Asset	560.1
Total Net book value of PPE at 31 March 2023	1,242.6

Highways Network Infrastructure Assets

Highways network 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.

Infrastructure Assets - 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.

Infrastructure Assets - Measurement

Highways network 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.

Infrastructure Assets - Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for 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. Annual depreciation is the depreciation amount allocated each year. Useful lives of the various parts of the highways network are assessed using industry standards where applicable.

Infrastructure Assets - 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 (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.

Where a part of the network is replaced, an adaptation provided in a separate update to the Code assumes that, from the introduction of the IFRS based Code, when parts of an asset are replaced or restored, the carrying amount of the derecognised part will be zero because parts of infrastructure assets are rarely replaced before the part has been fully consumed.

2021/22

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment^	PFI Assets included in PPE
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2021	496.8	173.8	0.3	3.9	87.8	762.6	193.8
Additions	2.5	1.2	0.0	0.2	42.8	46.7	
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in Revaluation Reserve	27.1	6.0	0.0	(0.7)	0.0	32.4	10.2
Revaluation increases / (decreases) recognised in the Surplus on the Provision of Services	(0.4)	3.1	0.0	0.8	0.0	3.5	3.0
Derecognition - disposals	(26.3)	(0.5)	0.0	(0.2)	0.0	(27.0)	(6.9)
Derecognition - other	(1.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1.2)	0.0
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1.3)	0.0	(1.3)	0.0
Assets reclassified to other categories	(1.3)	0.0	0.0	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other movements in cost or valuation	3.6	0.2	0.0	0.0	(22.7)	(18.9)	0.1
At 31 March 2022	500.8	183.8	0.3	4.0	107.9	796.8	200.2

^Total Property, Plant & Equipment excluding Infrastructure Assets

2021/22

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment^	PFI Assets included in PPE
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Accumulated depreciation and impairment							
At 1 April 2021	(25.9)	(71.2)	0.0	(0.3)	0.0	(97.4)	(12.9)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	(3.4)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(3.4)	(0.2)
Depreciation charge	(4.3)	(10.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(14.4)	(5.4)
Derecognition - disposals	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.3	0.0	1.5	0.1
Derecognition - other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Assets reclassified to other categories	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other movements in depreciation and impairment	4.4	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9	5.2
At 31 March 2022	(28.6)	(76.2)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(104.8)	(13.3)
Net book value							
At 31 March 2022	472.2	107.6	0.3	4.0	107.9	692.0	186.9
At 31 March 2021	470.9	102.6	0.3	3.6	87.8	665.2	180.9

^Total Property, Plant & Equipment excluding Infrastructure Assets

Infrastructure Assets	£m
Opening Net book value at 1 April 2021	418.7
Additions	48.9
Other movements in cost or valuation	18.9
Depreciation charge	(32.4)
Closing Net book value at 31 March 2022	454.1

Reconciliation to Balance Sheet	£m
Net book value of PPE excluding Infrastructure Assets	692.0
Net book value of Infrastructure Asset	454.1
Total Net book value of PPE at 31 March 2022	1,146.1

14.2 Revaluations

Asset categories are revalued at least every five years on a rolling basis in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Valuation - Global Standards 2021 and UK National Supplement. This also ensures compliance with the CIPFA Local Authority Code of Practice, which states that valuations shall be carried out at intervals of no more than five years. Further revaluations are carried out where there have been material changes. Assets are revalued where completed capital expenditure represents more than 15% of the asset's opening net book value or is greater than £100,000. Non-property assets with short useful lives and/or low values are valued at depreciated historical cost and where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of the asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used. The County Council's valuations as at 31 March 2023 have been completed by:

Mark Aldis (Hons) MRICS RICS Registered Valuer IRRV
Wilks Head & Eve LLP
3rd Floor 55 New Oxford Street
London
WC1A 1BS

Where increases in value are identified, the carrying amount of the asset is increased with a corresponding entry for the gain in the Revaluation Reserve.

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

- the carrying amount of the asset writing down the balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve; or
- the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where there is no, or insufficient, balance in the Revaluation Reserve.

Upon revaluation (upwards or downwards) previously accumulated depreciation is eliminated and the asset shown at the newly revalued figure.

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 by:

- 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 subsequently reversed, 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.

Revaluations

	Land and Buildings	Vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	Infrastructure assets	Community Assets	Surplus Assets	Assets under Construction	Total Property, Plant & Equipment	PFI Assets included in PPE
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Net book value as at:								
31 March 2023	454.9	103.9	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	568.3	194.1
31 March 2022	6.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	6.6	0.0
31 March 2021	24.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	24.8	0.0
31 March 2020	6.2	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.0	7.0	5.2
31 March 2019	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	0.0	4.3	0.0
Held at cost	0.3	3.6	560.2	0.0	0.3	50.5	614.8	0.0
Total cost or valuation	495.7	107.6	560.2	9.5	2.6	50.5	1,226.0	199.3

14.3 Revaluation reserve

The revaluation reserve contains revaluation gains arising from increases in the value of PPE assets. The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

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

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
203.4	Opening Balance at 1 April	228.7
47.6	Revaluations upwards during the year	92.3
(3.4)	Depreciation of revaluations	(4.6)
(4.9)	Revaluations downwards during the year	(33.4)
(14.0)	Disposal of revaluations	(2.6)
228.7	Closing Balance at 31 March	280.4

14.4 Downward revaluations and disposal losses

Disposal proceeds are categorised as capital receipts and used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the County Council's underlying need to borrow (the Capital Financing Requirement). Gains or losses arising from the derecognition of an asset recognises the difference between the disposal proceeds and carrying value of the asset and is included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. There is then a credit to the Capital Receipts Reserve equal to the disposal proceeds and a debit to the Capital Adjustment Account for the carrying amount of the fixed asset disposal.

Schools converting to academy status are transferred for nil consideration.

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
8.2	Downward revaluations - other land and buildings	40.6
0.0	Downward revaluations – vehicles, plant, furniture & equipment	0.0
0.0	Downward revaluations - non-operational	0.4
26.9	Disposal losses – other land & buildings	11.3
35.1		52.3

14.5 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 additions to those assets under statutory provisions.

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
213.8	217.0
Capital Financing:	
6.2	11.2
57.9	43.3
0.5	11.7
0.0	0.0
64.6	66.2
2.1	(2.6)
(48.3)	(49.0)
12.3	14.7
4.6	10.3
(13.0)	(15.9)
(14.4)	(12.1)
(4.7)	(5.1)
217.0	223.5

14.6 Contractual commitments for property, plant and equipment

As at 31 March 2023 the County Council has a capital programme comprising capital projects amounting to £249.5 million (2021/22 £146.1 million) for 2023/24 and future years. As at 31 March 2023, the following contracts have been entered into for the construction or enhancement of PPE.

Major schemes where contracts have been let:	£m
Worcestershire A4440 Southern Link Road Dualling	5.0
Column Replacement Programme	4.0
Kepax Bridge	6.3
Sub-total	15.4
Committed schemes less than £2 million	16.3
Major schemes where contracts have been let:	31.7

14.7 School assets

The land and buildings utilised in the provision of education services across the County are recognised in accordance with the asset recognition tests as they are judged to apply to the different type of arrangements. The accounting treatment of the schools' land and buildings is as follows:

- Community schools – land and buildings are legally held by the County Council and are shown in full on the Balance Sheet. Valuation of these assets is at depreciated replacement cost to reflect the specialist nature of the assets;
- Voluntary Controlled schools and Voluntary Aided schools - land and buildings comprising the main body of the school are legally held by the other entities. In Worcestershire this is either the Church of England or Catholic Diocese who retain the control of the asset. The review determined that, for these assets, legal ownership in conjunction with the substantive rights to the asset and future economic benefits sit with the relevant church body. Accordingly, the County Council has not shown these assets on the Balance Sheet;
- Foundation schools/ Trust schools – land and buildings comprising the body of the school are legally held by other entities. The review determined that, for these assets, legal ownership in conjunction with the substantive rights to the asset and future economic benefits sit with the relevant church body. The County Council has use of the assets but is not able to exert substantive control over them or to receive any future economic benefits. Accordingly, the County Council has not shown these assets on the Balance Sheet;
- Assets provided by the County Council as part of its responsibility for running the schools are shown on the Balance Sheet (for example the funding of mobile classrooms);
- Academy schools (previously community schools) – are not maintained by the County Council. The land and buildings comprising the body of the schools are leased to the academy on a 125-year lease and are therefore not shown on the Balance Sheet. Where the County Council has retained the freehold of the land, the land is held on the County Council balance sheet at a nominal value to reflect its restricted use.

- Local authority schools which are due to convert to academy status post balance sheet date are treated as non-adjusting post balance sheet date events. Where a school transfers after 31 March 2022, details are given in the Events after the Balance Sheet date note at the end of the accounts.

	Number of schools at 31 March 2023	Value held on Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023	Status
		£m	
Community	48	236.7	On Balance Sheet
PFI	7	64.2	On Balance Sheet
Voluntary controlled	37	1.9	Off Balance Sheet
Voluntary aided	22	0.2	Off Balance Sheet
Academy	124	0.0	Off Balance Sheet
Foundation	1	0.0	Off Balance Sheet
Free School	4	0.0	Off Balance Sheet
	243	303.0	

14.8 Non-operational assets

Assets held for sale are actively marketed and, as such, are not depreciated.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
5.4 Assets Held for Sale		8.9

14.9 Capital expenditure and capital financing

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
787.0	Opening capital financing requirement	816.1
Capital investment:		
97.6	Property, plant and equipment	91.0
13.0	Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	15.9
110.6	Total Capital Investment	106.9
Sources of finance:		
(6.2)	Capital receipts	(11.2)
(57.9)	Government grants & other contributions	(43.3)
Sums set aside from revenue:		
(0.5)	Direct revenue contributions	(11.7)
(12.3)	MRP/loans fund principal (excluding PFI)	(14.7)
(4.6)	MRP/loans fund principal (PFI)	(10.3)
816.1	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	831.7
(155.0)	Long-term liabilities (PFI liabilities)	(144.8)
661.1	Underlying need to borrow	686.9

Explanation of movements in year		
29.1	Increase in underlying need to borrow	15.6
29.1	Increase / (decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	15.6

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is a charge to the General Fund and is shown in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, with a matching entry in the Capital Adjustment Account. It represents an annual contribution from revenue towards the provision for the reduction in our overall borrowing requirement. MRP is charged over a period that is broadly commensurate with the period over which the County Council receives benefit from the asset. The charge is calculated using the asset life method on an annuity basis for either:

- The average life of all assets at 31 March 2008 for pre-2008 debts, and
- The average asset class life for post-2008 debts, using schools, highways and other assets as our key categories.
- For PFI assets, the MRP charge is based on the useful economic life relevant to each asset.

The total MRP charge in 2022/23 is £25.0m represented by £14.7m charged in respect of non-PFI assets and £10.3m in respect of PFI assets.

15. Private finance initiatives (PFI)

Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts are agreements to receive services where the responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the County Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI schemes and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the County Council at the end of the contracts at no additional charge, the County Council carries the property, plant and equipment used under the contracts on its Balance Sheet. The original recognition of these property, plant and equipment at their fair value is balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the PFI provider. Property, plant and equipment recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the County Council.

The amounts payable to the PFI contractors each year are analysed into five elements:

- a) Fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- b) Finance cost – a percentage interest charge on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to interest payable and similar charges in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement under Financing, investment income & expenditure.
- c) Contingent rent – differences in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited or credited to interest payable and similar charges in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- d) Payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability, current and long term, towards the PFI operator.
- e) Lifecycle replacement costs – the annual payment implicit in the contract is funded and treated as a prepayment on the Balance Sheet and recognised as property, plant and equipment when the contractor incurs the expenditure.

The County Council has 3 PFI contracts providing waste services (including energy from waste), schools and library services. These contracts have been assessed as meeting the requirements of IFRIC 12 and the non-current assets relating to the service provision have been brought on to the County Council's Balance Sheet with a corresponding finance liability.

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) is balanced by the recognition of a liability for amounts due to the scheme operator to pay for the capital investment. Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the County Council. The significant PFI contracts are as follows:

15.1 Waste Disposal PFI

In December 1998 the County Council, in partnership with Herefordshire Council, entered into a 25-year contract with Mercia Waste Management Limited for the provision of an integrated waste management system using the Private Finance Initiative.

Under the contract the Councils are required to ensure that all waste for disposal is delivered to the Contractor who will take responsibility for recycling or recovering energy from the waste stream. In total the estimated cost over the life of the contract is approximately £500 million of which approximately 75% relates to the County Council. The contractor is at risk if waste tonnage fluctuates although the Authorities will be liable for a minimum payment of about £6 million per year in future years.

A variation to the contract was signed in May 2014 to design, build, finance and operate an Energy from Waste Plant. Actual takeover by Mercia Waste Management Limited was achieved in March 2017. Completion of the takeover tests by Mercia Waste Management Limited was achieved as planned in August 2017.

Both Councils will be providing circa 82% of the Project Finance requirement from their own planned borrowing from the Public Works and Loans Board with the remaining 18% being provided by the equity shareholders of Mercia Waste Management Limited. The loan is shown under long term Debtors on the Balance Sheet and the effective interest rate is shown under financial investments on the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

15.2 Bromsgrove Schools PFI

In December 2005 the County Council entered into a 30-year contract with Invesis UK Ltd (previously known as BAM PPP UK Limited and prior to that as HBG PFI Projects Ltd) for the replacement of seven schools in the Bromsgrove area. The estimated cost over the life of the contract is approximately £300 million. During 2007/08 the seven new schools were completed and opened to provide educational services for the children of Bromsgrove and the surrounding area. In 2014/15 one school became an Academy. This has no impact to the main PFI contract. The Academy has entered into an agreement with the County Council to continue the obligations of the school in respect of the PFI contract.

15.3 Worcester Library and History Centre (The Hive) PFI

In January 2010 the County Council entered into a PFI contract with Galliford Try Investments Ltd (now DiF Infra 3 UK Limited) for the construction and provision of a new Worcester Library and History Centre (The Hive). The Hive became operational in January 2012 and opened to the public in the summer of 2012. The Hive is a partnership initiative between the County Council and the University of Worcester ('the University') for the provision of a fully-integrated public and University library, plus the Worcestershire Record Office, Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and Worcestershire Hub Customer Service Centre.

The service term for the contract is 25 years from the handover of the facility and the annual unitary payment during the life of the contract is £4.6 million, at April 2007 prices. The contract allows for indexation by the retail prices index of the service element of the contract (30% of the unitary payment) annually. At the end of the contract term the assets transfer to the County Council and the University on a 70/30 basis. The contract also allows for an extension to the provision of services by Galliford Try Investments Ltd.

15.4 Value of assets and liabilities under PFI contracts

	PPE – Land & Buildings Waste disposal	PPE – Land & Buildings Bromsgrove schools	PPE – Land & Buildings The Hive	PPE – Land & Buildings Total	PPE - vehicle, plant & equipment Waste disposal	PPE Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2022	5.4	57.0	24.4	86.8	100.1	186.9
Additions	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2
Revaluations	0.0	6.8	2.6	9.4	9.1	18.5
Disposals	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Movements	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Depreciation	(0.2)	(0.6)	(0.3)	(1.1)	(5.2)	(6.3)
Balance at 31 March 2023	5.2	63.4	26.7	95.3	104.0	199.3

Finance lease liability

	Waste disposal	Bromsgrove schools	The Hive	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2022	(91.3)	(47.4)	(16.4)	(155.1)
Additions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Payments	8.1	1.5	0.6	10.3
Balance at 31 March 2023	(83.2)	(45.9)	(15.7)	(144.8)

15.5 Details of payments due to be made under PFI contracts

	Repayment of liability	Service Charge	Interest	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Payments due within one year	15.4	25.2	10.2	50.9
Payments due within 2 to 5 years	71.3	101.1	30.6	203.0
Payments due within 6 to 10 years	15.4	51.1	18.7	85.2
Payments due within 11 to 15 years	28.4	29.4	7.7	65.4
Payments due within 16 to 20 years	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	130.5	206.8	67.2	404.5

The payments due are based on prices at the Balance Sheet date.

16. Financial instruments

Financial instruments are contracts that give rise to a financial asset for one party and a financial liability to another party. Non-exchange transactions such as those relating to taxes and government grants do not give rise to financial instruments. The term includes financial assets such as bank deposits, investments and loans and accounts receivable and financial liabilities including borrowings and amounts payable. They are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the County Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of the Financial Instrument and are carried in-line with the requirements of IFRS 9.

The fair value calculations have been provided by the County Council's Treasury Management advisors for PWLB loans, LOBO loans, PFI Liabilities and shares in unlisted companies.

Debtors and Creditors are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the County Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and subsequently measured at their amortised cost.

16.1 Income, expense, gains and losses on Financial Instruments 2022/23

The gains and losses on financial instruments recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements are shown in the following table:

Financial Liabilities Measured at Amortised Cost	Financial Assets at Amortised Cost	Financial Assets at Fair Value Through Profit and Loss	21/22 Total		Financial Liabilities Measured at Amortised Cost	Financial Assets at Amortised Cost	Financial Assets at Fair Value Through Profit and Loss	22/23 Total
£m	£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m	£m
(28.7)	0.4	0.0	(28.3)	Interest expense	(28.6)	0.0	0.0	(28.6)
0.0	7.4	(0.2)	7.2	Interest income	1.3	9.1	0.9	11.3
0.0	0.0	(0.1)	(0.1)	Increase/(decrease) in fair value	0.0	0.0	(1.1)	(1.1)
0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Fee expense	(0.1)	0.0	0.0	(0.1)
(28.7)	7.8	(0.3)	(21.2)	Net gain / (loss) for the year	(27.4)	9.1	(0.2)	(18.5)

16.2 Financial assets

Financial assets are classified as either:

- Amortised Cost – where the County Council holds the asset to collect payments of principal and interest and the cashflows arising not subject to variations in capital value. These are recognised on the Balance Sheet when we become party to the contractual provisions of the instrument and are initially valued at fair value, with subsequent measurement at amortised cost.
- Fair Value through profit and loss –in all other cases. These are recognised on the Balance Sheet when we become party to the contractual provisions of the instrument and are initially valued at fair value, with subsequent measurement at market price for instruments with quoted prices or discounted cash flow for instruments with fixed and determinable payments.

The financial assets disclosed in the balance sheet are analysed across the following categories:

31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022	Category	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Long-term	Current	Total		Long-term	Current	Total
£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m
	8.0	8.0	Amortised cost	0.0	0.0	0.0
3.0	(0.1)	2.9	Financial assets at fair value through profit & loss	1.9	0.3	2.2
3.0	7.9	10.9	Total Investments	1.9	0.3	2.2
0.0	4.3	4.3	Cash	0.0	6.1	6.1
0.0	0.0	0.0	Cash equivalents at amortised cost	0.0	0.0	0.0
0.0	38.5	38.5	Fair value through profit & loss	0.0	65.8	65.8
0.0	42.8	42.9	Total Cash	0.0	71.9	71.9
104.2	57.4	161.6	Debtors*	102.4	68.5	170.9
107.2	108.2	215.4	Total financial assets	104.4	140.4	242.8

*The debtors figure stated is lower than the debtors shown on the Balance Sheet as it excludes the following amounts which do not meet the definition of a financial asset: payments in advance and non-exchange transactions

0.0	28.5	28.5	<i>Debtors which do not meet the definition of a financial instrument</i>	0.0	38.0	38.0
104.2	85.9	190.1	Balance Sheet Debtors Total	102.4	106.5	208.9

16.3 Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet once there is a contractual obligation and are initially measured at fair value and carried at amortised cost. Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction. The fair value of loans has been assessed at current market conditions by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the loans.

31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022	Category	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Long-term	Current	Total		Long-term	Current	Total
£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m
(409.9)	(78.2)	(488.1)	Financial liabilities at amortised cost	(416.4)	(119.1)	(535.5)
0.0	0.0	0.0	Bank Account Liabilities	(0.0)	(16.8)	(16.8)
0.0	(43.4)	(43.4)	Creditors*	(0.0)	(39.7)	(39.7)
(155.1)	0.0	(155.1)	Other financial liabilities (PFI) at amortised cost	(144.8)	(0.0)	(144.8)
(565.0)	(121.6)	(686.6)	Total financial liabilities	(561.2)	(175.6)	(736.8)

*The creditors figure stated is lower than the creditors shown on the Balance Sheet as it excludes the following amounts which do not meet the definition of a financial asset:

(0.0)	(47.7)	(47.7)	<i>Creditors which do not meet the definition of a financial instrument</i>	0.0	(41.6)	(41.6)
(0.0)	(91.1)	(91.1)	Balance Sheet Creditors Total	0.0	(81.3)	(81.3)

16.4 Fair value of financial assets and liabilities

Financial instruments, except those classified at amortised cost, are carried in the Balance Sheet at fair value. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset, or paid to transfer a liability, between market participants in an orderly transaction at the measurement date under current market conditions.

Financial liabilities and financial assets classified as loans and receivables are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost. Their fair values have been estimated by calculating the net present value of remaining cash flows at 31 March 2023 using fair value techniques appropriate to the characteristics of each instrument, using the following methods and assumptions:

- Loans taken out by the Council have been valued by discounting contractual cash flows over the life of the instrument at the appropriate market rate for local authority loans.
- The carrying value of long-term instruments, represented by long-term debtors, is deemed to be a reasonable proxy for fair value as this debtor will be repaid by 31 March 2024 and therefore the discounting of future cashflows over this two year period is not a material difference.
- The fair values of finance lease and PFI scheme liabilities have been calculated by discounting the contractual cashflows (excluding service charge elements) at the appropriate AA-rated corporate bond yield.
- The fair value of short-term instruments, including trade payables and receivables, is deemed to be not materially different to the carrying amount.

Fair values are shown in the table below, split by their level in the fair value hierarchy.

Level 1	Fair value is derived from quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
Level 2	Fair value is calculated from inputs other than quoted prices that are observable for the asset or liability
Level 3	Fair value is determined using unobservable inputs

Fair value of financial assets

31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022	Category	31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Balance Sheet value	Fair value	Fair value level		Fair value level	Balance Sheet value	Fair value
£m	£m				£m	£m
Financial asset held at fair value through profit & loss						
(0.1)	(0.1)	1	Short-term investments	1	0.0	0.0
42.8	42.8	1	Cash and cash equivalents	1	71.9	71.9
3.0	3.0	3	Long-term investments (Malvern Hills Science Park)	3	1.9	1.9
45.7	45.7		Subtotal		73.8	73.8
Financial asset held at amortised cost						
104.2	104.2	1	Long-term debtors	1	102.4	102.4
7.9	7.9	1	Investments	1	0.3	0.3
112.1	112.1		Sub total		102.7	102.7
157.8	157.8		Total		176.5	176.5
57.5			Assets for which fair value is not disclosed*		68.5	68.5
215.3	157.8		Total Financial Assets		245.0	245.0
Recorded on Balance Sheet as:						
104.2			Long term loans and advances		102.4	102.4
3.0			Long term investments		1.9	1.9
7.9			Short-term investments		0.3	0.3
57.4			Short-term Debtors		68.5	68.5
42.8			Cash and cash equivalents		71.9	71.9
215.3			Total Financial Assets		245.0	245.0

*The fair value of short term financial assets including trade receivables is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

Fair value of financial liabilities

31/03/2022	31/03/2022	31/03/2022		31/03/2023	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Balance Sheet value	Fair value	Fair value level		Fair value level	Balance Sheet value	Fair value
£m	£m				£m	£m
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost						
406.5	439.9	2	Long term PWLB loans	2	381.1	316.6
81.6	103.7	2	Other long term loans	2	35.3	32.9
0.0	0.0	1	Bank Account Liabilities	1	16.8	16.8
155.1	196.0	1	PFI liabilities	1	144.8	112.0
			Short term PWLB loans		11.2	11.2
			Other short term loans		107.9	107.9
643.2	739.6		Total financial liabilities held at amortised cost		697.1	597.4
43.4			Liabilities for which fair value is not disclosed*		39.7	
686.6	739.6		Total financial liabilities		736.8	597.4
Recorded on Balance Sheet as:						
43.4			Short term Creditors		39.7	
78.2			Short term Borrowings		119.1	
0.0			Bank Account Liabilities		16.8	
409.9			Long term Borrowings		416.4	
155.1			Other long term liabilities		144.8	
686.6			Total Financial Liabilities		736.8	

*The fair value of short term financial liabilities including trade payables is assumed to approximate to the carrying amount.

The fair value of financial liabilities held at amortised cost is higher than their Balance Sheet carrying amount as these balances comprise a number of loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the current rates available for similar loans at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future loss (based on economic conditions at the end of the financial year) arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders at above current market rates.

16.5 Nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments

The County Council's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets and seek to minimise potential adverse effects on the resources available to fund services. Risk management is carried out by a central treasury team under policies approved by the County Council in the Treasury Management Strategy.

The Strategy imposes a maximum sum and duration that the County Council can invest in an institution, depending upon the quality of credit rating. The Strategy for 2022/23 was approved by Council on 17 February 2022.

The County Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks. The key risks are:

Credit risk

Credit risk is the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the County Council.

Credit Risk Management Practices

The Council's credit risk management practices are set out within its Annual Treasury Management Strategy (ATMS), with particular regard to determining whether the credit risk of financial instruments has increased significantly since initial recognition.

The ATMS 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 ATMS also considers maximum amounts and time limits with a financial institution located in each category.

The credit criteria in respect of financial assets held by the Council are detailed below: -

The Council uses the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service uses a sophisticated modelling approach with credit ratings from all three rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's, 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
- CDS spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries

All credit ratings are monitored daily and changes to ratings are notified to the Council by Link Asset Treasury Solutions, creditworthiness service. If a downgrade results in the financial institution / investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn immediately.

The Council's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in financial institutions of £25.0m 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 recoverability applies to all of the Council's deposits but there was no evidence at the 31 March 2023 that this was likely to crystallise

The credit risk in respect of Trade Debtors is considered at Note 18. For our other Financial Assets Held at Amortised Cost, we have considered the credit risk, including any additional impact arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Cash and Cash Equivalents - No material risk on the basis that these are liquid assets.
- Short-term investments – No material risk. The Short-term investments balance at 31 March 2021 comprises a single deposit at another local authority with a short-term maturity date; the expected credit loss was assessed by our Independent Treasury Advisors as a trivial sum.
- Capital Advances treated as a Loan – No material risk. In respect of the loan arrangement to Mercia Waste, we assess the 12 month potential credit loss; as this has been quantified as not material, we see no reason to revise our assessment in light of the Covid-19 impact given that:
 - The nature of the Counterparty's activity (waste management), which has continued to operate during the pandemic and will continue to operate as the economy reopens; and
 - The nature of the underlying asset (clean power generation), notwithstanding short-term energy price fluctuations, we do not anticipate any risk of obsolescence, loss of amenity or other factors that would suggest an impairment in the value of the asset.

Credit risk: Treasury Investments

The table below summarises the credit risk exposures of the County Council's treasury investment portfolio by credit rating:

31/03/2022	31/03/2022	Credit Rating	31/03/2023	31/03/2023
Long Term	Short Term		Long Term	Short Term
£m	£m		£m	£m
3.0	38.5	AAA	1.9	62.7
0.0	7.9	AA-	0.0	10.0
0.0	0.0	A	0.0	5.0
3.0	46.4	Total	1.9	77.8
0.0	0.0	Credit Rating not applicable	0.0	0.0
3.0	46.4	Total Investments	1.9	77.8
0.0	0.1	Accrued Interest excluded	0.0	0.0
3.0	46.5	Total Investments	1.9	77.8

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the possibility that the County Council might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments. This is managed through our Treasury Management Strategy.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities (loans) is as follows:

31 March 2022	31 March 2023
£'000	£'000
78.2	119.1
28.8	46.9
33.9	33.6
49.6	47.8
297.6	288.0
488.1	535.5

17. Long term investments

31		31
March		March
2022		2023
£m		£m
3.0	Malvern Hills Science Park	1.9
3.0	Total	1.9

17.1 Malvern Hills Science Park

Malvern Hills Science Park is a limited company established by the County Council with its partners Malvern Hills District Council and the Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise. The County Council holds 9 voting shares out of a total issue of 100; this has been judged not to give the County Council a controlling influence. In addition, the County Council holds Preference shares of 957,103 shares (957,103 in 2021/22) and 6,190 P2 shares (6,190 2021/22). The preference shares carry no voting rights. These are the only Level 3 investments held by the County Council. The County Council's investment, measured at fair value in 2022/23, is £1.9 million (2021/22 £3.0m). This is shown on the Balance Sheet as a Long-Term investment, and the asset is held at Fair Value Through Profit and Loss (included in note 16.2). The value of the shares has been reviewed following publication of the Company's 2021/22 accounts. There is one Cabinet member on the Board.

18. Debtors

Debtors are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the County Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and subsequently at amortised cost.

31 March 2022		31 March 2023
£m		£m
Long term debtors:		
0.9	Trade receivables	4.2
103.3	Capital loans and advances	98.2
104.2		102.4
Short term debtors:		
50.2	Trade receivables	62.6
8.6	Prepayments	14.2
14.0	VAT	8.4
12.5	Council Tax	18.7
0.5	NNDR	2.7
0.1	Other receivables	0.0
85.9		106.5
190.1	Total debtors	208.9

The County Council does not generally allow credit for trade receivables debtors, however £19.2 million of balances are past due date for payment and can be analysed as follows. The current impairment allowance for trade debtors in the Balance Sheet is £6.2 million (£2.5 million for general Trade Debtors and £3.7 million for Fairer Charging Clients), a decrease of £1.0 million on the March 2022 figure.

	£m
One to three months	4.2
Three to six months	3.3
Six months to one year	3.2
More than one year	8.4
Total	19.2

19. 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 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. The County Bank current account is shown as a credit balance at balance sheet date – this is not an overdrawn position – it reflects a timing difference between the balance sheet balance and bank balance which is part of our usual bank reconciliation process.

	Opening Balance 01/04/2022	Movement During the Year	Closing Balance 31/03/2023
	£m	£m	£m
Bank current accounts (asset)	4.3	1.8	6.1
Bank current accounts (liabilities)	(0.0)	(16.8)	(16.8)
Short Term investments held as cash	38.5	27.3	65.8
Total cash and cash equivalents	42.8	12.3	55.1

20. Creditors

Creditors are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the County Council becomes party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and subsequently at amortised cost.

31 March		31 March
2022		2023
£m		£m
Short-term creditors		
(49.9)	Trade payables	(39.7)
(8.8)	Receipts in Advance	(6.8)
(5.6)	Employee Leave Accrual	(6.3)
(12.1)	Council Tax	(20.1)
(6.7)	NNDR	(0.9)
(8.0)	Other payables	(7.5)
(91.1)	Total creditors	(81.3)

21. Other long-term liabilities

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
(155.1)	PFI liabilities	(144.8)
(429.4)	Net defined benefit surplus/(deficit)	0.0
(2.2)	Teachers' Pension scheme Added year surplus/(deficit)	(1.7)
(586.7)	Other Long-term Liabilities	(146.4)

22. Grants and contributions receipts in advance

31 March 2022		31 March 2023
24.1	Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990	28.2
2.1	Section 278 Highways Act 1980	2.2
8.2	Short-term Grants Received in Advance	0.2
34.4		30.6

23. Cash activities

23.1 Operating activities

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
The surplus/deficit on the provision of services has been adjusted for the following non-cash movements	
50.3 Depreciation	53.5
(2.2) Downward revaluations	2.5
1.4 Amortisation	0.0
(1.7) (Increase) / decrease in impairment for bad debts	1.0
(26.2) (Decrease) / Increase in creditors	(17.3)
21.3 (Increase) / decrease in debtors	(19.5)
44.4 Movement in pension liability/asset	63.8
0.0 (Increase)/ decrease in Inventories	(0.3)
28.5 Carrying amount of non-current assets and non-current assets held for sale, sold or derecognised	14.6
(8.4) Other non –cash items	(0.6)
107.4	97.7
The surplus/deficit on the provision of services has been adjusted for the following items that are investing or financing activities	
(6.2) Proceeds from the sale of property plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(11.2)
(50.2) Any other items for which the cash effects investing of financing cash flows	(56.9)
(56.4)	(68.1)

23.2 Investing activities

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
(97.5)	Purchase of property, plant & equipment and intangible assets	(91.0)
(41.0)	Purchase of short-term & long-term investments	(173.9)
6.7	Other payments for investing activities	6.4
6.2	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant & equipment and intangible assets	11.2
68.1	Proceeds from short-term & long-term investments	181.9
55.6	Other receipts from investing activities	62.6
(1.9)	Net cash flows from investing activities	(2.8)

Other receipts from investing activities (£56.9 million) are represented by Capital Grants of £56.9 million and other Capital Receipts of £5.7 million.

23.3 Financing activities

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
0.0	Cash receipts of short-term & long-term borrowing	101.0
2.6	Other receipts from financing activities	0.0
(7.9)	Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases & on-Balance Sheet PFI contracts	(10.3)
(39.6)	Repayments of short and long-term borrowing	(54.1)
(44.9)	Net cash flows from financing activities	36.6

23.4 Interest Received and Paid

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
0.3	Interest received	0.9
(29.4)	Interest paid	(28.6)

24. Officers' remuneration

Short-term employee benefits, including wages and salaries, paid annual and sick leave for current employees, are recognised as an expense in the year in which the service is provided to the County Council.

24.1 Remuneration over £50,000 per annum

All amounts paid to or receivable by County Council employees, including salary, expenses allowances and compensation for loss of employment, where this total is more than £50,000 are given in the table below. Senior Officer remuneration are excluded and reported separately.

2021/22			Total Remuneration to Employees	2023/23		
Teachers	Non-Teachers	Total		Teachers	Non-Teachers	Total
62	37	99	£50,000 to £54,999	75	96	171
40	24	64	£55,000 to £59,999	51	42	93
30	22	52	£60,000 to £64,999	36	24	60
26	5	31	£65,000 to £69,999	18	24	42
18	3	21	£70,000 to £74,999	23	10	33
10	4	14	£75,000 to £79,999	13	2	15
6	0	6	£80,000 to £84,999	8	0	8
3	4	7	£85,000 to £89,999	5	3	8
2	3	5	£90,000 to £94,999	0	9	9
2	1	3	£95,000 to £99,999	7	4	11
2	2	4	£100,000 to £104,999	0	1	1
0	2	2	£105,000 to £109,999	0	2	2
1	1	2	£110,000 to £114,999	0	1	1
0	0	0	£115,000 to £119,999	0	1	1
0	0	0	£120,000 to £124,999	0	1	1
0	1	1	£125,000 to £129,999	0	1	1

2021/22		2021/22		Total Remuneration to Employees	2023/23		2022/23	
Teachers	Non-Teachers	Total	Teachers		Non-Teachers	Total	Teachers	Non-Teachers
0	1	1	£130,000 to £134,999	0	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	£135,000 to £139,999	0	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	£140,000 to £144,999	0	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	£145,000 to £169,999	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	£170,000 to £174,999	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	£175,000 to £179,999	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	£180,000 to £184,999	0	0	0	0	0
0	1	1	£185,000 to £189,999	0	1	1	1	1
202	112	314		236	224	460		

24.2 Senior employees' remuneration

Senior employees are defined as those whose salary is more than £150,000 per annum, and those employed in statutory chief officer posts or who report directly to the Chief Executive.

Post Title		Salary	National Insurance	Expense allowances	Pension Contributions	Total	Position start date	Position end date
		£	£	£	£	£		
Chief Executive, Paul Robinson	2022/23	188,526	26,057	35	35,337	249,955		
	2021/22	186,719	24,547		34,998	246,264		
Director of Children's Services^	2022/23	140,989	19,236	781	26,450	187,456		
	2021/22	126,557	16,244	834	23,722	167,357		
Director of Economy & Infrastructure	2022/23	138,435	18,750		25,948	183,133		

Post Title		Salary	National Insurance	Expense allowances	Pension Contributions	Total	Position start date	Position end date
	2021/22	136,525	17,593		25,590	179,708		
Director of Commercial & Change	2022/23	129,680	16,654	127	23,383	169,844		
	2021/22	128,390	16,497		24,205	169,092		
Director of Public Health	2022/23	10,692	1,469	23	1,347	13,531		30/04/2022
Interim Director of Public Health	2022/23	57,604	7,326		10,792	75,772	26/05/2022	28/02/2023
Director of Public Health	2022/23	9,468	1,202		1,775	12,445	01/03/2023	
	2021/22	112,492	14,303		16,301	143,096	*	
Chief Financial Officer	2022/23	101,499	13,582	258	19,025	134,364		12/03/2023
Interim Chief Financial Officer	2022/23	4,949	615		928	6,492	13/03/2023	
	2021/22	105,186	13,773		20,365	139,324		
Assistant Director Legal & Governance	2022/23	107,865	11,035		9,740	128,640		30/09/2022
Assistant Director Legal & Governance	2022/23	9,115	1,070		1,709	11,894	01/03/2023	
	2021/22	105,908	13,395	97	19,851	139,251		
Assistant Director for Human Resources & Engagement	2022/23	96,283	12,655		18,048	126,986		
Director of People	2022/23	96,450	12,859		18,079	127,388	01/07/2022	
	2021/22	139,844	18,228		25,468	183,540		
Total	2022/23	1,091,555	142,510	1,224	192,561	1,427,900		
	2021/22	1,041,621	134,580	931	190,500	1,367,632		

25. Termination benefits and exit packages

This discloses both exit packages for employees who have left the County Council in 2022/23 and any provisions for packages which have been agreed where the employee will leave at a future date. The cost includes redundancy costs, costs of pension added years and any other departure costs. Termination Benefits are charged in the year in which they are paid or on an accrual basis if appropriate.

Where enhancement of retirement benefits is made the amount charged is the amount payable by the County Council to the Pension Fund or pensioner in the year.

2021/22	2021/22	Exit package cost band (including redundancy, pension strain, and settlement payments)	2022/23	2022/23
Total number of exit packages	Total cost of exit packages		Total number of exit packages	Total cost of exit packages
	£m			£m
23	0.1	£0 - £20,000	44	0.3
3	0.1	£20,001 - £40,000	8	0.2
1	0.1	£40,001 - £60,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£60,001 - £80,000	1	0.1
0	0.0	£80,001 - £100,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£100,001 - £150,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£150,001 - £200,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£200,001 - £250,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£250,001 - £300,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£300,001 - £350,000	0	0.0
0	0.0	£350,001 - £400,000	0	0.0
27	0.3	Total Termination Packages	53	0.6

26. Related parties

The Council is required to disclose material transactions with bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Council, or to be controlled or influenced by the Council.

26.1 UK Central Government

The UK Central Government has significant influence over the general operations of the County Council. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the County Council works, provides funding in the form of grants (note 6 refers), and sets the terms of many of the relationships that the County Council has with other organisations.

26.2 Elected Members

Elected members of the County Council have direct control over the County Council's financial and operating policies. A total of £1.0 million allowances and expenses were paid to members in 2022/23 (2021/22 £1.0 million). Elected members of the County Council may be involved with other local organisations that provide services for or receive services from the County Council. Transactions for these organisations have been reviewed and there are no related party disclosures to be made for elected members.

26.3 Officers

Officers of the County Council may be involved with other local organisations that provide services for or receive services from the County Council. Transactions for these organisations have been reviewed and there are no related party disclosures to be made for officers.

26.4 Section 75 Framework Partnership Agreements

The County Council has an integrated commissioning unit with Health through a Section 75 arrangement including the Better Care Fund (details given in note 7). Monitoring is through the Integrated Commissioning Executive Officers Group (ICEOG) and agreed and controlled through the Clinical Commissioning Group Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

26.5 Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund

At the year-end the County Council charged the Pension Fund £1.8 million (2021/22 £1.4 million) for expenses incurred in administering the Pension Fund. Further details are given in the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme notes.

26.6 West Mercia Energy Joint Committee

The County Council is represented by its elected members on the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee (WME). WME offers energy procurement and management on behalf of its four owning authorities and a number of outside bodies. WME is constituted as a Joint Committee and the County Council is one of four constituent authorities, alongside Shropshire Council, Herefordshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council. The parties have rights to the net assets of the arrangement and, as such, this is judged to be a joint venture. This joint venture is not consolidated into the Group Accounts because it is not considered to be material. The County Council spent £3.4 million with WME in 2022/23 (2021/22 £4.1 million) and this is reflected in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

26.7 Place Partnership Limited

Place Partnership Limited was a single asset management company co-owned by the County Council, Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority, Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police and each party had equal shares and equal voting rights.

Place Partnership Limited ceased to trade on 31 March 2021 and services relating to the County Council were transferred in house. A notice of appointment of liquidator was filed with Companies House on 14 April 2022. No further costs are expected to be incurred by the partners.

26.8 Severn Arts

Severn Arts is a Private Company Limited by Guarantee that provides education in music and the Arts within Worcestershire. The County Council appoints one out of the ten trustees. This is a Related Party because the trustee appointed is a key management personnel of the County Council.

The company commenced trading on 1st June 2018, after a transfer of service provision and assets from the County Council. As part of the transfer, the County Council loaned Severn Arts £0.4 million, which is to be paid back in monthly instalments over 7 years with 4.78% interest per annum. There is a loan balance of £0.3 million outstanding at 31 March 2023 (2021/22 £0.3 million).

26.9 Worcestershire Children First

Worcestershire Children First is a Private Limited Company by Guarantee without share capital and is 100% owned and controlled by Worcestershire County Council. The company was incorporated on 4th July 2018 and commenced trading on 1st October 2019. The company is principally engaged in the provision of social care and educational services for children and families across Worcestershire. The company has been identified as a subsidiary as it is 100% owned by the Council, and therefore the Council is deemed to have single control. Group Accounts have been prepared because the subsidiary is assessed to be material.

In 2022/23, the Council spent £148.8 million (2021/22 £128.1 million) on services from the company and received £8.3 million (2021/22 £7.7 million) in income from the provision of support services. This is reflected in the single entity Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. There is a debtor of £3.1 million (2021/22 £3.9 million) and a creditor of £2.0 million (2021/22 £1.5 million) outstanding at 31 March 2023 and these balances are included in the single entity Balance Sheet.

The company's Board includes 1 Director who is employed by the Council and 2 Elected members of the Council; these individuals did not receive any remuneration from the company during the year.

26.10 Tickenhill Trust

Worcestershire County Council is sole trustee for the Tickenhill Collection, registered charity 527509. This collection of rural life artefacts are managed by the Joint Museums Committee with Worcester City Council. The Trust has no income or expenditure, and therefore is not included in the Council's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The assets are included on the Council's balance sheet under Heritage Assets.

27 Leases

27.1 The County Council as lessee – operating leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease.

The County Council's outstanding obligations under lease agreements as at 31 March 2023 totalled £14.1 million (31 March 2022 £13.4 million).

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
1.0 Leases expiring in less than 1 year	1.2
4.7 Leases expiring between 1 and 5 years	3.6
7.7 Leases expiring in 5 years+	9.3
13.4	14.1

Operating lease payments of £1.2 million were charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2022/23.

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
1.1 Minimum lease payments	1.2
0.0 Contingent rents	0.0
0.0 (Sublease payments receivable)	0.0
1.1	1.2

27.2 The County Council as lessor – operating leases

Where an asset is leased by the County Council to a third party as an operating lease the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease.

The County Council's outstanding obligations under lease arrangements as at 31 March 2023 totalled £7.7 million (31 March 2022 £11.2 million).

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
1.4	Leases expiring in less than 1 year	1.9
2.2	Leases expiring between 1 and 5 years	3.7
7.6	Leases expiring in 5 years+	2.1
11.2		7.7

Operating lease receipts of £1.4 million were received in 2022/23 million).

	£m	
3.0	Contingent rents	1.4
3.0		1.4

28 External audit costs

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
0.2	Fees payable regarding external audit services	0.1

A fee of £140k was paid to Grant Thornton in 2022/23. This fee comprises £140k main statutory audit fees. Non audit fees of £7.5k were paid to Grant Thornton in respect of certification of the Teacher's Pension Fund.

29 Short term investments

31 March 2022		31 March 2023
£m		£m
7.9	Short term investments	0.3
7.9	Total	0.3

30 Events after the reporting period

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is approved. 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 of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

The financial statements have not been adjusted for the following events which took place after 31 March 2023; they provide information relevant to the Council's financial position but do not relate to conditions existing at that date.

Non-adjusting events

At the date of publication of the accounts, there are no non-adjusting events to disclose.

Academy Conversions

At the date of publication of the accounts, 1 school has converted to academy status since 31 March 2023. Schools which convert after the reporting period are non-adjusting events and are reported below for information.

Name of School	Date of Conversion	Asset value at 31 March 2023 £m
North Bromsgrove High School	01/12/2023	35.5

31 Accounting standards issued but not yet adopted

The County Council is required to disclose the impact on an accounting change required by a new accounting standard that has been issued on or before 1 January but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). The 2022/23 Code will introduce the following amendments:

IFRS 16: Leases

IFRS 16 will require local authorities that are lessees to recognise a lease on their balance sheet as a right-of-use asset with a corresponding lease liability (there are exemptions for low-value and short-term leases). CIPFA/LASAAC have deferred implementation of IFRS 16 for local government to 1 April 2024. The County Council will continue to review its lease arrangements to assess the impact of the change.

Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2018-2020

The annual IFRS improvement programme notes 4 changed standards

- IFRS 1 (First-time adoption) – amendment relates to foreign operations of acquired subsidiaries transitioning to IFRS
- IAS 37 (Onerous contracts) – clarifies the intention of the standard
- IFRS 16 (Leases) – amendment removes a misleading example that is not referenced in the Code material
- IAS 41 (Agriculture) – one of a small number of IFRSs that are only expected to apply to local authorities in limited circumstances.

These accounting standards are not expected to have any significant impact for the Council.

32 Prior Period Adjustments

Prior period adjustments may arise from a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Change in estimates are accounted for prospectively, whereas changes in accounting policies are applied retrospectively. Material errors in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period. There have been no changes to prior period figures in the preparation of these financial statements.

33 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 events that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made based on historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, as balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023 for which there is significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Property plant & equipment valuations	The Council's external valuers provide valuations at 31 March based on a 5-year rolling programme of valuations. The valuations are undertaken by qualified valuers in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) professional standards using recognised measurement techniques.	<p>Valuations are compiled by an expert using recognised measurement techniques and based on professional guidance. The underlying data is considered to be reliable and the scope to use judgement and change assumptions is limited.</p> <p>The balance of assets not revalued in year are reviewed by applying local movement in prices and appropriate cost indices to ensure the value of the Council's assets are not materially misstated.</p> <p>A variation of 5% in the value of the Council's Land & Building assets (Net Book Value at 31 March 2023 of £512.2 million) would be approximately £25.6 million.</p> <p>A reduction in the estimated valuations would result in a reduction to the revaluation reserve and/or a loss charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p> <p>An increase in estimated valuations would result in the reversal of any negative revaluations previously charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and/or increase to the Revaluation Reserve and/or gains charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.</p>
Pension Liability/Asset	The net liability to pay pensions is calculated every three years with annual updates in the intervening years. A firm of actuaries (Mercer) is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. Changes to these underlying assumptions can result in significant variances in the calculated liability.	<p>The effect on the net pension surplus (£30.1 million at 31 March 2023) of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase of 0.05% in the discount rate assumption would increase the value of the net pension surplus by approximately £79.6 million. An increase of 0.25% in the inflation assumption would decrease the value of the net pension surplus by approximately £42.9 million.

The assumptions and complex judgements applied include 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.

- An increase of 0.25% in the assumed pay assumption would decrease the value of the net pension surplus by approximately £4.1 million.
- An increase of one year assumed in life expectancy would decrease the value of the net pension surplus by approximately £21.6 million.

Further information is included in the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme notes.

Fair Value Measurement

When the fair value of financial instruments cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (i.e. Level 1 inputs) their fair value is measured using the following valuation techniques:

- For Level 2 inputs, quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets at the Balance Sheet date;
- For Level 3 inputs, valuations based on most recent valuations adjusted using indexation and impairment review as appropriate.

Where the fair value of financial instruments is measured using Level 2 inputs, namely using quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets at the Balance Sheet date. All valuations are undertaken by expert valuers in accordance with methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards.

As most estimates are based on current market information, material changes to the carrying values are not expected.

Significant changes in any of the unobservable inputs could result in a significantly lower or higher fair value measurement for these assets.

34 Pension Schemes

Post-employment benefits include pensions and retirement lump sums. Employees of the County Council may be members of:

- The Local Government Pensions Scheme (a defined benefit scheme), administered by the County Council under national regulations;
- The Teachers' Pension Scheme (a defined benefit scheme), administered by the Teachers' Pensions Agency on behalf of the Department for Education; or
- The NHS Pension Scheme (a defined benefit scheme), administered by the Department of Health.

34.1 Defined benefit pension schemes

Teachers' Pension Scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme is a defined benefit scheme administered by the Teachers' Pensions Agency. Although the scheme is unfunded, a notional fund is used as a basis for calculating the employers' contribution rate.

In 2022/23 the County Council paid £16.1 million (2021/22 £15.3m) to the Department for Education and Skills in respect of teachers' pension costs, which represents 23.7% (2021/22 23.7%) of teachers' pensionable pay. In addition, the County Council is responsible for all pension payments relating to teachers' added years it has awarded, together with the related increases. In 2022/23 these amounted to £0.2 million (2021/22 £0.3m), representing 0.4% (2021/22 0.4%) of pensionable pay. The County Council's Actuary has calculated a long-term liability of £1.7 million in respect of these payments that will decline over time and this is included in the balance sheet under other long-term liabilities.

NHS Pension Scheme

The NHS pension scheme is a defined benefit scheme administered by the NHS Superannuation Scheme.

In 2022/23 the County Council paid £0.1 million (2021/22 £0.1m) to the NHS Superannuation Scheme, which represents 14.4% (2021/22 14.4%) of NHS pensionable pay.

Defined benefit pension schemes

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

- The liabilities of the Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis.
- The assets of the Pension Fund attributable to the County Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value.

In relation to retirement benefits the General Fund is charged with the amount payable by the County Council to the Pension Fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated by the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the Pension Fund and pensioners and any amounts payable to the fund but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance on the Pensions Reserve measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits based on cash flows and not as benefits are earned by employees.

The County Council administers and participates in the Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund. Retirement benefits are determined independently of the investments of the Pension Fund, and the County Council has an obligation to make contributions where assets are insufficient to meet employee benefits. The County Council and participating employees pay contributions into the fund which are calculated at a level intended to balance pension's liabilities with investment assets.

The pension scheme is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme. As the statutory Administering Authority and Scheme Manager for the Fund, the County Council is responsible for ensuring effective stewardship of the Pension Fund's affairs. The County Council has established a Pension Committee to discharge its responsibility for the management of the administration of the Pension Fund. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pensions Fund Regulations. The management of the Pension Fund's assets is operated through thirteen specialist external managers.

The three principal risks to the scheme are:

- Market risk (volatility in stock prices, increase in interest rates and fluctuations in currency exchange rates);
- Credit risk where a borrower does not make payments as promised; and
- Liquidity risk, in that a given security or asset cannot be traded quickly enough in the market.

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.

The Court of Appeal decision on the 28 June 2019 in the Sargeant/McCloud cases (generally referred to for the LGPS as "McCloud") ruled that the transitional protection afforded to older members when the Public Service Pension Schemes were amended constituted unlawful age discrimination. The County Council's actuary has included a calculation for the anticipated impact of the judgement on the pensions' liability. The additional costs are sensitive to the assumptions made. Relevant entries are included below as McCloud judgement liability.

34.2 Transactions relating to post-employment benefits

The County Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. The charge against the council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment / retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	
Cost of services:	
36.9	54.1
	Current service cost

2021/22		2022/23
0.0	Current service cost – McCloud judgement	0.0
0.0	Past service cost	0.1
0.0	Settlements and curtailments	0.1
Other Operating Expenses		
0.4	Administration expenses	0.5
Financing & investment income & expenditure		
32.1	Interest on Pensions Liabilities	43.6
(22.8)	Interest on Pensions Assets	(31.5)
46.6	Total post-employment benefit charged to the surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services	66.9
Re-measurement of the net defined liability charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
(44.2)	Return on Plan assets (excluding the amount included in net interest expense)	(36.9)
4.2	Actuarial (gain) / loss arising on changes in experience	166.0
(7.0)	Actuarial (gain) / loss arising on changes in financial assumptions	(637.2)
(11.9)	Actuarial (gain) / loss arising on changes in demographic assumptions	(25.6)
0.0	Increase/(Decrease) in Teacher's Pension Liability	(0.5)
0.0	Adjustment for impact of IFRIC 14 consideration	34.2
(12.3)	Total post-employment benefit charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(433.1)

2021/22**2022/23****Movement in Reserves Statement**

(46.6)	Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit for the Provision of Services for post-employment benefits in accordance with the Code of Practice	(67.0)
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Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year:

28.0	Employer's contributions payable to the scheme	29.6
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34.3 Pension gains and losses charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement**2021/22****2022/23****£m****£m**

44.2	Return on Plan Assets (excluding the amount included in net interest expense)	36.9
(4.2)	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in experience	(166.0)
7.0	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising from changes in financial assumptions	637.2
11.9	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	25.6
0.0	Adjustment for impact of IFRIC 14 consideration	(34.2)
0.2	(Increase)/decrease in Teachers Pension Liability	0.5
59.1	Total gain / (loss)	500.0

34.4 Pension assets and liabilities recognised in the Balance Sheet

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
(1,566.6)	(1,144.7)
1,137.2	1,144.74
(429.4)	0.0

Statutory arrangements for funding pension fund deficits mean that the financial position of the County Council is consistent with previous financial years. Any deficit on the local government pension scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of the employees (i.e. before payments fall due), as assessed by the scheme actuary. Finance is only required to be raised to cover discretionary benefits when the pensions are paid.

34.5 Liabilities and assets in relation to post-employment benefits (Local Government Pension Scheme)

This table gives detail of the assets and liabilities as calculated by the County Council's actuary. The financial assumptions included are based on yield assumptions on corporate bonds and are impacted by the duration of our employee liabilities. Increases in benefits and pensions included in these assumptions are based on CPI. Salary growth assumptions are based on long-term "real" salary inflation assumptions. Further information is given in note 34.7 which breaks down the fund investment assets, note 34.8 which provides the underlying assumptions for calculations included and note 34.10 which estimates the impact of any sensitivities in these assumptions.

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities:

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
(1,541.6)	(1,566.6)
(36.9)	(54.1)
(32.1)	(43.6)
(5.7)	(8.4)
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:	
(4.2)	(166.0)
7.0	630.9

2021/22	2022/23
11.9 Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	25.6
35.1 Benefits paid	37.7
0.0 Business combinations	0.0
0.0 Past service cost – McCloud Judgement	(0.1)
0.0 Curtailments	(0.1)
(1,566.6) Closing balance at 31 March	(1,144.7)

Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets:

2021/22	2022/23
£m	£m
1,097.7 Opening balance at 1 April	1,137.2
22.8 Interest Income	31.5
44.2 Return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	36.9
(0.4) Administration expenses	(0.5)
2.3 Employer contributions	3.2
0.0 Business combinations	0.0
5.7 Contributions by scheme participants	8.4
(35.1) Benefits paid	(37.7)
0.0 IFRIC 14 Adjustment	(34.2)
1,137.2 Closing balance 31 March	1,144.7

34.6 Pensions Reserve

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
(498.4)	Balance at 1 April	(458.0)
44.2	Return on Plan assets (excluding the amount included in net interest expense)	36.9
(4.2)	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in experience	(166.0)
7.0	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in financial assumptions	630.9
0.0	Adjustment for impact of IFRIC 14	(34.2)
11.9	Actuarial gain / (loss) arising on changes in demographic assumptions	25.6
0.0	Business combinations	0.0
(46.6)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(67.0)
2.3	Employer's pensions contributions & direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	3.2
25.6	Employer's pension contributions – prepayment adjustment	26.3
0.2	Decrease in Teachers Pension Liability	0.5
(458.0)	Balance at 31 March	(1.7)

34.7 Local Government Pension Scheme assets

2021/22		Quoted	2022/23
£m		(Y/N)	£m
Equities:			
1.3	UK Quoted	Y	1.2
278.4	Overseas quoted	Y	263.4
156.7	Pooled Investment Vehicle – UK Managed Funds	N	148.3
454.6	Pooled Investment Vehicle – UK Managed Funds – (overseas equities)	N	430.1
9.1	Pooled Investment Vehicle – Overseas Managed Funds	N	8.6
Bonds:			
0.0	UK Corporate	-	0.0
0.0	Overseas Corporate	-	0.0
0.0	Other Bonds	Y	0.0
18.4	UK Government Fixed	Y	16.3
16.0	LGPS Central Global Pooled Funds	Y/N	14.2
0.0	Overseas Government	-	0.0
Property:			
0.0	European Property Fund	N	0.0
7.9	UK Property Debt	N	12.7
5.3	Overseas Property Debt	N	8.4
50.1	UK Property Fund	N	80.2
0.0	Overseas REITS	N	0.0
Alternatives:			

53.6	UK Infrastructure	N	68.5
35.7	European Infrastructure	N	45.7
29.8	US Infrastructure	N	38.1
4.8	US Stock Options	N	6.1
(2.4)	Overseas Stock Options	N	(3.0)
17.9	Corporate Private Debt	N	22.8
Cash:			
0.0	Cash Instruments	N	0.9
0.0	Cash Accounts	N	8.0
0.0	Net Current Assets	N	8.5
1,137.2	Total		1,178.9

It should be noted that the total assets listed in Note 34.7 have not been reduced for the impact of IFRIC 14, therefore the total is different to that in Note 34.5

34.8 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. The Local Government Pension Scheme has been assessed by Mercer Ltd, an independent firm of actuaries, and estimates for the County Council fund are based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2020, with an effective date of 1 April 2021. The principal assumptions used by the actuary are:

2021/22		2022/23
Mortality assumptions		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners (years):		
22.6	Men	22.0
25.0	Women	24.2
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners (years):		
24.1	Men	23.3
27.0	Women	26.1
Financial assumptions		
3.4%	Rate of CPI inflation	2.7%
4.9%	Rate of increase in salaries	4.2%
3.5%	Rate of increase in pensions	2.8%
2.8%	Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	4.8%

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

34.9 Assumptions made about the future and estimate uncertainties

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Property and infrastructure valuations (Level 3 investments)	<p>The Fund's directly held investment properties are valued at fair value by independent valuers in accordance with RICS valuation professional standards, whilst infrastructure investments are valued at fair value by independent experts. There is continuing uncertainty regarding the property and infrastructure valuations due to the time that it will take to fully realise the impact of geopolitical issues upon these illiquid assets as well as the concerns as to the current inflationary environment. The valuations have been updated based on the information available as at 31 March 2023 and may be subject to variations as further market information becomes available. Investments are valued each month as per the latest quarterly statements available to our custodian, which are usually received between 45 and 60 days after quarter end, +/- any activity post statement date</p>	<p>The total value of indirect property investments in the financial statements is £323.6m (£221.9m in 2021/22). There is a risk that this investment may be under or overstated in the accounts.</p> <p>The total value of direct infrastructure investments in the financial statements is £511.8m (£426.7m in 2021/22). There is a significant risk of valuation updates resulting in a material adjustment in the carrying amount within the next financial year.</p>

34.10 Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme (Liabilities)

	Increase in rate of	Increase/(decrease) in Assumption
		£m
Discount Rate	0.5%	(87.1)
Inflation	0.3%	47.0
Pay	0.3%	4.5
Life Expectancy	1 year	23.4

34.11 Impact on the County Council's cash flows

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 17 years (2021/22 17 years). The County Council anticipates payments of £2.4 million expected contributions to the scheme in 2023/24.

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Worcestershire County Council

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Worcestershire County Council (the 'Authority') and its subsidiary (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2023, which comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement, the Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Group Movement in Reserves Statement, the Group Balance Sheet, the Group Cash Flow 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 2022/23.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of the group and of the Authority as at 31 March 2023 and of the group's expenditure and income and the Authority's expenditure and income for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the group and the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

In our evaluation of the Chief Financial Officer's conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 that the Authority's and group's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the group and the Authority. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2022) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the group and Authority and the group and Authority's disclosures over the going concern period.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Chief Financial Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

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

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Financial Report and Statement of Accounts, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon, and our auditor's report on the pension fund financial statements. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice published by the National Audit Office in April 2020 on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice) we are required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement does not comply with 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016 Edition' published by CIPFA and SOLACE, or is misleading or inconsistent with the information of which we are aware from our audit. We are not required to consider whether the Annual Governance Statement addresses all risks and controls or that risks are satisfactorily addressed by internal controls.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice

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

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of the Authority and the Chief Financial Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on page 17, the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that officer is the Chief Finance Officer. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Financial Report and 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 2022/23, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the group and Authority and determined that the most significant which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements are those related to the reporting frameworks (the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Act 2003).

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

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

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

We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority and group's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating management's incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls. We determined that the principal risks were in relation to

- Journals processed by senior finance officers, as we would not expect them to be involved in the normal day to day operations of the general ledger
- Journals with a blank description, as this could indicated that there is not a legitimate reason for posting a journal.

Our audit procedures involved:

- evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that management has in place to prevent and detect fraud,
- journal entry testing, with a focus on senior officers posting journals and those with a blank description,
- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of IAS19 and PPE, and
- assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.

These audit procedures were designed to provide reasonable assurance that the financial statements were free from fraud or error. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error and detecting irregularities that result

from fraud is inherently more difficult than detecting those that result from error, as fraud may involve collusion, deliberate concealment, forgery or intentional misrepresentations. Also, the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it.

We communicated relevant laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, throughout the audit.

Our assessment of the appropriateness of the collective competence and capabilities of the group and Authority's engagement team and component auditors included consideration of the engagement team's and component auditor's

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

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

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

For components at which audit procedures were performed, we requested component auditors report to us instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that gave rise to a risk of material misstatement of the group financial statements. No such matters were identified by the component auditors.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

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

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

Under the Code of Audit Practice, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, we have not been able to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2023.

We have nothing to report in respect of the above matter except on 15 December 2023 we identified:

- significant weaknesses in the Authority’s arrangements for financial sustainability. This was in relation to:
 - the increased level of financial stress the Authority is facing, including the significant use of reserves in 2022/23, the planned future use of reserves, the projected overspend for 2023/24, and the forecast deficit in the Authority’s Medium Term Financial Strategy. We recommended that all members ensure there is a robust response to these financial matters, that officers are supported in making the changes needed and that progress in delivering savings and transformation plans is tracked by Cabinet, the Audit Committee, and Scrutiny Committees, and
 - the Authority’s Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficit balance, which places significant pressure on the Authority’s reserves and puts at risk the Authority’s general fund unearmarked and earmarked reserves balances. We recommended that the Authority ensure there is a robust plan in place outlining how the DSG deficit will be brought back into balance and that regular reporting and oversight of progress be provided through the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.
- significant weaknesses in the Authority’s governance arrangements. This was in relation to:
 - the Authority being unable to demonstrate that it has appropriate and effective risk management arrangements in place. We recommended that the Authority ensure there are robust arrangements in place, covering the whole year, to manage risk, and
 - the Authority’s internal audit function not being fully compliant with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). We recommended that the Authority ensure there are robust arrangements in place for providing an internal audit function which is fully compliant with PSIASs and that does not negatively impact the Chief Audit Executive’s ability to provide an annual internal audit opinion.

Responsibilities of the Authority

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

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

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

We undertake our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in January 2023. This guidance sets out the arrangements that fall within the scope of 'proper arrangements'. When reporting on these arrangements, the Code of Audit Practice requires auditors to structure their commentary on arrangements under three specified reporting criteria:

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

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

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements – Audit certificate

We certify that we have completed the audit of Worcestershire County Council for the year ended 31 March 2023 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited]. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

M C Stocks

Mark Stocks, Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

15 December 2023



Worcestershire County Council Group Accounts 2022/23

Group Accounts and Supporting Notes

Group Accounts

Introduction

In order to provide a fuller picture of the Council's economic activities and financial position, the accounting statements of the Council and Worcestershire Children First have been consolidated.

The Group Accounts are presented in addition to the Council's 'single entity' financial statements and comprise:

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

These statements are set out on the following pages, together with accompanying disclosure notes. Disclosure notes have only been included in the group accounts where they are materially different from those of the Council's single entity accounts.

Results of Subsidiary

Worcestershire Children First

The County Council's wholly owned subsidiary Worcestershire Children First (WCF) was successfully launched on 1st October 2019 and operational responsibility for the delivery of all of Children's services on behalf of Worcestershire County Council was transferred on that date.

For 2022/23, the company's (unaudited) results showed a profit for the year of £1 (one pound) and net assets of £1.1 million.

A full copy of the company's accounts can be obtained from the Directors, Worcestershire Children First, County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP. The accounts are audited by Grant Thornton (UK) LLP.

Group Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

2021/22	2021/22	2021/22		2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
Expenditure	Income	Net		Expenditure	Income	Net
£m	£m	£m		£m	£m	£m
0.0	(1.2)	(1.2)	Turnover	0.0	(1.3)	(1.3)
Service Expenditure Analysis						
345.9	(197.7)	148.2	People	342.9	(194.1)	148.8
371.5	(263.4)	108.1	Children's Services	465.0	(317.5)	147.5
114.7	(30.3)	84.4	Economy & Infrastructure	114.8	(35.1)	79.7
36.3	(8.7)	27.6	Commercial & Change	43.8	(0.2)	43.5
36.2	(6.4)	29.8	Finance, HR & Chief Executive	46.5	(24.5)	22.0
904.6	(507.7)	396.9	Net Cost of Services	1,013.0	(572.7)	440.3
1.9	(0.4)	1.5	Other operating expenditure	5.4	(2.1)	3.3
86.5	(30.2)	56.3	Financing, investment income & expenditure	81.9	(40.9)	41.0
0.3	(431.5)	(431.2)	Taxation & non-specific grant income and expenditure	0.3	(439.3)	(439.0)
993.3	(969.8)	23.5	(Surplus) / deficit on the provision of services	1,100.6	(1,055.1)	45.5
		0.0	Tax expenses of subsidiary	0.0	0.0	0.0
		23.5	Group (surplus)/deficit			45.5
Other comprehensive income and expenditure						
	(47.6)		(Surplus) on revaluation of property, plant & equipment			(92.3)
	4.9		Downward revaluations on non-current assets charged to Revaluation Reserve			33.4
	(59.1)		Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability/(asset)			(500.1)
	(101.8)		Total other comprehensive income and expenditure			(559.0)
	(78.3)		Total comprehensive income and expenditure (surplus) / deficit			(513.5)

Group Movement in Reserves Statement 2022/23

	General Fund (Non- Earmarked) Balance	General Fund (Earmarked) Reserves	General Fund Total	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves	Council's Share of Reserves of subsidiary	Total Reserves attributable to Council
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2022	14.3	157.7	172.0	2.7	63.5	238.3	(37.1)	201.2	11.3	212.5
Movement in reserves during 2022/23:										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	95.0	0.0	95.0	0.0	0.0	95.0	559.0	654.0	(140.5)	513.5
Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	(146.1)	0.0	(146.1)	0.0	0.0	(146.1)	0.0	(146.1)	146.1	0.0
Net increase/ (decrease) before transfers	(51.1)	0.0	(51.1)	0.0	0.0	(51.1)	559.0	507.9	5.6	513.5
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	28.5	9.1	37.6	(2.7)	13.6	48.5	(48.5)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to/(from) earmarked reserves	22.5	(22.5)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase / (decrease) in 2022/23	0.0	(13.4)	(13.4)	(2.7)	13.6	(2.6)	510.5	507.9	5.6	513.5
Balance at 31 March 2023 carried forward	14.3	144.2	158.6	0.0	77.1	235.7	473.4	757.6	16.9	726.0

Adjustments between Group Accounts and Authority Accounts in the Group Movement in Reserves Statement

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
(120.4)	Elimination of intra-group transactions	(146.1)
(120.4)	Total adjustments between Group Accounts and Authority Accounts	(146.1)

Reconciliation between Retained Earnings in Worcestershire Children First's Statements and Closing Balance on Council's share of Reserves of subsidiary

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
1.1	Retained Earnings at 31 March	1.1
5.0	Accumulated consolidation adjustments at the start of the year	10.2
5.2	Consolidation adjustments during the year	5.6
11.3	Council's share of reserves of subsidiary	16.9

Group Movement in Reserves Statement 2021/22

	General Fund (Non- Earmarked) Balance	General Fund (Earmarked) Reserves	General Fund Total	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied Account	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves	Council's Share of Reserves of subsidiary	Total Reserves attributable to Council
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Balance at 31 March 2021 Restated	13.0	137.9	150.9	2.7	71.3	224.9	(96.8)	128.1	6.1	134.2
Movement in reserves during 2021/22:										
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	91.7	0.0	91.7	0.0	0.0	91.7	101.8	193.5	(115.2)	78.3
Adjustments between group accounts and authority accounts	(120.4)	0.0	(120.4)	0.0	0.0	(120.4)	0.0	(120.4)	120.4	0.0
Net increase/ (decrease) before transfers	(28.7)	0.0	(28.7)	0.0	0.0	(28.7)	101.8	73.1	5.2	78.3
Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations	44.9	4.9	49.8	0.0	(7.7)	42.1	(42.1)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to/(from) earmarked reserves	(14.9)	14.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Increase / (decrease) in 2021/22	1.3	19.8	21.1	0.0	(7.7)	13.4	59.7	73.1	5.2	78.3
Balance at 31 March 2022 carried forward	14.3	157.7	172.0	2.7	63.6	238.3	(37.1)	201.2	11.3	212.5

Group Balance Sheet

31 March 2022		31 March 2023	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
£m		£m	£m	£m
1,146.1	Property, plant and equipment	1,226.0	(1.4)	Long-term provisions (1.5)
1.7	Heritage assets	1.7	(409.9)	Long-term borrowing (416.4)
4.5	Intangible assets	0.0	(576.5)	Other long-term liabilities (130.6)
3.0	Long-term investments	1.9	(26.2)	Grants receipts in advance (30.4)
104.2	Long-term debtors	102.4	(1,014.0)	Long-term liabilities (579.0)
1,259.5	Long term assets	1,332.1	212.5	Net assets 726.0
5.4	Non-Operational Assets	8.9		
7.9	Short-term investments	0.3		Financed by:
1.4	Inventories	1.7	249.6	Usable reserves 236.8
84.0	Short-term debtors	110.9	(37.1)	Unusable reserves 489.2
56.5	Cash and Cash Equivalents	83.2		
155.2	Current assets	205.0		
(78.2)	Short-term borrowing	(119.1)		
(101.8)	Short-term creditors	(95.8)		
(0.0)	Cash and Cash Equivalents	(16.8)		
(8.2)	Short-term grants receipts in advance	(0.2)		
(188.2)	Current liabilities	(231.9)		

Group Cash Flow Statement

2021/22		2022/23
£m		£m
(23.5)	Net surplus/(deficit) on the provision of services	(45.5)
102.0	Adjust net (surplus)/deficit for non-cash movements	89.8
(56.4)	Adjust for items included in the net (surplus)/deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	(68.5)
22.1	Net cash flows from operating activities	(24.2)
(1.9)	Net cash flows from investing activities	(2.4)
(44.9)	Net cash flows from financing activities	36.6
(24.7)	Net increase/(decrease) in cash or cash equivalents	9.9
	Cash and cash equivalents	
81.2	Balance at 1 April	56.5
56.5	Balance at 31 March	66.4
(24.7)	Movement in cash and cash equivalents increase / (decrease)	9.9

Notes to the Group Accounts

1. Group boundary

Worcestershire Children First (WCF) is private limited company by guarantee and a 100% wholly owned subsidiary of Worcestershire County Council.

The company is a subsidiary of the Council for accounting purposes and its results have been consolidated into the Group Accounts on a line by line basis using the acquisition basis of consolidation.

2. Accounting policies

The financial statements of WCF have been prepared in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice), including Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. Differences between these standards and the Code would have no material impact on the Group Statements.

The Group Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA). In preparing the Group Accounts, the Council has:

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

The group accounting policies are not significantly different from those used to prepare the Council's single entity statements with the exception of the policy noted below:

- Pensions – the Group Accounts have been prepared incorporating the requirements of IAS19: Retirement Benefits for the treatment of pension costs. IAS19 requires that pension costs are recorded in the year in which the benefit entitlements are earned by the employee rather than the year in which the pension and employer's contributions are actually paid. The Pension Reserve represents the net liability for future pension costs. The financial statements of WCF have been prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'. The financial position under FRS102 is not significantly different under IAS19.

- Debtors in the single entity financial statements are initially measured at fair value and then measured at amortised cost. Debtors in the financial statements of the subsidiary are initially measured at transaction price less attributable transaction costs and then subsequently at amortised cost.

3. Group short term debtors

31 March 2022		31 March 2023
£m		£m
Short term debtors:		
38.1	Trade receivables	66.5
8.0	Prepayments	14.2
14.6	VAT	8.8
12.5	Council Tax	18.7
0.5	NNDR	2.7
0.1	Other receivables	0.0
73.8	Total short term debtors	110.9

4. 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 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

	Opening Balance 01/04/2022	Movement During the Year	Closing Balance 31/03/2023
	£m	£m	£m
Bank current accounts	18.0	(17.4)	0.6
Short Term investments held as cash	38.5	27.3	65.8
Total cash and cash equivalents	56.5	9.9	66.4

Glossary of Terms

Accounting policies	The principles, rules and procedures used in the preparation of the accounts
Accruals	The recognition of income and expenditure as goods and services are provided, not when cash is received or paid
Actuary	An independent company which advises on the assets and liabilities of the pension fund with the aim of ensuring that the payment of pensions and future benefits are met.
Admitted bodies	Voluntary and charitable bodies whose staff can become members of the Local Government Pension Scheme, subject to certain terms and conditions, and other organisations to which Local Government employees have been transferred under the outsourcing of local government services
Agent	The County Council or other authority acting as an intermediary
Amortisation	The drop-in value of intangible assets as they become out of date
Asset	<p>A resource controlled by the County Council because of past events and from which economic benefits or service potential is expected. Assets can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intangible – assets of non-physical form, e.g. patents, goodwill, trademarks and copyrights• Property, plant and equipment – assets which give the Council benefits for more than one year• Community – assets held in perpetuity which may have restrictions on their disposal• Infrastructure – assets such as highways and footways• Non-operational – assets not directly used for service provision• Heritage – assets held solely for historical, artistic, or environmental qualities
Assets under construction	Capital expenditure on assets where the work is incomplete
Augmentation	Additional employer contributions relating to the cost of employees who are allowed to retire before their normal retirement age

Billing authority	The local authority which collects Council Tax. In Worcestershire this is the district or borough council
Capital charge	A charge to services to reflect the cost of Property, Plant and Equipment used in the provision of services
Capital expenditure	Expenditure on acquisition or construction of assets which have a value to the authority for more than one year e.g. land and buildings
Capital financing costs	The costs of financing assets, being the interest costs of external loans and monies used to repay debt
Capital receipts	Income from the sale of capital assets
Commutation / commuting	Where a member of the pension scheme gives up part or all of their pension in return for an immediate lump sum. It is also called a cash option
Council tax precept	A property based tax which is set by the County Council and administered by district and borough councils
Creditors	Amounts owed by the County Council for work done, goods received or services provided but for which payment has not been made by the end of the accounting period
Current service cost	Officers employed during the year will have earned one or more years of pensionable service. The current service cost is the increase in the value of the pension scheme's liabilities arising from the employee service during the period
Custodian	The organisation that holds and safeguards the Pension Fund assets
Debtors	Amounts due to the County Council for work done, goods received or services provided but which remain unpaid by the end of the accounting period
Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)	A central government grant paid to the County Council for use for expenditure on schools.
Deferred pension benefit	A pension benefit which a member of the fund has accrued but is not yet entitled to receive payment
Depreciation	The fall in value of an asset, as recorded in the financial records, due to wear and tear, age or obsolescence

Derivative	A financial instrument whose characteristics and value depend upon the characteristics and value of an underlier, typically a commodity bond, equity or currency. Examples of derivatives include futures and options
Effective Interest rate (EIR)	The rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments or receipts through the expected life of a financial instrument. When calculating the EIR, the County Council shall estimate cash flows considering all contractual terms of the financial instrument
Equities	Shares representing the capital of a company issued to shareholders, usually with voting rights on the way the company runs the business
Fair value	The amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled
Financial instruments	Any contract giving rise to a financial asset or liability. For the County Council this is likely to be a loan or investment
Fixed interest	A corporate bond in the form of a certificate of debt issues by a company or institution in return for a fixed rate of interest with a promise of redemption to repay the original sum
Gilt	Similar to corporate bonds by way of interest and redemption, but these are issued by Government and are a loan to the Government
Forward foreign exchange	An agreement to purchase or sell an amount of foreign currency at a future date and predetermined price
Imprest accounts	Petty cash accounts used for small items of expenditure
Index linked	Stock whose value is related directly to an index, usually the Retail Price Index and therefore provides a hedge against inflation
Joint Venture	A joint arrangement whereby the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the net assets of the arrangement
Joint Operation	A joint arrangement whereby the parties that have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets, and obligation for the liabilities, relating to the arrangement

Liability	A present obligation of the County Council arising from past events, the settlement of which is expected to result in an outflow of resources
Minimum revenue provision (MRP)	The statutory amount set aside from the revenue budget which can be used to repay external loans
National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)	A tax collected locally by borough and district councils and paid to Central Government. It is then redistributed to county, unitary, borough and district councils on the basis of the resident population
Operating leases	A method of obtaining the use of an asset where the rewards and risks of ownership of the asset remain with the leasing company and the annual rental is charged directly to the revenue account
Pooled investment vehicles	A fund in which multiple investors contribute assets and hold them as a group, for example a unit trust
PPE (Property, Plant & Equipment)	For the purposes of the Statement of Accounts, the Council's property, plant & equipment is abbreviated to PPE.
Precept	The amount the County Council (the precepting authority) ask district and borough councils to collect as council tax.
Private Finance Initiative (PFI)	A long-term contractual public private partnership under which the private sector takes on the risks associated with the delivery of public services in exchange for payments tied to standards of performance
Provisions	Monies set aside to meet any liabilities or losses which are likely or will be incurred, but the amounts or the dates on which they will arise are uncertain e.g. provision for bad debts
Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)	A government agency which provides long-term loans to local authorities at favourable interest rates
Reserves	Money set aside to meet the cost of specific future expenditure. These can be either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usable – those which can be used to provide services • Unusable – those which cannot be used to provide services

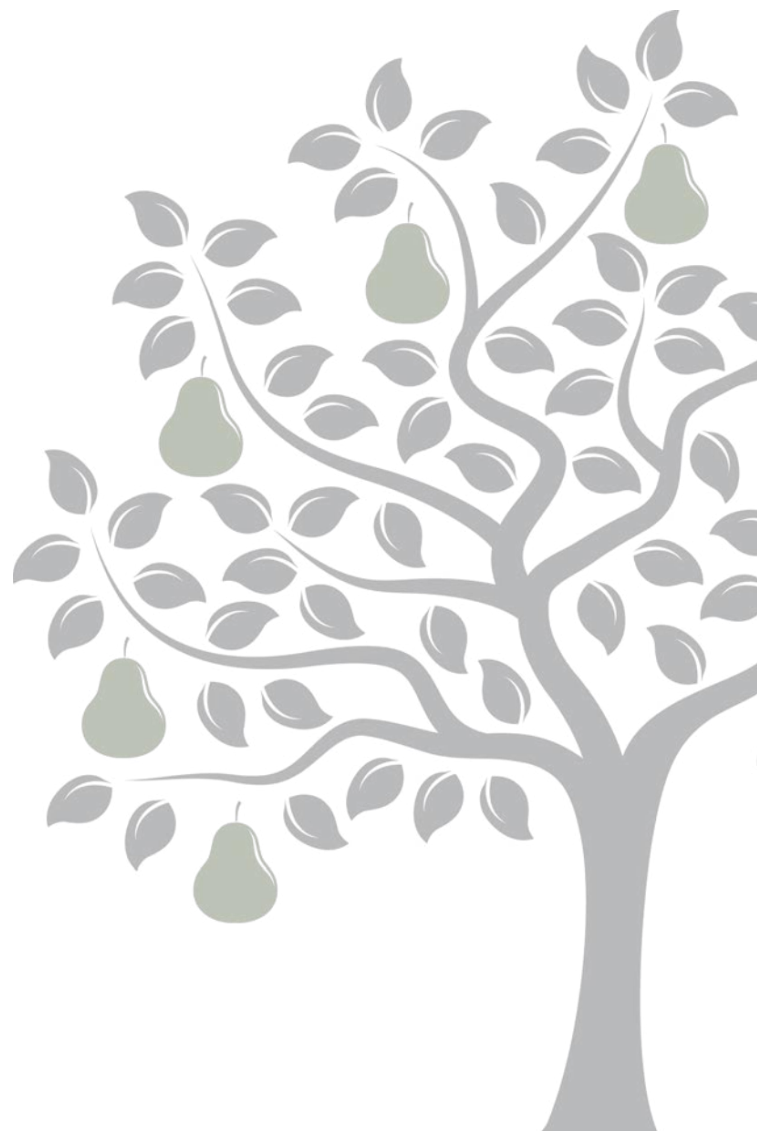
Revenue contributions to capital expenditure	The amount of capital expenditure to be financed directly from the annual revenue budget
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	A general central government grant paid to the County Council in support of annual revenue expenditure
Scheduled bodies	Local authorities and similar bodies whose staff are entitled automatically to become members of the Local Authority Pension Fund
Settlement costs	Settlement costs arise when a lump-sum payment is made to a scheme member in exchange for their rights to receive certain pension benefits
Stock lending	The temporary transfer of stock (shares / securities) to a third party for a fixed or open period of time. In return the owner of the stock receives an agreed consideration secured by collateral of equal or greater value than the loaned securities
Transfer values	Sums which are either paid to or received from other pension schemes and relate to new and former members' periods of pensionable employment with employers participating in the scheme

**Worcestershire
Pension Fund**



Annual Report and Financial Statements

for the year ending 31 March 2023



Find out more online:

www.worcestershirepensionfund.org.uk

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1. Chair's Foreword



1 Chair's Foreword

Welcome to the annual report for the Worcestershire Pension Fund ('the Fund') for the year ending 31 March 2023.

On behalf of the Pensions Committee, I am pleased to introduce an annual report which looks back on a scheme year in which the most notable achievements were:

- Successfully completing the (as at 31 March) 2022 actuarial valuation at which point we were 101% funded on a solvency basis. I think that's quite an achievement considering that on 31 March 2019 the Fund was 90% funded and the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023 included not only COVID but the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Incidentally, the position for our two largest employers who have a 45% share of the Fund's assets between them was that Worcestershire County Council was 107% funded and Herefordshire County Council was 98% funded.
- Retaining our signatory status to the UK Stewardship Code 2020.
- Making significant progress on restructuring our pensions administration department whilst continuing to have no backlogs, delivering a business-as-usual service, and meeting our KPI's.
- As part of the 2022 actuarial valuation producing updated versions of our Funding Strategy Statement and our All About our Investment Pots guidance note, and also reviewing our Making a Formal Representation for an Exit Credit Payment guidance note.
- Delivering a funding position of 101% at the latest actuarial triennial valuation as at 31 March 2022.
- Reviewing (and producing updated versions of) our key policy documents: Investment Strategy Statement, Governance Policy Statement, Pensions Administration Strategy, Policy Statement on Communications, Policy Statement on our Discretions, Training Policy and Programme, and Climate Change Risk Strategy.
- Adding a Policy on Conflicts of Interest, a Policy on Representation, and a Policy on Payment of Death Grants to our governance documents and reviewing our Business Plan and Risk Register.
- Delivering the Fund's third Climate Risk Report.

Picking out some highlights, the Committee agreed:

- To reduce further the carbon footprint of the Fund's listed equity portfolio; set an internal decarbonisation reduction target up to 2025 at which point it will be further reviewed; continue to invest a proportion of the Fund's portfolio in low carbon & sustainable investments; and use the Climate Scenario Analysis to track and better understand the portfolio's capacity to transition into a low carbon economy. To remove the Funds equity protection strategy, invest in private equity, and reduce exposure to the UK whilst increasing investment in North America.
- Actions in response to the proposals made by the Scheme Advisory Board's Good Governance project.
- Our 2022 audited/unaudited annual reports that were completed within the required timescales.

- LGPS Central Limited's (LGPSC) Strategic Business Plan & Budget for 2023/34.
- Our climate related Financial Disclosures.

Scheme membership has also continued to grow and is now 67,739.

As readers will be aware, the Fund primarily exists to pay pensions. This core activity of pension scheme administration was again delivered successfully throughout the year. From a Fund management perspective, it is worth noting that the increase in pensioners since 2009 reflects the fact that people are living longer these days. This in turn means that the Fund needs to have more money available for longer to meet the 'guaranteed pension for life' promises made to its pensioners compared to what was needed in the past.

The year saw the total employers who were contributing to the Fund increase from 183 to 189.

Whilst this annual report by its nature looks back on 2022/2023, our quarterly rolling Business Plan is provided at each Pensions Committee meeting. It reviews our ongoing progress in our key target areas and towards achieving our aspirations. It details our latest investment performance v benchmark and our latest performance against our target turnarounds for our key pension administration processes.

I'd like to finish my foreword by thanking all new and continuing members of the Committee, the Chair and members of the Pension Board, our advisers, staff at the Fund and our employers for all their continuing hard work for the Fund and its members.



**Councillor Elizabeth Eyre Chair
Worcestershire Pension Fund Pensions Committee**

2. Management & Financial Performance



2. Management & Financial Performance

Scheme management and advisors on 31 March 2023

Administering Authority: Worcestershire County Council
Address: County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester WR5 2NP
Scheme Manager: Phil Rook, Chief Financial Officer

Pensions Committee on 31 March 2023

Representative	Meetings attended					Training received			
	28/ 06	13/ 10	13/ 12	08/ 02	22/ 03	13/ 05	22/ 06	03/ 10	08/ 02
Cllr E Eyre (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr A Hardman (Vice Chair)		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Cllr L Mallett						✓			
Cllr T Marsh	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Cllr S Richardson Brown	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
J Evans – Unison (Employee Representative)									
S Flynn (Employer Representative)		✓	✓	✓		✓			✓
Cllr K Hanks	✓	✓		✓	✓				

Pension Board on 31 March 2023

Representative	Meetings attended				Training received			
	07/ 06	05/ 10	22/ 11	03/ 03	13/ 05	22/ 06	03/ 10	08/ 02
Roger Phillips (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Cllr Paul Harrison			✓	✓	✓			✓
Bridget Clark		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Andrew Lovegrove								
Adam Pruszyński (Lucy Whitehead to 22/11)	✓		✓	✓	✓			
Kim Wright			✓					
Cllr Tony Miller				✓				✓

The Chair of the Pensions Committee, Councillor Elizabeth Eyre, also attends the Board.

Notes:

(1) The training on 13 May was on ‘Does what we are paying our investment managers represent value for money?’.

(2) The training on 22 June was on the actuarial valuation 2022.

(3) The training on 3 October was on private equity.

(4) The training on 8 February was an ESG / responsible investment workshop.

Pension Investment Sub-Committee on 31 March 2023

Councilor A I Hardman (Chair)

Councilor E Eyre

Councilor K Hanks

Councilor T Marsh

LGPS Central Limited Shareholder Representative

Councilor A I Hardman

Investment managers on 31 March 2023

AEW

Bridgepoint (was EQT)

Gresham House Alternative Asset Management & Investment

Hermes Investment Management

Igneo (was First Sentier) Investments

Invesco Real Estate

Legal & General Investment Management

LGPS Central Limited

Macquarie Group Ltd (was UK Green Investment Bank) Nomura Asset Management UK Ltd

Stonepeak Infrastructure partners

Venn Partners

Walton Street Capital, LLC

Global custodian (2022/2023)

BNY Mellon (Northern Trust for assets managed by LGPSC)

Independent investment adviser (2022/2023)

M J Hudson

Actuary

Mercer

Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Adviser

LGPS Central Limited

Bankers

Barclays

Auditors to the Fund

Grant Thornton UK LLP

Legal adviser

Worcestershire County Council

In-house AVC providers

Scottish Widows and Utmost Life

LGPS Central Limited

Mike Weston, Chief Executive Officer

Pension Administration Advisory Forum

All employers were invited to the 22 June 2022 forum.

3. Risk Management



3. Risk Management

Risk management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their likelihood and potential impact and determining the most effective methods for controlling or responding to them.

The Fund has a dedicated Risk Register that is regularly reviewed by the leadership team and updated quarterly. The Pensions Committee receives regular updates on the key risks facing the Fund, and the latest Risk Register is reported to each regular Committee meeting.

Each risk is initially assigned a score designed to reflect the likelihood of it occurring and impacts faced by the Fund if it were to occur.

Risks are then categorised against a series of mitigations designed to reduce the likelihood and/or impact. Risks are colour coded and assigned a red, amber or green status according to the degree of risk posed. On 31 March 2023 the Fund's most significant risks were after taking into account mitigating actions and controls:

- Mismatch in asset returns and liability movements, leading to exposure to risk or missing investment opportunities or increases in employer contributions.
- Having insufficient resources in pensions administration, leading to Insufficient staff resource or remaining staff not having the skills to do their areas of work.
- Inflation, leading to (1) higher employers pay settlements, leading to increases in liabilities; (2) lower real investment returns, requiring increases in employer contributions and leading to weaker employer covenants and (3) increased pension payments, putting pressure on liquidity

The nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments are detailed in note 16 of the accounts further on in this document.

LGPS Central Limited

There is a separate risk register relating to investment pooling which the Practitioner Advisory Forum, the main Partner Fund working group, maintains. The LGPSC Joint Committee oversees the risk register to ensure risks are logged and mitigating actions put in place. LGPSC, the pooling delivery company, maintains its own risk register, which is overseen by the company board.

Systems of internal control

The Fund's Statement of Accounts and Annual Report are subject to an external audit by Grant Thornton that provides a separate opinion for both the accounts and the annual report. Grant Thornton also conducts a number of interim audits throughout the year to test the design effectiveness of the Fund's internal controls.

In addition to external audit, the Fund receives regular reviews from the Council's Internal Audit department who test the internal control systems and processes employed. Internal Audit obtains assurance on the internal control environment through a series of audits of key areas.

4. Financial Performance



4. Financial Performance

Triennial valuation

Every three years the Fund commissions a formal valuation from the Fund's actuary which produces two key outputs.

Firstly, it quantifies the ongoing funding level, i.e. the level to which the Fund's pension liabilities for the accrued benefits of current employees, deferred pensioners and pensions in payment are matched by the market value of the Fund's assets. A funding level of less than 100% implies that there is a deficit between the Fund's assets and liabilities at that date.

Secondly, it also sets the rate at which employers should contribute to the Fund for the following three years along with any deficit recovery payments.

The table summarises the funding position on 31 March 2022 compared to the funding position at the last formal valuation on 31 March 2019.

Summary valuation results

	31 March 2019 £m	31 March 2022 £m
Total past service liability	3,090	3,585
Fund assets	2,795	3,562
Surplus/ (deficit)	(295)	23
Funding level	90%	101%

On 31 March 2023 we estimate that the Fund was 96% funded as a result of the impact of macroeconomic and geopolitical pressures on global markets.

To meet the requirements of the regulations, we have set a clear long-term funding objective; to achieve and then maintain assets equal to 100% of projected accrued liabilities, assessed on an ongoing basis.

In tandem with the actuarial valuation the actuary helps us to produce a Funding Strategy Statement that focuses on the pace at which future benefits will be funded and on practical measures to ensure that employers pay for their own liabilities.

Contribution rates

Members' contributions are set at a rate which covers only part of the cost of accruing benefits after the valuation date. Employers pay the balance of the cost of delivering future benefits to members.

At the 2022 actuarial valuation a common rate of contribution of 18.8% of pensionable pay per annum was set for employers from 1 April 2023. These range over individual employers from 15.5% to 29.2%.

As the actuary assessed the particular circumstances of each employer, including the strength of its covenant and its individual membership experience within the Fund, the actuary applied individual adjustments to each employer to reflect these circumstances.

This resulted in a higher contribution rate than the baseline percentage and/or an annual cash contribution at a fixed amount being set for many employers.

The next actuarial valuation and review of the Funding Strategy Statement will be carried out as at 31

March 2025, with any changes to employers' contribution rates being implemented with effect from 1 April 2026. Our Funding Strategy Statement and the 2022 Actuarial Valuation Report are available from our website.

Analytical review of Fund Account and Net Assets Statement

The following table provides a brief overview of the major movements in the Fund Account and Net Assets Statement for the financial year 2022/2023. The full Statement of Accounts is included from page 56 of this report.

Fund Account category	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	Notes
Net contributions	(44.4)	(33.0)	Contributions received increased year on year whilst Management expenses decreased. This was in part offset by an increase in
Return on investments	264.2	57.0	Investment income remained stable year on year however the change in market value, although still positive, wasn't as great in 2022.23 as in 2021.22.

Operational expenses – comparison of 2022/23 forecast to actual.

	2022/23 Budget £000	2022/23 Actual £000	2022/23 Variance £000
Administration, oversight & governance			
Employees	930	1,137	207
Supplies & services	231	385	154
Actuarial fees	410	500	90
Investment advisor expenses	88	55	-33
IT costs	393	373	-20
External audit fees	34	89	55
LGPSC governance & running costs	777	622	-155
Other expenses	0	40	40
Legal fees	10	29	19
Total	2,873	3,230	357
Investment management			
External fund managers	16,029	10,657	-5,372
Transaction costs	2,000	3,665	1,665
Custodian	113	113	0
Total	18,142	14,435	-3,707
Overall total	21,015	17,665	-3,350

Administration and management costs per member past 5 years

Process	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Investment management expenses					
Total cost (£'m)	11.9	14.4	17.3	20.4	15.1
Total membership (Nos)	62,254	63,635	64,770	66,599	67,739
Cost per member (£)	191	226	267	306	223
Administration costs					
Total cost (£'m)	1.1	1.5	2.0	1.7	1.5
Total membership (Nos)	62,254	63,635	64,770	66,599	67,739
Cost per member (£)	18	24	31	26	22
Oversight and governance costs					
Total cost (£'m)	0.1	0.1	0.9	1.1	1.0
Total membership (Nos)	62,254	63,635	64,770	66,599	67,739
Cost per member (£)	1.6	1.6	13.9	17	15
Total cost per member (£)	210.6	251.6	311.9	348.0	260.0

Oversight and governance costs have not significantly changed since 2020/21 when the allocation of LGPSC pool governance and running costs were included. Previously they were included as part of the investment management expenses.

The table below outlines the Fund's performance for key financial variables for the past 5 years

* The contributions receivable was higher in 2020/21 than in other years due to some larger employers paying their contributions 3 years in advance.

** The increase in transfers 2020/21 was due to a large employer transferring into the Fund.

	2018/19 £'m	2019/20 £'m	2020/21 £'m	2021/22 £'m	2022/23 £'m
Contributions and Benefits					
Contributions receivable*	81.8	87.5	201.2	90.7	97.9
Individual transfers	12.9	12.9	29.0	13.7	22.0
Total contributions and transfers in	94.7	100.4	230.2	104.4	119.9
Benefits payable	(106.3)	(111.9)	(112.6)	(115.6)	(122.6)
Payments to and on account of leavers	(8.7)	(11.2)	(9.5)	(10.0)	(12.7)
Total benefits paid and transfers out	(115.0)	(123.1)	(122.1)	(125.6)	(135.3)
Management and admin expenses	(13.1)	(16.0)	(20.2)	(23.2)	(17.6)
Sub total	(33.4)	(38.7)	87.9	(44.4)	(33.0)
Return on investments					
Investment income	50.2	47.9	28.7	37.0	37.9
Change in market value of investments	77.5	(159.1)	602.8	227.2	19.1
Net return on investments	127.7	(111.2)	631.5	264.2	57.0
Net increase in the Fund during the year	94.3	(149.9)	719.4	219.8	24.0

3-year forecast management expenses 2023/24 to 2025/26

	2023/24 Budget £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000
Administration/oversight & governance			
Pension scheme administration recharge	1,331	1,388	1,448
Actuarial services*	380	380	430
Audit	34	35	36
Legal fees	10	10	10
Committee and governance recharge	10	10	10
Total	1,765	1,823	1,934
Investment administration costs			
Investment administration recharge	163	167	170
LGPSC central governance & running costs	870	840	874
Investment custodial and related services	140	147	155
Investment professional fees	165	97	140
Performance measurement	44	45	46
Total	1,382	1,296	1,385
Investment management			
External fund managers**	17,817	19,080	20,877
Transaction costs	2,000	2,000	2,000
Total	19,817	21,080	22,877
Overall Total	22,964	24,199	26,196

* Actuarial fees are higher in 2025/26 due to this being a valuation year.

** External managers' fees are subject to market valuations

5. Administration Report 2022/23



5. Administration Report 2022 / 2023

Making significant progress on restructuring our pensions administration department whilst continuing to have no backlogs, delivering a business-as-usual service, and meeting our KPIs makes 2022 / 2023 , we believe, a year to be very proud of .

We are dedicated to delivering good governance, and in that regard it was a year that saw us reviewing (and produce updated versions of) our key policy documents: Governance Policy Statement, Pensions Administration Strategy, Policy Statement on Communications, Policy Statement on our Discretions, and Training Policy and Programme. We added a Policy on Conflicts of Interest, a Policy on Representation, and a Policy on Payment of Death Grants to our governance documents and reviewed the format of our quarterly our Business Plan and Risk Register. We also produced quarterly position statements to summarize progress on how we are taking forward the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board's (SAB) Good Governance workstream in preparation for statutory guidance being issued.

On cyber security we checked out our pensions administration supplier's cyber security review and produced cyber security tips for Board and Committee members who would not otherwise be updated by Worcestershire County Council's ongoing training programme.

On data quality the results of our 2022 NFI data matching showed us only having 2 mismatches overall.

We collected employer declarations on a McCloud checklist / declarations form that had links for employers to supply all missing data if they had not confirmed that there was no data missing.

We launched our own completely stand-alone (from Worcestershire County Council' website) website and delivered an online stewardship survey of our pensioners. In 2022 / 2023 our website had 80,317 visits compared to 44,567 in 2021/2022.

As usual, paying pensions, processing retirements, processing deaths, processing refunds, delivering our year end, providing employers' with FRS / IAS information for their accounts, and issuing annual benefit statements / newsletters / Pension Savings Statements / pensioner P60s and pay slips were our major administration deliverables. New employers, employer restructures and delivering training for Pensions Committee and Pension Board members also required significant resource.

We deliver our service using:

- The Altair pensions administration system.
- Our stand-alone website.
- Dedicated resource for each member requirement.
- Monthly employer newsletters and online training.
- Computer hardware, software and the County Council's computer network.

We have arrangements in place to ensure the accuracy and confidentiality of personal data. The Fund conforms with Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) breach notification process and WCC's data policy, for example through the use of data encryption and password protection. Systems are reviewed by internal and external audit and set up in line with data protection regulations.

Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP)

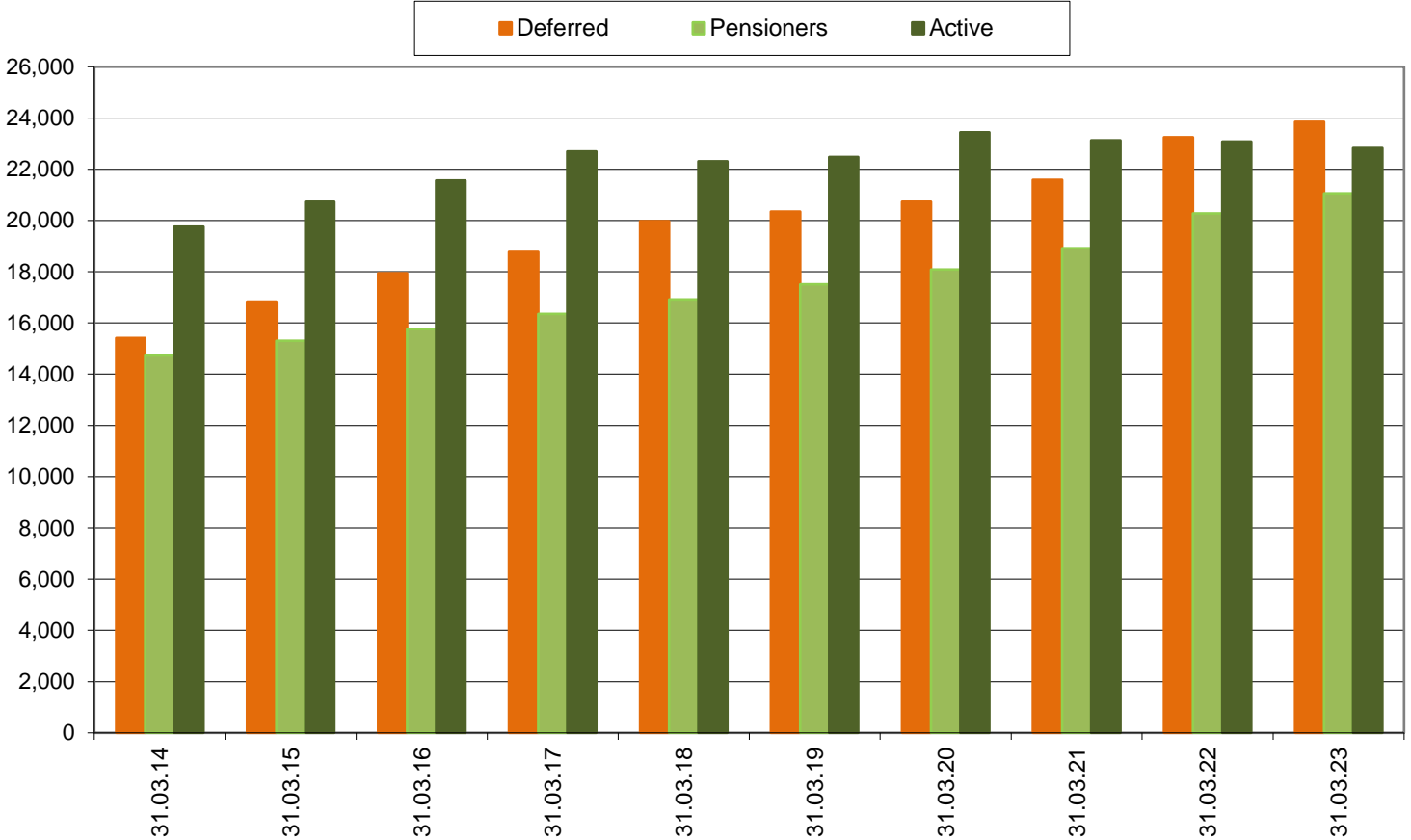
There are times when members, employers and the Fund may find themselves in disagreement about a pensions issue. The first approach in these situations is for those involved to talk to each other to reach resolution. However, should this not prove possible, the Fund has an IDRP. Our appeals procedure is detailed on our website.

Policy Statement on Communications

The Policy Statement provides an overview of how the Fund will communicate with its stakeholders. An effective communications strategy is vital for the Fund to meet its objective of providing a high quality and consistent service. Scheme communications are a critical activity; they are the external face of the Fund and provide a key link with its stakeholders. The Fund continuously looks at ways to enhance its communication offering to the various audiences and the Policy Statement is reviewed annually with a revised version will be published following any material change. Our Policy Statement on Communications is included within the Fund's Administration Strategy and is referenced in Appendix B below.

Membership and employer movement and Scheme complexity

The Fund continues to experience a year-on-year increase in the total number of members.



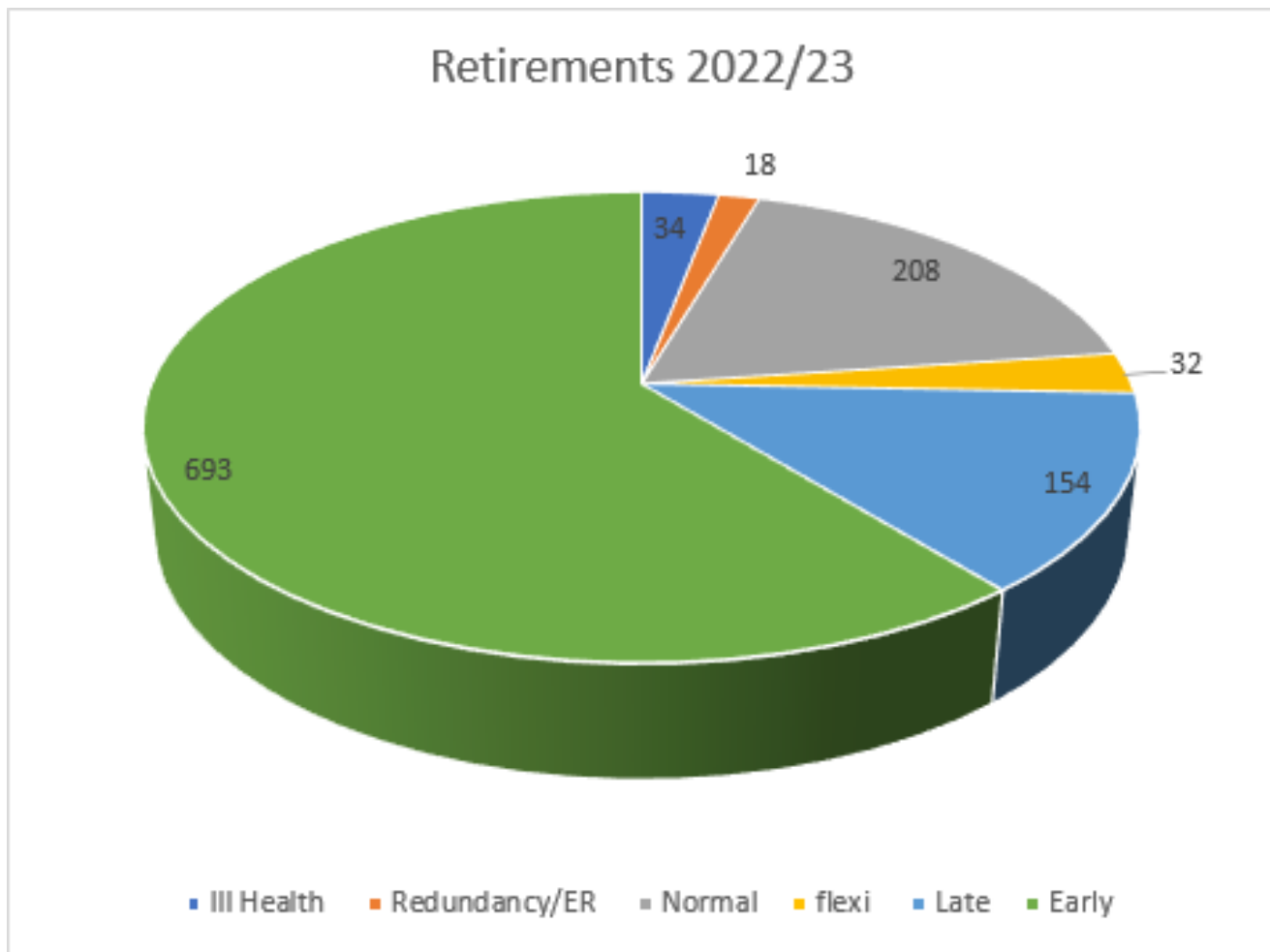
The table below summarises the age ranges of the membership over the three categories of active, deferred and pensioner on 31 March 2023:

Age group	Active	Pensioner*	Deferred	Total	%
0-20	262	109	10	381	0.56
21-25	1,063	34	255	1,352	2.00
26-30	1,437	1	853	2,291	3.38
31-35	2,006	2	1,883	3,891	5.74
36-40	2,397	7	2,604	5,008	7.39
41-45	2,845	25	2,993	5,863	8.66
46-50	3,117	55	3,614	6,786	10.02
51-55	3,792	174	4,875	8,841	13.05
56-60	3,408	1,168	4,569	9,145	13.50
61-65	2,044	3,363	1,930	7,337	10.83
66-70	387	4,957	204	5,548	8.19
71-75	64	4,482	55	4,601	6.79
76-80	0	3,392	10	3,399	5.02
81-85	0	1,825	0	1,825	2.69
86-90	0	1,009	0	1,009	1.49
90+	0	462	0	462	0.68
Total	22,822	21,062	23,855	67,739	100%

* Pensioner column includes dependents.

Retirements during 2022/23

There were 1,139 retirements during 2022/23 as summarised in the chart below:



The Fund has 189 contributing employers whose employees are members of the LGPS:

Active on 31/03/2023	
Scheduled bodies	114
Designated bodies	26
Admitted bodies	49
Total	189

Notes:

- Scheduled (in the regulations) bodies are organisations whose employees qualify to become members of the LGPS by right. These include county councils, district councils, foundation schools/colleges and academies.
- Designated bodies are organisations that have passed resolutions with town or parish councils to offer the LGPS to their employees.
- Admitted bodies are organisations that fall into none of the previous 2 categories. Admitted bodies are voluntary/charitable bodies and other organisations to whom local government employees have been transferred under the outsourcing of local government services whose staff can, at the discretion of their employer, become members of the LGPS.

Our performance

The Fund benchmarks its administration performance against CIPFA benchmarks as outlined in the table below. The Fund achieved 100% compliance. We measure how we perform against our target turnarounds for our key processes:

Activity / process	Average turnaround achieved (working days) 2021/22	Average turnaround achieved (working days) 2022/23	Target turnaround (working days)
Joiners' notification of date of joining	19	15	40
Process and pay refund	4	5	10
Calculate and notify deferred benefits	8	7	30
Letter notifying actual retirement benefits	2	2	15
Letter notifying amount of dependent's benefits	3	3	10
Letter acknowledging death of member	3	4	5
Letter detailing Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) for divorce	2	2	45
Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits	3	3	15
Letter detailing transfer in quote	2	2	10
Process and pay lump sum retirement grant	10	14	23
Letter detailing transfer out quote	3	3	10
Letter detailing PSO implementation	4	4	15

We continue to monitor this and improve our data capturing of the information against the CIPFA benchmarks. For example, in response to the cost of living being a major news story over the year, we monitored our number of flexible retirements and opt-outs.

Detailed below are the number of each case type processed in the year and the percentage achieved within the KPI.

Activity / process	Number processed 2022/23	% Processed within KPI 2022/23
Joiners' notification of date of joining	3979	94
Process and pay refund	826	93
Calculate and notify deferred benefits	1968	99
Letter notifying actual retirement benefits	546	99
Letter notifying amount of dependent's benefits	205	98

Activity/Process	Number processed 2022/23	% Processed within KPI 2022/23
Letter acknowledging death of a member	493	79
Letter detailing cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) for divorce	128	100
Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits	1471	99
Letter detailing transfer in quote	634	98
Process and pay lump sum retirement grant	1188	100
Letter detailing transfer out quote	524	96
Letter detailing Pension Sharing Order (PSO) implementation	2	100

The administration team comprises of 39.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff. The Fund therefore has a ratio of one full time equivalent member of the team for every 1,710 Fund members.

In 2022/2023 we had two data breaches, completed seven Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP), and have four cases in progress.

Value for money

At £1.5m our administration costs for 22/23 were £0.2m less than the previous year. Our cost per member is £23.09.

In 2022/23 our administration team of 39.6 FTE (as at 31 March 2023) achieved the average CIPFA benchmark turnaround target for all 12 standard processes.

In line with guidance from The Pensions Regulator (TPR), we continue to measure the quality of our data. The last measure was taken in October 2022.

The percentage of member records passing ALL tests required by The Pensions Regulator was:

- Common data 95.4% (our 2021 score was 95.0%).
- Scheme-specific data 98.4% (our 2021 score was 98.7%).

The percentage (2021 previous year in brackets) of our member records without a single 'common data' failure was 92.4% (92.4%).

In the core list of TPR 'common data' tests our pass rates were: National Insurance Number 99.7% (100%); Name 100% (100%); Sex and Date of Birth 100% (100%); Date Commenced and Normal Retirement Date 100% (99.9%); Status 100% (100%); and Address 93.5% (95.1%).

The percentage of our member records without a single 'scheme-specific data' failure was 98.3% (98.7%). In the core list of TPR 'scheme-specific data' tests our pass rates were Member Benefits 99.6% (99.9%);

Member Details 99.5% (99.9%); CARE benefits 98.6% (98.0%); HMRC 99.8% (100.0%); and Contracted Out 98.8% (98.5%).

Looking ahead, we are committed to delivering an even more modern and efficient value for money service.

6. Investment Policy & Performance



6. Investment Policy & Performance

Investment management

Subject to the LGPS regulations on allowable investments, the Fund may invest in a wide range of assets including quoted equity, government bonds, corporate bonds, money markets, traded options, financial futures/derivatives and alternative strategies including infrastructure/property pooled funds.

The Fund's investment objective is to support the funding strategy by adopting an investment strategy and structure which incorporate an appropriate balance between risk and return. Our Investment Strategy Statement is referenced at Appendix C.

The Pensions Committee has responsibility for the investment strategy of the Fund but has established a Pension Investment Sub-Committee and delegated oversight of its implementation to the Chief Financial Officer. The Committee regularly reviews the Fund's investment management arrangements. In broad terms on 31 March 2023 the Fund's strategic allocation was to be invested 70% in equities, 10% in fixed income and 20% in property/alternatives/private equity. The Fund's assets are managed day to day by the Fund's appointed specialist, external investment managers.

Target asset allocation

The table below shows the actual distribution of assets across the main asset categories. This changes year on year as a result of the target asset allocation, the performance of the underlying asset classes, managers' performance, and rebalancing.

Strategic Actual and Target Asset Allocations

Asset Class	Actual portfolio weight	Actual portfolio weight	Target portfolio weight
	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2023
Total Equities	74.4%	68.5%	70.0%
	-		
Total Actively Managed Equities	19.4%	24.2%	26.0%
Far East Developed	10.5%	10.1%	10.0%
Emerging Markets	9.2%	8.6%	10.0%
Global Sustainable Active Fund	0.0%	5.5%	6.0%
Total passively managed equities - market capitalisation indices	38.7%	28.5%	29.0%
United Kingdom	19.1%	17.2%	17.0%
North America	12.2%	5.1%	6.5%

Asset class	Actual portfolio weight	Actual portfolio weight	Target portfolio weight
	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	31 March 2023
Europe ex UK	7.4%	6.2%	5.5%
Passively managed equities – alternative indices	16%	15.8%	15.0%
Equity Protection Strategy	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Fixed Interest	7.5%	7.8%	10.0%
Actively managed bonds & corporate private debt	7.5%	7.8%	10.0%
Total actively managed alternative assets	18.1%	23.7%	20.0%
Property	5.8%	8.6%	7.5%
Infrastructure	12.3%	15.1%	12.5%
TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The Fund had an equity protection strategy in place on 31 March 2022 but not on 31 March 2023.

There are still a number of undrawn capital commitments related to property and infrastructure. These take a number of years and are being funded from disinvestments in the equity portfolio to meet the strategic target allocations.

Details of the largest equity investments as at 31 March 2023

Top 10 direct equity investments	Market value of holding on 31st March 2023 (£)	Percentage of total fund assets
AstraZeneca	43,194,092	1.22%
Shell	41,977,357	1.18%
Taiwan Semicon Man	41,329,842	1.17%
Tencent Holdings	37,181,483	1.05%
Apple	36,190,620	1.02%
Microsoft	33,521,751	0.95%
HSBC	29,201,639	0.82%
Unilever	27,376,537	0.77%
BP	23,726,332	0.67%
Diageo	20,684,494	0.58%

Report of the Independent Investment Advisor

What a year that was!

In a sense this last year has seen a roll forward of the consequences arising from what was breaking news at the end of the last year; namely the Russian invasion of Ukraine. It should have been the post Covid-19 recovery period, instead we saw world markets unsettled by substantially higher fuel and food prices, leading to a much higher level of inflation than we have seen for a very long time. Of much greater impact to our members would have been the even higher rate at which the cost of living was rising. In the UK the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) peaked at 11.1% in October, with a small decline to 10.1% by March.

Central banks were effectively caught between a rock and a hard place, knowing that they had to raise interest rates to try to bring inflation back to more reasonable levels, but at the same time not wishing to cause unnecessary damage to economic activity as a result. In March the UK Base Rate rose to 4.25%, with an expectation that further increases would be necessary, given that inflation is staying higher and for longer than had been forecast by the Bank of England.

One notable success in the economic battle with Putin was that European gas supplies had been boosted by an increase in storage capacity ahead of the 2022-23 winter. That, combined with a generally mild winter, has seen energy prices falling considerably from the peak levels seen after the invasion of Ukraine. Attention has also been focused on increasing the amount of energy derived from non-fossil fuel origins, thus increasing the sustainability of future energy supplies independent of Russia.

The 2022-23 fiscal year was certainly a tale of two halves so far as Fund values were concerned, along with the differentiated performance of public and private markets. Fund values fell during H1 and then recovered to some extent during H2, ending the year down by just -1.0% (£3.55bn. v. £3.59bn.). Given the turmoil seen at times during the course of the year, this is an encouraging outcome in the circumstances. In general terms equities fell during H1 and then recovered to some degree during H2, with the position reversed for the private market investments. Emerging Markets were particularly volatile, driven in large part by China.

While the Fund and its benchmark have generated positive returns, the Fund has underperformed its benchmark by -0.5%. The underperformance has been primarily generated by equity assets, and by the underperformance of the Fixed Income assets. Infrastructure slightly underperformed whilst the Property outperformed. It should be noted that many of the Alternative assets are investing in new portfolios; these types of portfolios often underperform initially due to the expenses of these funds 'investing' and that it takes time for many of these vehicles to generate significant positive returns from their investments. It is pleasing to be able to report that the Funding Level has remained stable over the year, at or near 100%.

The two main focuses of attention for the Pensions Committee have been the Triennial valuation and following on from that the Strategic Asset Allocation review. The Triennial valuation provided encouraging reassurance that the Fund remains in good health, with just a flag of concern about a possible deteriorating cashflow outlook, reflecting higher inflation and consequent increases in pension payments. This has been considered as part of the Strategic Asset Allocation review, which recommends that we consider building up a portfolio of income generating assets over time. As part of the evolution of the investment portfolio to reflect the improved Funding position and to help with matching to liabilities an initial investment strategy to invest in Private Equity has been approved.

As the year drew to a close the Fund bade farewell to Michael Hudson, the Chief Financial Officer and to Rob Wilson, the Finance Manager for Pensions. They have been instrumental in overseeing a complete transformation of the Fund's governance and operational management over the last five years, such that Worcestershire Pension Fund is now amongst the elite of the Funds within the LGPS. We have welcomed Phil Rook as the new Chief Financial Officer and Sherief Loutfy as Rob's successor in charge of the Fund's investments.

The outlook for the economy and world markets is distinctly cloudy, in fact a deep look into the proverbial crystal ball is about as good as it gets at the moment. Even the Bank of England doesn't seem to have much of a clue about what happens next.

Geopolitics has a big part to play in this uncertainty. It has to be hoped that Ukraine's resolve to drive the invaders out of their country is successful in the near term and that Putin is put in his box. The trouble is that instability in that region is likely to continue, regardless of the short-term outcome. Continued and if anything intensified sabre rattling by the Chinese government certainly doesn't help the nerves, for us or investment markets. This will almost certainly run and run for the foreseeable future.

In the short term the current volatility in financial markets, coupled with high interest rates and inflation clearly raises some concerns. LGPS pensioners have the benefit of index linked (CPI) increases to their pensions each year. This is in contrast to most private sector pension schemes, that tend to have a cap (or a limit) on the amount that pensions will increase each year, regardless of the rate of inflation. Certainly, for pensioners this provides some relief to the rapid increase in the cost of living, but it is acknowledged that with the large increases seen in energy costs and most food items times will still be challenging for many.

Over the longer term the investment strategy of the Fund is designed to ensure that the ability to pay pensions in the short, medium, and long term is fully maintained. The Fund invests in a diversified range of assets that over time is anticipated to increase in value and to provide a secure flow of income to pay those pensions. The assumptions that are made in the management of the Fund are regularly reviewed to ensure that changes to economic forecasts, including the cost of living, are incorporated within the investment strategy. With the expectations that the rate of inflation and interest rates will stay relatively high in the short term, but then fall back to lower levels (but higher than we have seen in recent years), the recent asset allocation review ensures that the investment strategy is adjusted accordingly to maintain the correct balance of assets between those that see a growth in value over time and those that generate a steady flow of income. One of the great strengths of the LGPS is the way in which it is designed to provide a secure income in retirement to our pensioners and to be able to absorb short term challenges due to the long-term strength of the asset base.

Philip Hebson
Independent Investment Advisor
July 2023

Investment monitoring and performance

The Pension Investment Sub-Committee monitors external managers' performance and makes investment manager and asset allocation recommendations. The Fund does not automatically rebalance mandates in line with the long-term investment policy as set out in the Investment Strategy Statement. Therefore, portfolio weights may vary compared to their long-term strategic total Fund weight. The Fund's actual asset valuations across UK, Non-UK and Global on 31 March 2023 are shown below.

Asset class	UK £m	Non-UK £m	Global £m	Total £m
Equities	612.2	1,062.8	756.9	2,431.9
Bonds	0.0	0.0	184.0	184.0
Pooled property	232.7	90.8	0.0	323.6
Pooled infrastructure	204.3	307.5	0.0	511.8
Pooled debt	34.8	57.5	0.0	92.3
Cash and cash equivalents	12.4	0.0	0.0	12.4
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	1,096.5	1,518.6	940.8	3,556.0

The Fund's investment performance is measured quarterly by Portfolio Evaluation Ltd against a number of benchmarks. The table below details the Fund's actual performance against these benchmarks over the 1 year, 3 years and 5 years to 31 March 2023.

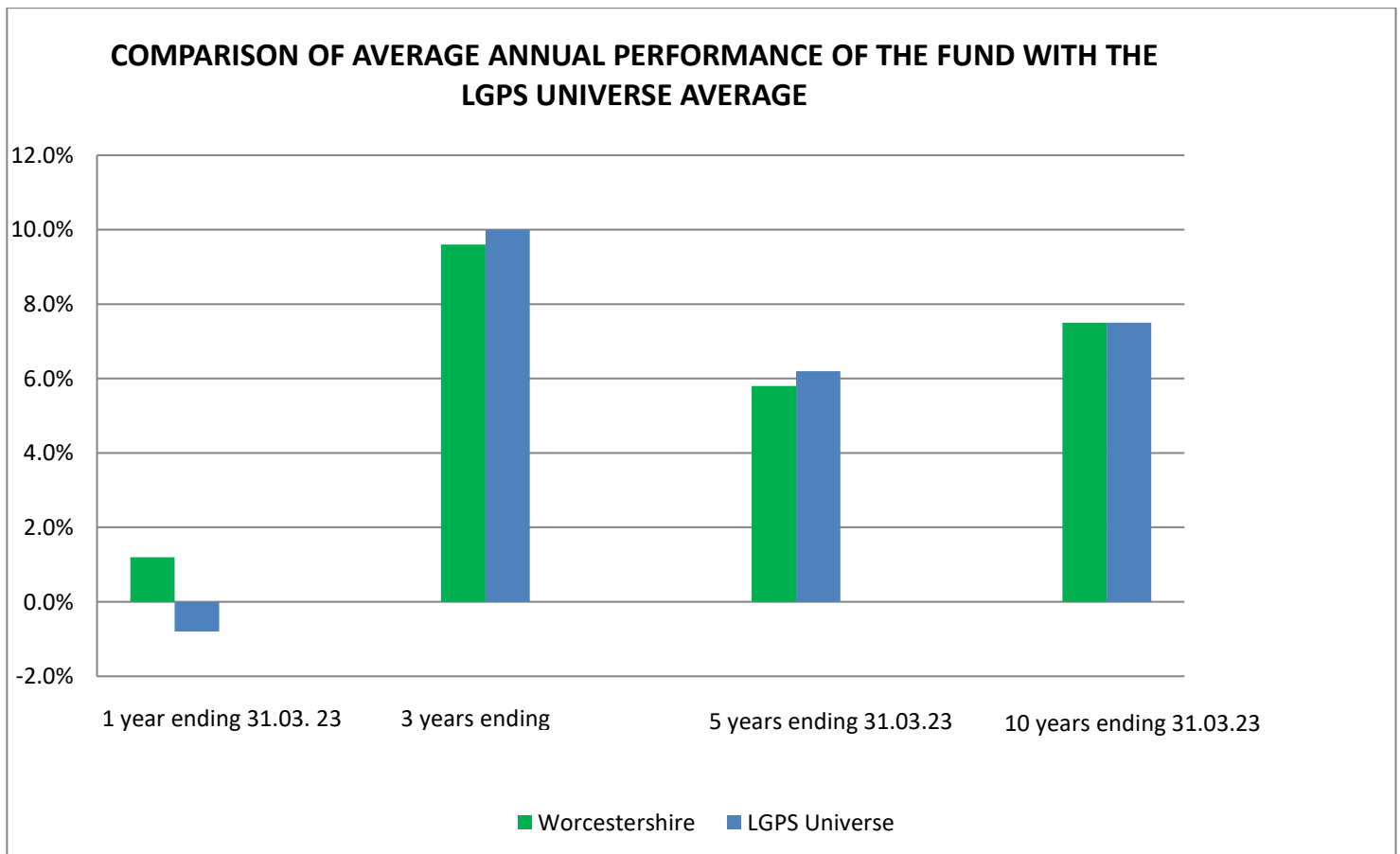
Fund performance by Asset Class

Asset class	1-year actual return %	1-year benchmark return %	3-year actual return %	3-year benchmark return %	5-year actual return %	5-year benchmark return %
Active equities	-4.8	-1.3	7.7	10.1	2.1	3.9
Passive equities	2.6	3.0	16.5	16.0	9.1	8.2
Alternative passive equities	0.3	0.5	12.7	13.3	8.8	9.4
Bonds	-10.8	-9.0	-2.0	-1.9		
Pooled private debt	11.3	6.0	6.9	6.0		
Pooled property	9.9	-6.4	4.4	5.5	4.5	6.1
Pooled infrastructure	12.8	13.0	10.6	10.9	8.5	10.0
Total Fund	1.2	1.7	9.6	11.0	5.8	6.3

The Fund produced a return of 1.2% for the year to 31 March 2023, which gave an underperformance of 0.5% against the benchmark of 1.7%. The Fund's performance continues to be in line with benchmark over the 10-year period.

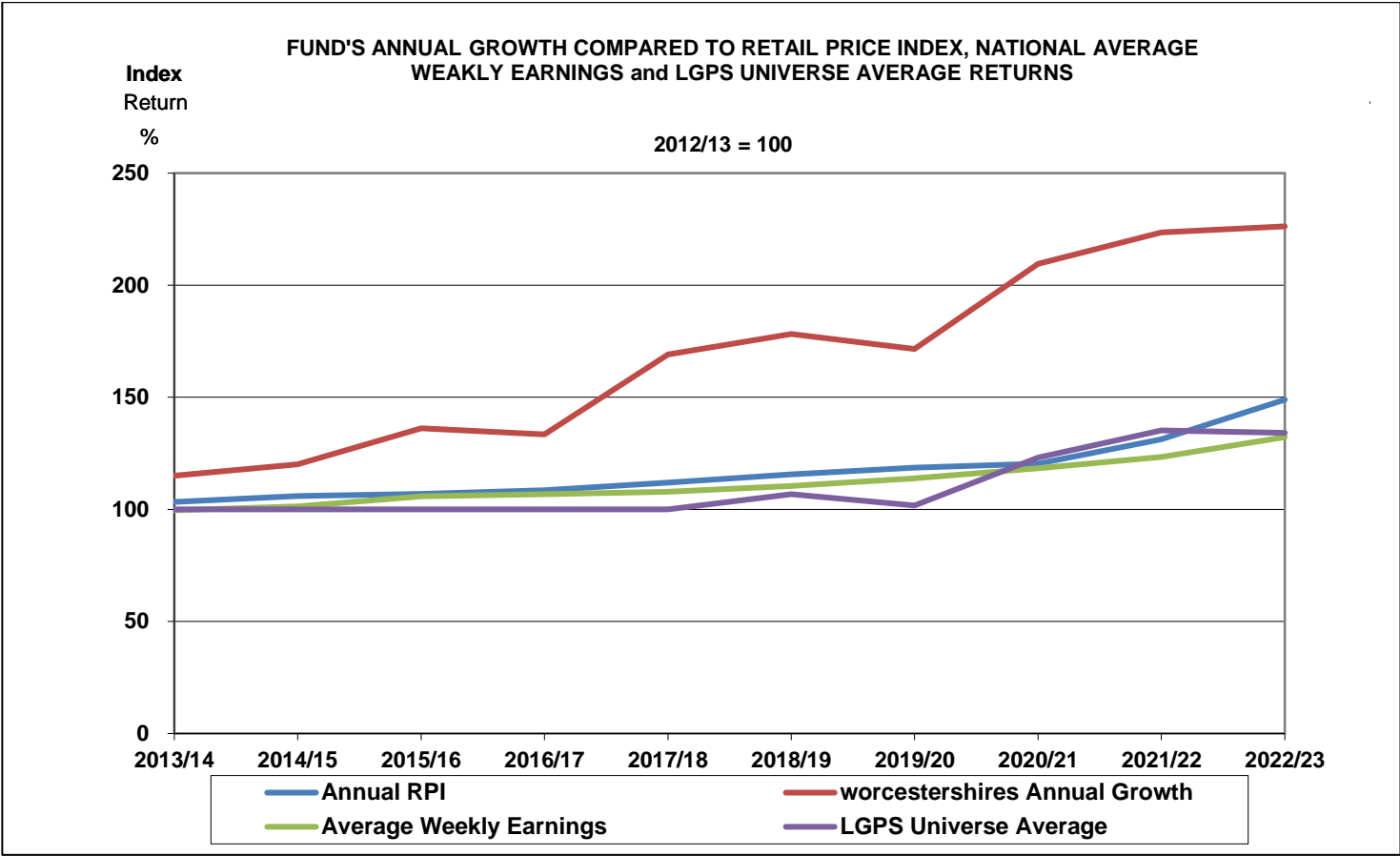
Performance was better than the LGPS universe over 1 year. The Fund slightly underperformed the LGPS universe and over 3 and 5 year periods but performance is in line over the 10-year period.

Comparison of average annual performance of the Fund with the LGPSC partners' median return and the LGPS universe



The following chart tracks the cumulative impact of long-term Fund performance since 2013/14 relative to the following key measures, the LGPSC universe, the Retail Prices Index (RPI) and annual average weekly earnings.

Fund's Annual Growth Compared to Retail Price Index, National Average Weekly Earnings and LGPSC Universe Returns



Investment fees

The Fund generally has an ad-valorem fee scale applied in respect of the investment management services it receives. This is generally accepted practice for passive tracking mandates and is easily understood.

A performance-related fee basis is sometimes set if it is believed to be in the overall financial interests of the Fund, particularly for active mandates where higher fees are paid for more consistent outperformance of market indices. The approach taken varies depending on the type of investment and the target being set.

The Fund reports in line with the CIPFA requirements under the Transparency Code and requires its investment managers to provide sufficient information to fulfil these requirements. The table below shows the fees paid to managers in each asset class as at the 31 March 2023.

Asset class	Management fees £'000	Performance & other fees £'000	Total fees £'000
Fixed interest securities	200	1,600	1,800
Equities	700	300	1,000
Pooled property	1,900	0	1,900
Pooled infrastructure	4,300	0	4,300
Private debt	1,500	0	1,500
LGPSC	2,000	1,800	3,800
Other	0	0	0
Total Fund	10,600	3,700	14,300

Custodial arrangements

Custody of the Fund's assets is provided by the Global Custodian, BNY Mellon Asset Servicing, or for assets managed by LGPSC, Northern Trust.

In addition to the custodian's role in the safe keeping of the Fund's total assets, the custodian also provides services in relation to settlement and income collection, the exercise of voting rights and the execution of corporate actions in conjunction with investment managers. The appointment of a global custodian also secures an independent confirmation of the Fund's assets and their value.

Asset pooling

The Fund is a partner Fund of LGPS Central Limited (LGPSC) pool and costs were incurred by all the partner funds under a cost sharing agreement with our contribution being as follows:

	At 1st April 2022 £'000	Recharges in year £'000	Settled in year £'000	At 31 March 2023 £'000
Governance costs		257		
Operator costs		400		
IMMC		150		
Product development costs		74		
Sub total	166	881	(661)	386

LGPSC set-up costs are detailed below. As the pool only launched in 2018, the information provided reflects the start-up nature of LGPSC: the level and complexity of the disclosures will increase in later years.

LGPSC set-up costs

£000	2018/19 direct £000	2018/19 indirect £000	2018/19 total £000	Cumulative 2014/15 to 2018/19 total £000
Set up costs				
Recruitment				27
Procurement				2
Professional fees				187
IT				97
Staff costs				142
Other costs				
Premises				49
Staffing related costs				5
Travel and expenses				1
Training and events				1

£000	2018/19 direct £000	2018/19 indirect £000	2018/19 total £000	Cumulative 2014/15 to 2018/19 total £000
FCA fees				1
General admin costs				2
Set up costs before funding				514
Share capital				1315
Debt				685
Other costs				
Set up costs after funding				2,514
Transition fees				
Taxation (seeding relief)				
Other transition costs				
Transition costs				

Although guidance from CIPFA has not provided a set definition of indirect costs, it is likely that the set-up costs captured to date relate to direct costs (i.e., either incurred directly by LGPSC or recharged by Partner Funds to LGPSC).

£000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	Cumulative £000
Set up costs before funding			95	419		514
Set up costs after funding			95	2419		2514
Transition costs						

LGPS Investment Management Expenses Charged to Partner Funds

		Direct £000	Indirect £000	Total £000	BPS charge £000
1	Ad valorem	2,365		2,365	26.70
2	Performance				
3	Research				
4	PRIIPS compliance				
5	Other (provide details)				
	Management fees	2,365		2,365	26.70
6	Commissions	207		207	2.33
7	Acquisition/issue costs				
8	Disposal costs				
9	Registration/filing fees				
10	Taxes and stamp duty	217		217	2.45
11	Other (provide details)				
	Implicit costs	1,343		1,343	15.15
	Transaction costs	1,767		1,767	19.94
12	Custody/depository	139		139	1.57
13	Other (provide details)				
	Fund accounting	45		45	0.51
	Transfer agent	5		5	0.06
	External audit	12		12	0.14
	Performance reporting	19		19	0.21
	Transaction charges	31		31	0.35
	MACS fees				
	Total costs	4,383		4,383	49.47

Fund's Assets Under Management & Performance By Product within the LGPSC Pool

	AUM at 1 April 2022 £m	AUM at 31 March 2023 £m	1-year gross performance %	1-year net performance %	Passive benchmark used	One-year passive index %
Emerging market equity	323	307	-5.79%	-6.20%	FTSE emerging market index	-4.07%
Corporate bonds	206	184	-12.85%	-12.92%	ICE BofAML Sterling Non-Gilt Index 50%; ICE BofAML Global Corporate Index 50%	-11.26%
Climate factor fund	207	208	-2.10%	-2.11%	FTSE All-World climate balanced comprehensive factor index	-2.23%
Sustainable Targeted		77	-3.40%	-3.60%	FTSE All World Index	-2.40%
Sustainable Thematic		117	-3.20%	-3.50%	FTSE All World Index	-2.40%
ACS sub-funds	736	893				
Total	736	893				

Statement of responsible investment

The Fund is a long-term investor aiming to deliver a sustainable pension fund for all stakeholders. Worcestershire County Council as the administering authority has a fiduciary duty to act in the best long-term interests of the Fund's employers and scheme members. The Fund believes that in order to fulfil this duty, it must have a clear policy on how it invests in a responsible manner.

Responsible investment is a fundamental part of the Fund's overarching investment strategy as set out in the Investment Strategy Statement. The Fund is committed to ensuring that the companies in which it invests have good corporate governance, adopt a responsible attitude towards the environment and adopt high ethical standards. The Fund is a signatory to the UK Stewardship Code 2020.

Policies adopted

The Fund adopts a positive engagement approach with the companies in which it invests in order to promote high standards of corporate governance. It believes that this will help to raise standards across all markets and that this is in the long-term interests of the Fund and its stakeholders.

Investment performance is monitored on a quarterly basis and the Fund expects investment managers to engage with companies to address concerns affecting performance.

The Fund believes that the greatest impact on behaviour can be achieved when working together with others. It is a member of the Local Authorities Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), to enable it to act collectively with other local authorities on corporate governance issues. The Forum currently has over 80 member funds representing assets of more than £350 billion. LAPFF's mission is to protect the long-term investment interests of beneficiaries by promoting the highest standards of corporate governance and corporate responsibility amongst investee companies.

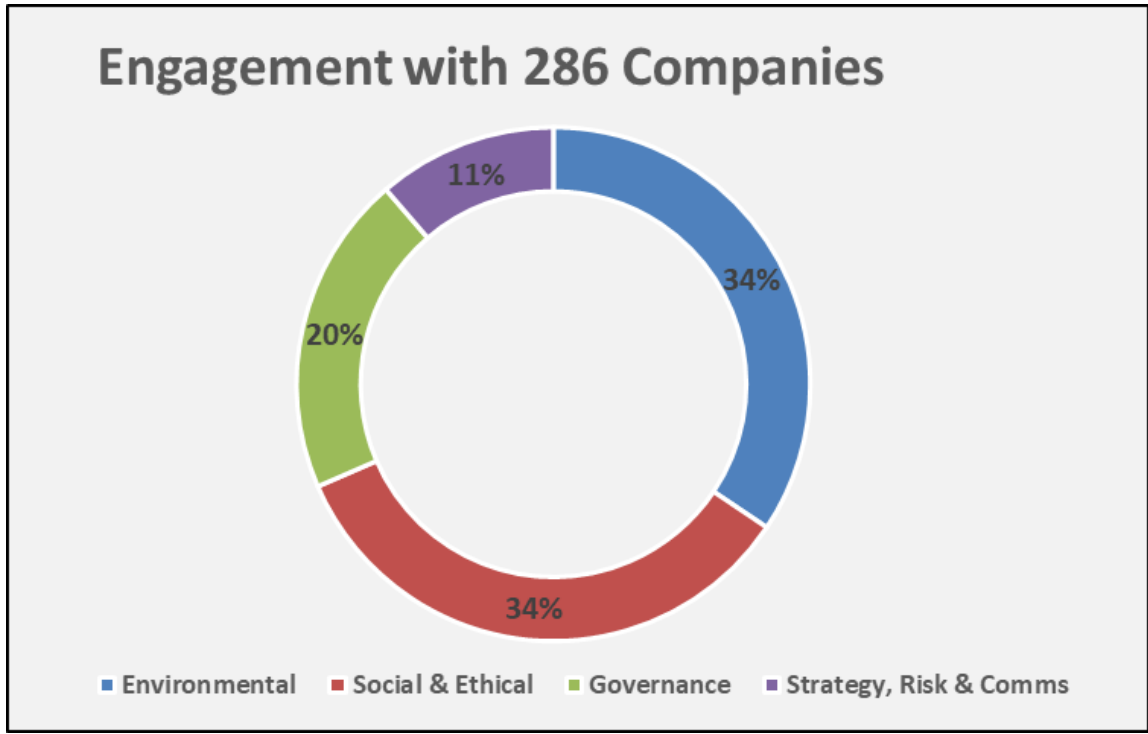
The Fund continues to exercise its ownership rights by adopting a policy of voting stocks it holds. The Fund believes that it is beneficial to take the voting decisions away from our active fund managers and have the votes executed in line with LGPSC's voting principles which are in line with our own. This enables improved monitoring and reporting to the Pensions Committee. Wherever practicable votes must be in accordance with industry best practice as set out in the combined code of corporate governance with a clear focus on enhancing long-term shareholders value.

In order to ensure that the governance practices employed by the Fund's investment managers are aligned to that of the Fund, investment managers' quarterly performance reports are required to include specific briefing in corporate governance detailing all votes cast on the Fund's behalf as detailed in the charts below.

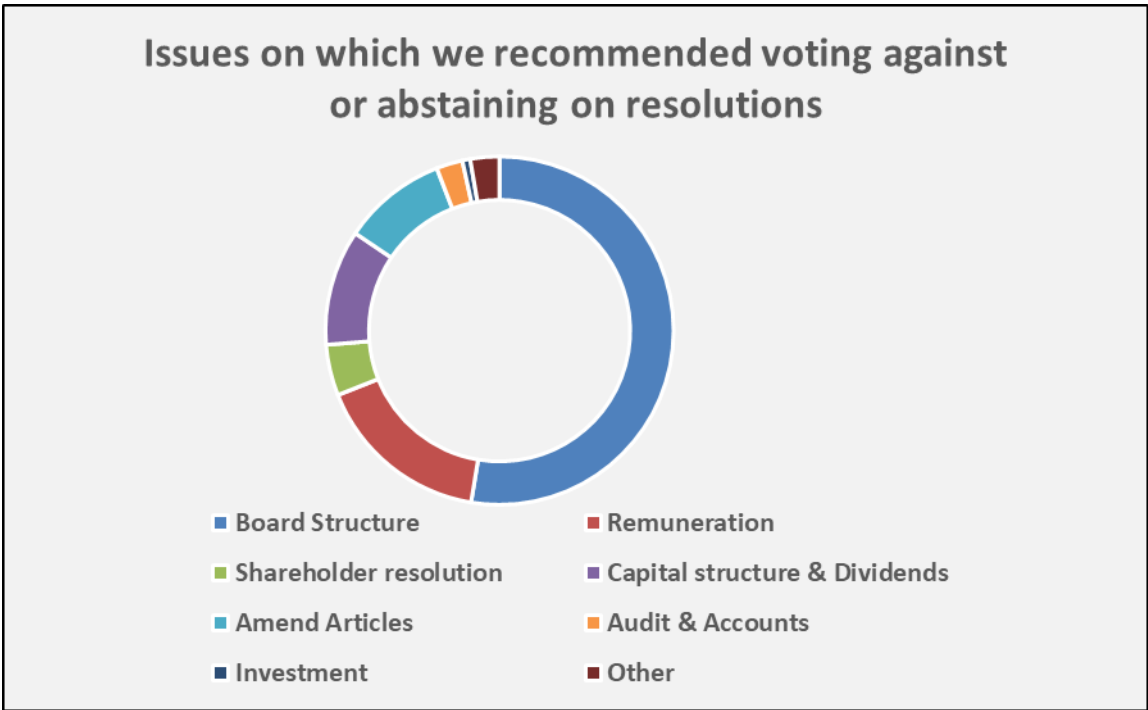
Meeting where Resolutions made



Engagement with 286 Companies



Issues on which we recommended voting against or abstaining on resolutions



REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE (ESG) in 2021

As detailed in our 2021 annual report, the Fund commissioned a company called Minerva to conduct an Environment Social and Governance (ESG) audit of the Fund and be able to map all the Funds' investments to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This was to establish a baseline for the Fund as to where we are and help formulate future strategic actions required for the Fund's investment approach.

A key outcome was to prioritise the following SDGs that the Fund considered are likely to have the biggest investment impact. At a Fund ESG review in February 2022 it was agreed to add SDG 12

Responsible consumption & Production to the Funds existing investment beliefs within the Investment Strategy Statement. There are now 6 specific SDG’s that are targeted by the Fund from an investment and ESG perspective.

- SDG 9. Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure (covers off 11 sustainable cities)
- SDG 7. Clean Energy (covers off 6 clean water and sanitation)
- SDG 8. Decent Work & Economic Growth
- SDG 13. Climate Action
- SD3. Health & Wellbeing
- SDG 12. Responsible consumption & Production

In February 2023 the Fund conducted an ESG workshop, facilitated by [Pensions For Purpose](#). Investment Managers participated and were engaged in robust discussions with Pension Committee members. The key outcome of the exercise was that the Fund intends to explore and agree an internal climate target with the aim of engaging investment fund managers to achieve alignment with the Fund’s objectives.

The Fund intends to conduct an SDG mapping of the Fund every 3 years. SDG 2000. Minerva used the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) SDG2000 to measure the alignment between the Fund’s investments and the SDGs. The WBA SDG 2000 measures and ranks 2000 of the world’s most influential companies in respect of SDGs. These are seen as global companies that are likely to have the greatest potential to help deliver the SDGs.

The illustration below shows the Funds exposure to the prioritised SDGs

Prioritised SDG Exposure: Worcestershire’s initial exposures to the Fund’s prioritised SDGs (£ Million)**



*as defined by the SDG2000 benchmark.

**as defined by the Pensions Committee in a Pensions for Purpose workshop in May 2020.

Climate Risk Report

The Fund has produced its third Climate Risk Report which was reviewed alongside the findings from the ESG Audit at the February 2023 workshop.

The Fund recognises that climate-related risk is very real and can impact the Fund both negatively and positively, depending on our approach to managing that risk. There is sector and stock specific risk in being invested in those areas that include fossil fuels, as they decline in usage, whereas investing in new more environmentally friendly areas, such as renewable energy, can enhance our investment returns.

The warmer the planet becomes, the risks increase much further, which at the simplest levels include substantial flooding of low-lying areas globally with all the negative implications that flow from that.

The key conclusions / points were part of the report to Pensions Committee on the 22 March 2023. The updated Carbon Risk Metrics implies that the existing management of carbon risk in the Fund continues to exceed that of the benchmarks. Between 29th May 2020 and 31st March 2022, the carbon footprint of the Total Equity portfolio decreased by 13.63%. The Total Equity carbon footprint was 30.1% more carbon efficient than the blended benchmark. Exposure of the Total Equity portfolio to fossil fuel reserves is demonstrated by the Fund's [Climate Risk Report](#).

LGPSC who produce our Climate Risk Reports commented 'We find that WPF has made significant enhancements to its published documentation and governance arrangements in the past year. The Fund has implemented 12 of the 13 recommendations issued in the first Climate Risk Report including, publishing its first TCFD-disclosure report, developing a Climate Change Risk Strategy and reporting against the 2020 Stewardship Code.

In our view, the Fund's approach to RI, including climate risk management, is above industry average standards and significantly in excess of the regulatory minimum. We suggest that the Fund maintains this current level of practice and implements any recommendations that are still outstanding from the first report.

The Fund's third year overarching Climate Change Strategy is contained within its [Investment Strategy Statement](#) and also within its [Climate Related Financial Disclosures Report](#).

Statement of Compliance with the UK Stewardship Code for Institutional Investors

The introduction of the Stewardship Code in July 2010 by the Financial Reporting Council strongly encouraged best practice in respect of investor engagement. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA updated the code in 2020 and made it more outcome focussed. The Fund was successful in its application and retained its signatory status to the UK Stewardship Code 2020.

7. Governance Arrangements



7. Governance Arrangements

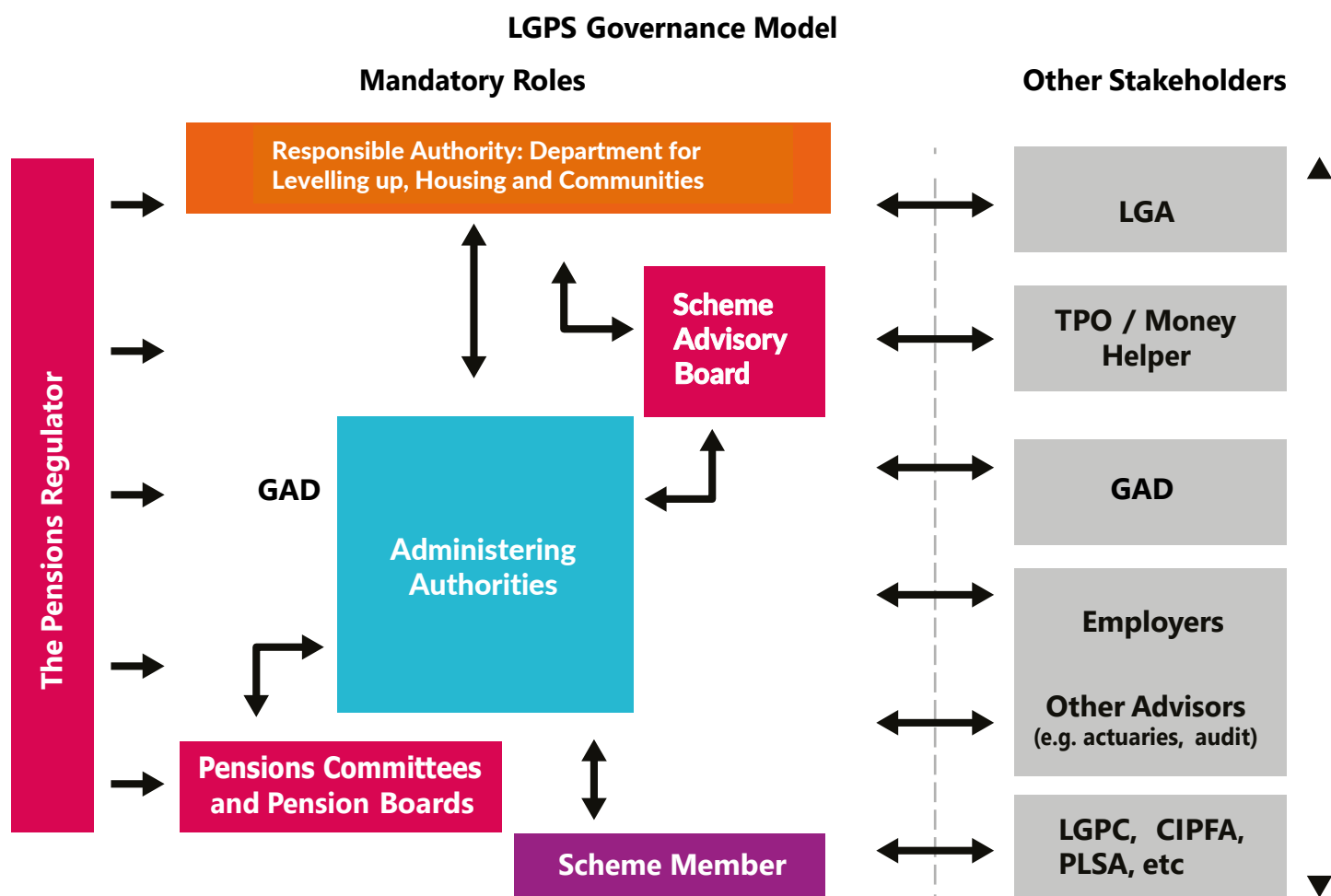
Our governance arrangements take account of:

- The way in which the LGPS is governed.
- The governance arrangements of LGPSC.
- Guidance issued by The Pensions Regulator.

Overall responsibility for managing the Fund lies with the full council of Worcestershire County Council who have delegated the management and administration of the Fund to the Section 151 Officer. The full Council reviews the discharge of its responsibilities through the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee. The Pension Board assists the Council to deliver efficient governance and administration of the Fund’s responsibilities through the Council’s Audit and Governance Committee.

The Section 151 Officer is advised by the Pensions Committee and also takes appropriate advice from the Fund’s actuary and the Fund’s appointed investment advisor. The Pensions Committee receives recommendations from the Pension Investment Sub-Committee to enable it to discharge its responsibilities effectively.

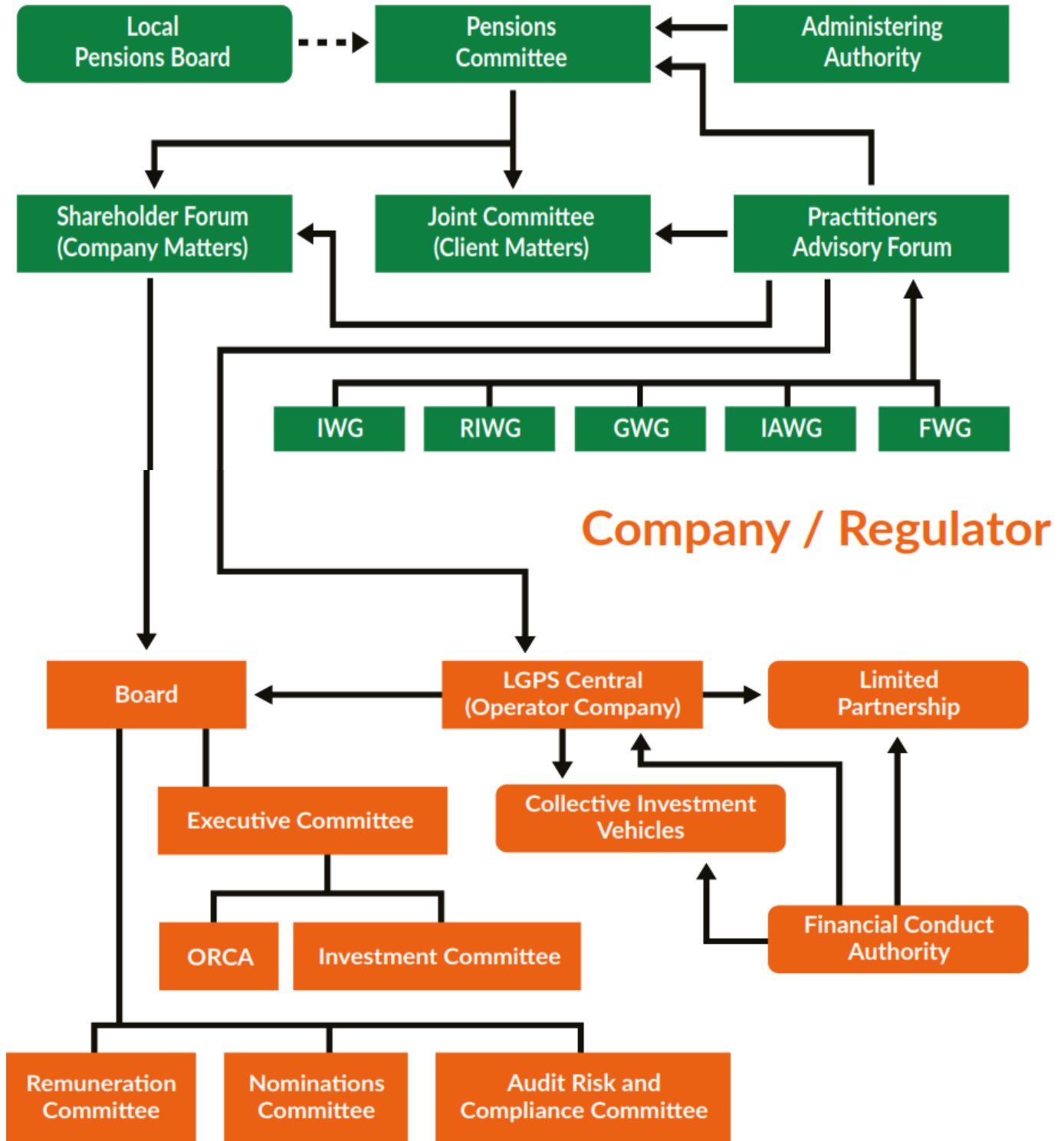
Our current governance arrangements are contained in our [Governance Policy Statement](#).



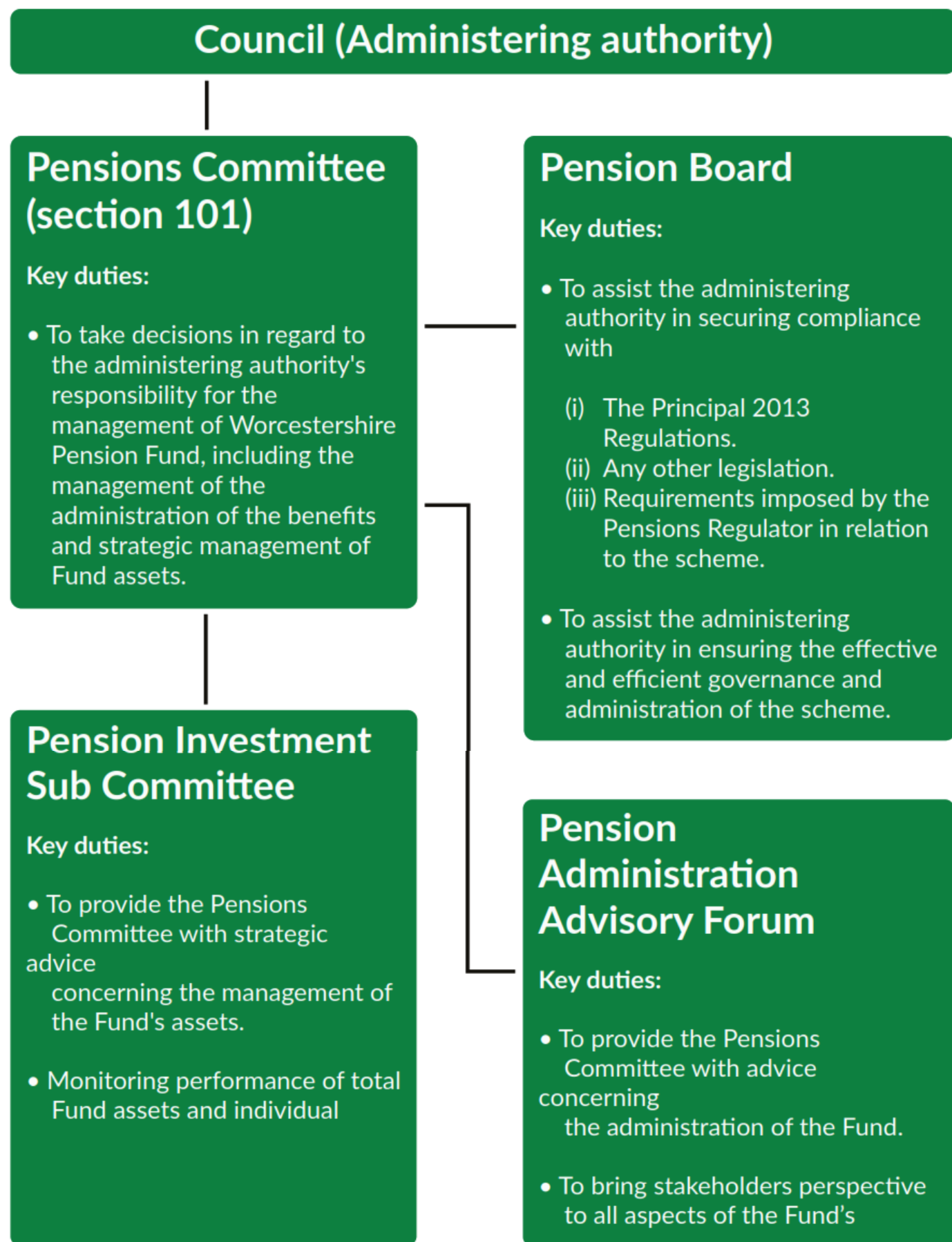
LGPS

In collaboration with Cheshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and West Midlands we continue to plan to pool actively managed assets using LGPS using the following governance model.

Shareholder / Client



Worcestershire Pension Fund Governance



8. Governance Compliance Statement



8. Governance Compliance Statement

Ref	Principles	Compliance statement	Evidence of compliance
A Structure			
a.	That the management of the administration of benefits and strategic management of fund assets clearly rests with the main committee established by the appointing council.	Compliant	The responsibilities of the Pensions Committee (PC) and its Sub-Groups are set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement. The Governance Policy Statement was approved by Full Council.
b.	That representatives of participating LGPS employers, admitted bodies and scheme members (including pensioner and deferred members) are members of either the main or secondary committee established to underpin the work of the main committee.	Compliant	The Pensions Committee membership includes an employee and employer representative. Full membership details are set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement.
c.	That where a secondary committee or panel has been established, the structure ensures effective communication across both levels.	Compliant	The Pension Investment Sub Committee provides strategic advice to the Pensions Committee regarding the management of the Fund's assets. The Chairman of the Pensions Committee also sits on the Pension Investment Sub Committee to ensure effective communication. The Pensions Committee receives quarterly investment updates from the Pension Investment Sub Committee. A Pension Administration Advisory Forum has been established. The employer and employee representatives from the Pensions Committee attend the forum and there is a standing invitation for the Pension Board to attend the forum.

Ref	Principles	Compliance statement	Evidence of compliance
B Representation			
a.	<p>That all key stakeholders have the opportunity to be represented within the main or secondary committee structure. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employing authorities (including non-Scheme employers, e.g., admitted bodies). ii) scheme members (including deferred and pensioner scheme members). iii) where appropriate, independent professional observers and iv) expert advisers (on an ad-hoc basis). 	Compliant	<p>Membership of the Pensions Committee and Pension Investment Sub Committee include employer and employee representatives and an independent investment adviser. Full membership details are set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement. Expert advisors attend the Pensions Committee as required for the nature of the main decisions. For example, the actuary attends when the valuation is being considered, and the main investment advisor attends when a strategic asset allocation decision is being made. The investment advisor regularly attends Pension Investment Sub Committee meetings.</p> <p>All members are treated equally in terms of access to papers and to training that is given as part of the Committee process.</p>
C Selection and role of lay members			
a.	<p>That committee or panel members are made fully aware of the status, role and function they are required to perform on either a main or secondary committee.</p>	Compliant	<p>The Pensions Committee has noted its terms of reference and the Fund's Governance Policy Statement. Minutes of Pensions Committee meetings are published on the Council's website. A detailed training programme is also provided to Committee members and Pension Investment Sub Committee members.</p>

Ref	Principles	Compliance statement	Evidence of compliance
C	Selection and role of lay members		
b.	That at the start of any meeting, committee members are invited to declare any financial or pecuniary interest related to specific matters on the agenda.	Compliant	Declaration of interests is a standing agenda item at the start of all Pensions Committee meetings. The Pensions Committee and Pension Investment Sub Committee are serviced by Legal and Democratic Services who invite members to declare any financial or pecuniary interest related to specific matters on the agenda. Members have also from December 2021 made declarations regarding conflicts of interest. Minutes of the Pensions Committee and Pension Investment Sub Committee meetings are published on the Council's website.
D	Voting		
a.	That the individual administering authorities on voting rights are clear and transparent, including the justification for not extending voting rights to each body or group represented on main LGPS committees.	Compliant	Voting rights are clearly set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement.
E	Training/facility time/expenses		
a.	That in relation to the way in which the administering authority takes statutory and related decisions, there is a clear policy on training, facility time and reimbursement of expenses for members involved in the decision-making process	Compliant	A policy on expenses is set out in the Council's constitution. The Fund's Governance Policy Statement sets out the number of Committee meetings required each year. The Fund has an approved Training Policy and programme.
b.	That where such a policy exists, it applies equally to all members of committees, sub- committees, advisory panels or any other form of secondary forum.	Compliant	These policies apply to all committee members and this is clearly set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement and Training Policy and Programme

Ref	Principles	Compliance statement	Evidence of compliance
E	Training/facility time/expenses		
c.	That the administering authority considers adopting annual training plans for committee members and maintains a log of all such training undertaken.	Compliant	Regular training needs analyses are conducted as detailed in the Fund's Training Policy and Programme. A log of all training undertaken is maintained. Regular updates on training are provided to the Pensions Committee.
F	Meetings (frequency/quorum)		
a.	That an administering authority's main committee or committees meet at least quarterly.	Compliant	The Pensions Committee meets quarterly. This requirement is set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement.
b.	That an administering authority's secondary committee or panel meets at least twice a year and is synchronised with the dates when the main committee sits.	Compliant	The Pension Investment Sub Committee meets quarterly. These meetings are synchronised with the dates when the Pensions Committee sits. These requirements are set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement. The Pension Administration Advisory Forum meets twice a year.
c.	That an administering authority that does not include lay members in its formal governance arrangements must provide a forum outside of those arrangements to represent the interests of key stakeholders.	Compliant	The Fund has employee representatives on its Pensions Committee and its Pension Board. It has established a Pension Administration Advisory Panel which meets twice yearly. All Fund employers are invited to attend the Panel meetings. The Panel arrangement and terms of reference are set out in the Fund's Governance Policy Statement.

Ref	Principles	Compliance statement	Evidence of compliance
G Access			
a.	That subject to any rules in the Council's constitution, all members of main and secondary committees or panels have equal access to committee papers, documents and advice that are due to be considered at meetings of the main committee.	Compliant	All members of the Pensions Committee, Pension Investment Sub Committee and the Pension Administration Advisory Panel have equal access to committee papers, documents and advice that are due to be considered at meetings of the main committee. The Pensions Committee agendas and associated papers are published on the Council's website prior to the committee meeting. Pension Board papers and minutes are equally available to all Board members.
H Scope			
a.	That administering authorities have taken steps to bring wider scheme issues within the scope of their governance arrangements.	Compliant	The Pension Administration Advisory Panel is attended by the employer and employee representatives who sit on the Pensions Committee. This ensures flow of information between the wider scheme employers and the main committee. Scheme employers are invited to bring wider scheme issues to the attention of the Pensions Committee through the established communication routes. The Council has included benefits administration, investments and wider governance issues under the remit of the Pensions Committee. All aspects of fund management and performance are also reported to the Pensions Committee.
I Scope			
a.	That administering authorities have published details of their governance arrangements in such a way that stakeholders with an interest in how the scheme is governed can say they want to be part of those arrangements.	Compliant	The Fund's Governance Policy Statement is published on the Council's website and all scheme employers are invited to attend the Pension Administration Advisory Panel meetings. The Fund ran an open recruitment process for the employer and employee representative appointments to the now established Pension Board. Contact details are provided on the website, so other interested parties can find out more if they wish.

9. Local Pension Board Annual Report



9. Worcestershire Pension Fund Local Pension Board Annual Report 2022 / 2023

In addition to ensuring that at every meeting the Board reviews the Business Plans, Training updates, Governance Updates and Risk Registers being tabled at the next Pensions Committee, this year the Board has:

- Monitored the Fund's progress against the LGPS Scheme Advisory Board's (SAB) Good Governance workstream in preparation for draft statutory guidance being issued.
- Reviewed the Fund's application for retaining signatory status to the UK Stewardship Code.
- Reviewed the Fund's 2022 annual report.
- Reviewed the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement, Funding Strategy Statement, Climate- related Financial Disclosures, Governance Policy Statement, and Climate Change Risk Strategy.
- Reviewed the Fund's Pensions Administration Strategy that includes the Fund's Policy Statement on Communications.
- Reviewed the Fund's Training Policy and programme.
- Reviewed the progress on the restructure of pensions administration.
- Reviewed the Fund's Cyber Security Tips for Board and Committee members.
- Reviewed the Fund's Policy on Conflicts of Interest and the Fund's Policy on Representation.

Board members have participated in joint training sessions with the Pensions Committee on:

- Does what we are paying our investment managers represent value for money?'
- The actuarial valuation 2022.
- Private equity.
- ESG / responsible investment.

The standard agenda for Board meetings includes reviewing:

- Scheme Advisory Board (SAB) updates.
- The minutes of the previous Pensions Committee meeting.
- LGPS Central Limited updates.
- The Fund's future work plans and budget positions.

The papers tabled at Board meetings can be accessed from the Fund's website.

I meet twice yearly with the chairs from the Boards of the LGPS funds within the Fund's pool to discuss current issues and to share ideas.

Looking ahead, the Board intends to pay particular attention to the Fund's approach to training; the implementation of the McCloud and GMP equalisation remedies; and progress towards delivering on Pensions Dashboards and Member Self Service.

Councillor Roger Phillips
Herefordshire Council
Chair of Worcestershire Pension Fund's Local Pension Board



Audited Statement of Accounts 2022/23



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About the accounts

BASIS OF PREPARATION

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Fund's transactions for the 2022/2023 financial year and its position at year-end as at 31 March 2023. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 which is based upon International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), as amended for the UK public sector.

The accounts summarise the transactions of the Fund and report on the net assets available to pay pension benefits. The accounts do not take account of obligations to pay pensions and benefits which fall due after the end of the financial year.

Explanatory Foreword and a Review of the Year 2022/23

Contains a review of the year and other general information about the accounts.

The Fund Account

Details the money received and spent within the Pension Fund during 2022/23.

Net Assets Statement

Statement showing the Fund's financial position at 31 March 2023.

Notes to the Fund Accounts

Notes providing additional information for the Fund Account and Net Assets Statement.

Statement of Accounting Policies

These are shown against the relevant note.

1. Explanatory Foreword and a Review of the Year 2022/23

Foreword by the Chief Financial Officer

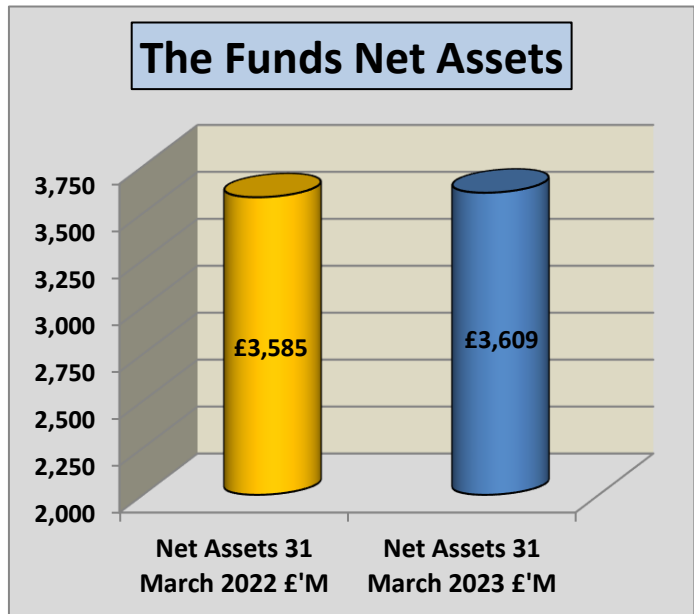
Welcome to the Fund's 2022/23 Statement of Accounts. Worcestershire County Council administers the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which provides for the occupational pensions of employees, other than teachers, police officers, and fire fighters of the local authorities within the Herefordshire and Worcestershire area. Worcestershire County Council also administer the LGPS for members of other organisations which have made admission agreements with the Fund and designated bodies who have passed resolutions with Worcestershire County Council.

Table 1 Aim and Purpose of the Fund

The aims of the Fund are to:	
•	Enable employer contribution rates to be kept as nearly constant as possible and at reasonable cost.
•	Manage employers' liabilities effectively.
•	Ensure that sufficient resources are available to meet all liabilities as they fall due.
•	Maximise the returns from investments within reasonable risk parameters.
The purpose of the Fund is to:	
•	Receive monies in respect of contributions, transfer values and investment income.
•	Pay out monies in respect of scheme benefits, transfer values, costs, charges, and expenses.

Key headlines

- Chart 1 shows that the value of the Fund's net assets increased by £24.0 million from £3,584.6 million at 31 March 2022 to £3,608.6 at 31 March 2023:
- Income from contributions increased to £97.9 million, from £90.7 million, due largely to the effect of the 2022/23 local authority pay award increasing basic pay, the value on which contributions are calculated.
- Net investment returns decreased by £207.2 million compared to 2021/22 which was mainly due to volatility in financial markets during 2022 and geopolitical factors.



Contributions from staff and employers were less than the benefits paid as well as administration and management expenses in 2022/23 by £33.0 million, compared to £44.4 million in 2021/22. This reduction was due to contributions received growing more than benefits paid whilst Admin and Management expenses have been reduced..

- Chart 2 shows that during the year a surplus resulted on the Fund Account (aside from the net investments returns) totaling £4.9 million, an increase of £12.3 million from the 2021/22 deficit of £7.4 million.

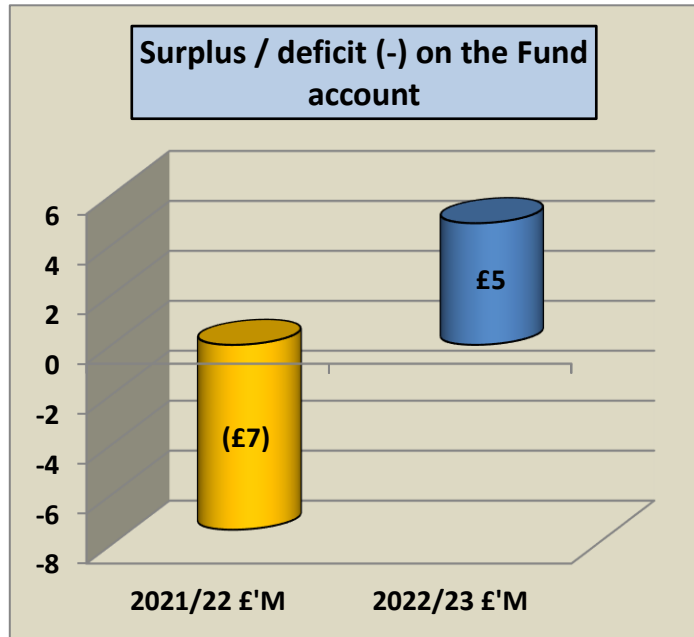


Table 2 analysis of changes within the Fund's membership profile

	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	Change	Change %
Contributors to the Fund	23,078	22,822	-256	-1.1
Pensions paid	20,273	21,062	789	3.9
Deferred members	23,248	23,855	607	2.6
	66,599	67,739	1,140	1.7

Table 2 above shows that the scheme membership has continued to grow. Active employer numbers have increased from 66,599 to 67,739 during 2022/23, due mainly to auto enrolment initiatives and an increase in the number of designated employers. Given the administrative challenges presented by this continued growth, the Fund regularly review its systems and processes and importantly, the way it engages with, and receives data from scheme employers.

Pensions Administration

Throughout 2022/23 the Administration Team continued to work flexibly but maintained excellent performance monitoring achieving its average turnaround targets for all the twelve key performance indicators it measures. This is also set in a context whereby in 2022/23 the team processed its highest volumes.

Activity / Process	Target turnaround (Working days)	2021/22 average turnaround (Working days)	2022/2023 average turnaround (Working days)
Joiners' notification of date of joining	40	19	12
Calculate and notify deferred benefits	30	8	6
Letter notifying actual retirement benefits	15	2	2
Letter notifying estimate of retirement benefits	15	3	2
Process and pay lump sum retirement grant	23	10	12

	2021/22	2022/23
Total Number of staff FTE	22.3	39.6
Admin Cost per member*	£25.38	£23.09

*' the lower administration costs per member in 2022/23 was mainly due to the timing of recruitment to the pensions administration team which occurred towards the end of the financial year. The increase in FTE in 2022/23 was due to an approved restructure of the Pensions Admin Team.

Governance

The Council has established a Pensions Committee to exercise the Administering Authority's responsibility for the management of the Fund. The Pensions Committee has overall responsibility for the management of the administration of the Fund and for the strategic management of the Fund's assets. In order to discharge its responsibility effectively the Pensions Committee is supported by the Pension Administration Advisory Forum and the Pension Investment Sub Committee. Note, it is the Audit and Governance Committee that is charged with governance for the purpose of the accounts.

The Council established a Pension Board in July 2015. The purpose of the Board is to assist the Administering Authority in its role as a scheme manager. Such assistance is to: (a) secure compliance with the Regulations, any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme, and requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator in relation to the Scheme and (b) to ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

The Fund's Governance Policy Statement is published on the Council's website. It complies with LGPS Regulations and is aligned to prescribe best practice guidance.

The Fund also reports quarterly to the Pensions Committee on the Fund's progress towards delivering the recommendations arising from the Scheme Advisory Board's (SAB) 'Good Governance project.

Management of the Fund's assets

The management of the Fund's assets is operated through fourteen specialist external managers with nineteen mandates in total. The Pensions Committee is advised in relation to asset allocation decisions and the monitoring of external managers' performance by the Pension Investment Sub Committee, which includes an independent investment adviser.

The Fund's asset allocation is kept under regular review and the current long-term investment allocation includes investments in a wide variety of UK and overseas companies, corporate bonds, corporate private debt, property, and infrastructure. A strategic asset allocation review took place in December 2019 and was endorsed by the Pensions Committee in March 2020 and the following recommendations arising from the review continued to be progressed during 2022/23, and will continue over the medium term:

- Increase in the allocation to infrastructure or a mix of infrastructure and real estate by 5% from the current strategic allocation of 15% of the Fund to up to 20%.
- Maintain the Fund's allocation to fixed income at 10%.
- Decrease in the Fund's strategic asset allocation to passive equities by 5% from 55% to 50%. The active equities allocation of 20% remained the same.

The 2019 strategic asset allocation review's recommendation of a 20% commitment to 'alternatives including property' continued to be implemented during the 2022/23 financial year following investments into: -

- Gresham House British Strategic Infrastructure Fund II: £38m.
- Gresham House Forestry Growth & Sustainability Fund: £22m.

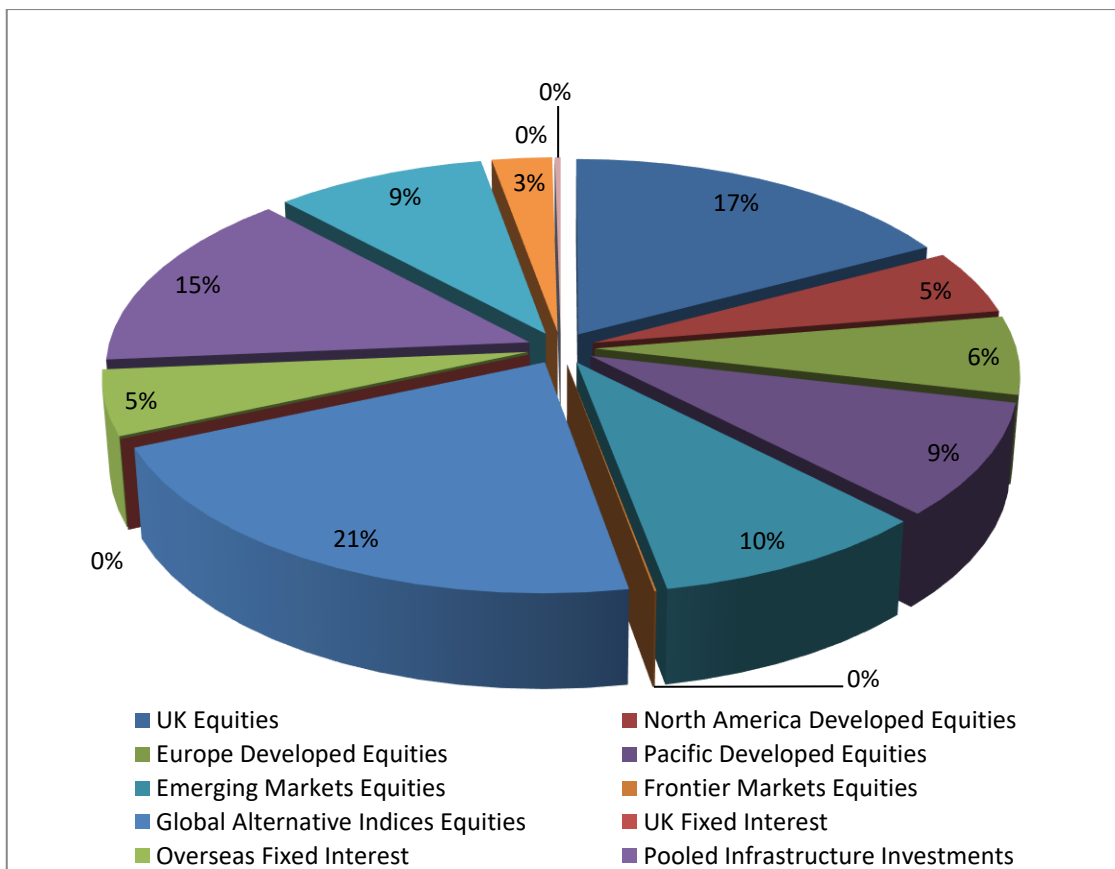
- Gresham House Forestry Fund VI: £85m.
- First Sentier (Now Igneo) European Diversified Infrastructure Fund III: £8m.
- Stonepeak Infrastructure Fund III: £17m.
- Stonepeak Infrastructure Fund IV: £21m.

To enhance the Fund's investment returns whilst reducing its carbon footprint, the Fund also disinvested from passive equity LGIM 'low Volatility' factor funds and invested £200m in LGPS Central Limited's (LGPS) All World Equity Climate Multi Factor Fund.

Given conditions in equity markets at the time, the Fund took the opportunity to exit the protection given by its equity protection vehicle managed by Schroders (formerly River & Mercantile). This was fully exited early November and the resultant £231m was reinvested back into the passive equity market cap funds on the 10 November 2022.

The following chart details the distribution of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2023:

Chart 3 Distribution of the Fund's Assets



Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) & Responsible Investment (RI)

The Fund has continually looked to develop and improve its approach to RI and conducted an ESG audit last year which included mapping the Fund's entire portfolio to the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs). The Fund conducted its second annual ESG workshop for its Pensions Committee on the 8 February 2023 to review progress against the identified actions and was found to have made significant headway.

In January 2023 the Fund's latest annual [Climate Risk Report](#) delivered a view of the climate risk of the Fund's entire equity asset portfolio, accompanied by proposed actions the Fund could take to manage and reduce that risk. The results were used in the Fund's public-facing [Climate related Financial Disclosures](#) for the third year. The Fund was particularly pleased to see that our initial focus on transitioning out of our passive mandates with the greatest carbon footprint has resulted in the Fund's overall listed market portfolio now being 30.1% (28% in 2022) more carbon efficient than the benchmark. The Fund transitioned a further £200m (6% of its portfolio) from its passive mandates into active sustainable equity funds by May 2022.

The Fund recognises that its investments in private markets also have a significant role to play in addressing climate related issues. Building on existing assets in this space, the Fund maintained its commitment of £175m towards a forest and sustainability fund and £200m to a number of sustainable infrastructure and housing investments, evidenced by the investments illustrated above, which will have a long term environmental and social impact.

Impact of Global Financial Market Volatility and Geopolitical Landscape

Ongoing discussions throughout the year have taken place with existing fund managers and our actuary to continue to consider and understand the implications of inflationary pressures and geopolitical instability on financial markets and the wider investment landscape. As detailed above the Fund had already taken steps to diversify some of its asset allocations from equities into property and infrastructure as well as implementing an equity protection strategy to guard against major market fluctuations. This helped cushion somewhat the initial impact on the Fund's market valuations, which then recovered, resulting in the decision to exit that strategy in November 2022. Excessive volatility in market risk is also managed through the diversification of the portfolio in terms of geographical and industry sectors and also individual securities. The Fund recognises that equity protection can play a key role in managing risk and is keeping it under constant review.

LGPS Central Limited (LGPSC)

The Fund's 2017/18 accounts highlighted the government's requirements and reasoning (opportunities for collaboration, cost savings and efficiencies) for asset pooling NB responsibility for asset allocation stays with the Fund. The Fund is a partner fund along with Cheshire, Leicestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire in a collective investment vehicle called LGPSC. The company is authorised to operate as an alternative investment fund manager (AIFM) and became formally operational from the 1 April 2018.

Each partner fund approved the regulatory capital requirements for LGPSC and its introduction on the 31 January 2018. As all FCA regulated entities are required to hold regulatory capital designed to protect the solvency of the entity, £16m of capital was introduced ("Capital Introduced") by the eight shareholders to cover the capital requirement, a prudent buffer, set-up costs and operational liquidity. Each partner fund provided £2million of capital on 31st January 2018, with the Fund's share consisting of £1.3million of equity and £0.7million of debt.

LGPSC has been in operation just over 5 years and the Fund has, by market value at 31 March 2023, 20% of its assets in LGPSC's Emerging Markets Equity Active Multi Manager Fund / Global Corporate Bonds Fund / Global All World Equity Climate Multi Factor Fund and Global Sustainable active equities. This increases to 59% when including the Pooling undertaken by the 'Shire' Pension Funds for passive equities just before LGPSC was formed which is included in the DLUHC pooling return.

Management of the Fund's liabilities

The Funds' funding strategy is kept under regular review by the Pensions Committee and the Fund's actuary assesses at three yearly intervals the Fund's assets and its liabilities. An actuarial valuation of the Worcestershire Pension Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022 to determine the contribution rates with effect from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026. Key outcomes of the valuation at that point in time are detailed below:

- The Fund's assets of £3,585 million represented 101% of the Fund's past service liabilities of £3,562 million (the "Funding Target") at the 31 March 2022 valuation date. This compares to the 90% funded position at the previous valuation at 2019.
- A common rate of contribution of 18.8% (2019: 17.5%) of pensionable pay per annum will be required from employers covering 2023-26. The common rate is calculated as being sufficient, together with contributions paid by members, to meet all liabilities arising in respect of service after the valuation date. Different rates apply across fund employers based on specific factors.

To meet the requirements of the Regulations, the Fund has set a clear long-term funding objective; to achieve and then maintain assets equal to 100% of projected accrued liabilities, assessed on an ongoing basis.

Phil Rook
Chief Financial Officer

1. Fund Account (money received and spent during 2022/23)

2021/22		2022/23	
£m		Notes	£m
Dealings with members, employers and others directly involved with the fund			
90.7	Contributions	4	97.9
13.7	Transfers in from other pension funds	5	22.0
104.4			119.9
(115.6)	Benefits	6	(122.6)
(10)	Payments to and on account of leavers	7	(12.7)
(125.6)			(135.3)
(21.2)	Net withdrawals from dealings with members		(15.4)
(1.7)	Administrative expenses	8	(1.5)
(21.5)	Management expenses	9	(16.1)
(44.4)	Net withdrawals including fund management and administrative expenses		(33.0)
Returns on investments			
37.2	Investment income	10	37.9
(0.2)	Taxes on income	11	0.1
227.2	Profit and (losses) disposal of investments and changes in the market value of investments	12a & 15b	19.1
264.2	Net return on investments		57.0
219.8	Net increase in the net investments available for benefits during the year		24.0
3,364.8	Opening net assets		3,584.6
3,584.6	Closing net assets		3,608.6

Management expenses have decreased mainly due to redirecting some actively managed investments to existing passive equity funds which by their nature have smaller management fees. In addition, due to the volatility in global equity markets during 2022, actively managed equity mandates where an element of management fees are based on investment performance, have attracted reduced fees.

2. Net Assets Statement for the year ended 31 March 2023 (showing the financial position at 31 March 2022 and 2023)

2021/22		2022/23	
£m		Notes	£m
1.4	Long term investment assets	12	1.4
2,960.1	Investment assets - internally managed	12 & 15	2,654.0
736.0	Investment assets - LGPSC managed	12 & 15	893.6
13.0	Cash deposits	12	8.7
3,710.5			3,557.7
(167.1)	Investment liabilities	12	(0.3)
46.2	Current assets	17	55.5
1.5	Non-current assets	18	1.7
(6.5)	Current liabilities	19	(6.1)
3,584.6	Net assets of the Fund available to fund benefits at the period end		3,608.6

These financial statements do not take into account liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits after the period end. The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits (determined in accordance with IAS 19) is disclosed in the Actuarial Statement (Note 2 to the Accounts). Note 14 to the Accounts provides details on the fair value of assets.

Financial assets are included in the Net Assets Statement above on a fair value basis as at the reporting date apart from those financial instruments that are held solely for the payments of principal and interest (SPPI) such as cash and debtors which are measured at amortised cost. A financial asset is recognised in the Net Assets Statement on the date the Fund becomes party to the contractual acquisition of the asset. From this date any gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of asset are recognised in the Fund Account. The values of investments as shown in the Net Assets Statement have been determined as follows:

- i. **Market-quoted investments** the value of an investment for which there is a readily available market price is determined by the bid market price ruling on the final day of the accounting period.
- ii. **Fixed interest securities** fixed interest securities are recorded at net market value based on their current yields.
- iii. **Unquoted investments** the fair value of investments for which market quotations are not readily available is determined as follows:

- a. **Valuations of delisted securities** are based on the last sale price prior to delisting, or were subject to liquidation, the amount the Fund expects to receive on wind-up, less estimated realisation costs.
- b. **Securities subject to takeover offer** – the value of the consideration offered under the offer, less estimated realisation costs.
- c. **Directly held investments** include investments in limited partnerships, shares in unlisted companies, trusts and bonds. Other unquoted securities typically include pooled investments in property, infrastructure, debt securities and private equity. The valuation of these pools or directly held securities is undertaken by the investment manager or responsible entity and advised as a unit or security price. The valuation standards followed in these valuations adhere to industry guidelines or to standards set by the constituent documents of the pool or the management agreement.
- d. **Investments in unquoted property and infrastructure pooled funds** are valued at the net asset value or a single price advised by the fund manager.
- e. **Investments in unquoted listed partnerships** are valued based on the Fund's share of the net assets in the limited partnership using the latest financial statements published by the respective fund managers in accordance with the *International Private Equity and Venture Capital Valuation Guidelines, updated at December 2022*.
- iv. **Limited partnerships** fair value is based on the net asset value ascertained from periodic valuations provided by those controlling the partnership.
- v. **Pooled investment vehicles** Pooled investment vehicles are valued at closing bid price if both bid and offer prices are published; or if single priced, at the closing single price. In the case of pooled investment vehicles that are accumulation funds, change in market value also includes income, which is reinvested in the fund, net of applicable withholding tax.

Financial Liabilities

The Fund recognises financial liabilities at fair value as at the reporting date apart from those financial instruments that are held solely for the payments of principal and interest (SPPI) such as cash and debtors which are measured at amortised cost. A financial liability is recognised in the Net Assets Statement on the date the Fund becomes party to the liability. From this date any gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value or amortised cost of the liability are recognised by the Fund.

3. Notes to the Accounts (providing additional information for the Fund Account and Net Assets Statement)

These comprise of a summary of significant accounting policies against the relevant note as opposed to a prescribed list of accounting policies. Further information and detail of entries in the prime statements and other explanatory information and disclosures are as follows:

NOTE 1: DESCRIPTION OF FUND

a) General

The Fund is administered by Worcestershire County Council on behalf of their own employees, those of the Herefordshire Council, the District Councils, private sector admitted bodies with staff transferred under TUPE from the administering authority and other bodies in the county of Worcestershire and Herefordshire, other than teachers, police officers, and fire fighters.

In matters relating to the management of the Fund's assets the Pensions Committee is advised in relation to asset allocation decisions and the monitoring of external managers' performance by the Pension Investment Sub Committee, which includes an independent investment adviser.

The Pensions Committee consists of County Councillors and an Employer and Employee Representative. Formal monitoring takes place on a quarterly basis through meetings with investment managers to discuss their performance. Asset allocation is reviewed at least annually, and pension administration issues are discussed at the Pension Administration Advisory Forum with any resulting recommendations considered by the Pensions Committee.

The day-to-day management of the Fund's investments is divided between external investment managers who operate in accordance with mandates set out in the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement.

b) Membership

Organisations participating in the Fund include the following:

- Scheduled bodies which are automatically entitled to be members of the Fund. These include county councils, district councils, foundation schools / colleges and academies.
- Admitted bodies, which participate in the Fund under the terms of an admission agreement between the Fund and the employer. Admitted bodies include voluntary, charitable and similar not for profit organisations, or private contractors undertaking a local authority function following outsourcing to the private sector.
- Designated bodies which are organisations that have passed resolutions with town or parish councils.

Membership details are set out below:

	31 March 2022	31 March 2023	Diff
Number of employers	208	198	(10)
Employee Members of the Fund			
County Council	7,467	7,433	(34)
Other Employers	15,611	15,389	(222)
Total	23,078	22,822	(256)
Pensioner Members of the Fund			
County Council	6,143	9,190	3047
Other Employers	14,130	11,872	(2,258)
Total	20,273	21,062	789
Deferred Members of the Fund			
County Council	9,034	6,476	(2,558)
Other Employers	14,214	17,379	3165
Total	23,248	23,855	607
Total Number of Members in the Fund	66,599	67,739	1,140

The member numbers have increased mainly due to an increase in pensioners and deferred members.

c) Funding

Benefits are funded by contributions and investment earnings. Contributions are made by employee members of the Fund in accordance with the LGPS Regulations 2013 and range from 5.5% to 12.5% of pensionable pay for the financial year ending March 2023. Employee contributions are in addition to employer contributions which are set based on actuarial valuations. The last valuation conducted was at 31 March 2022. The common employer contribution rate for the Fund will be 18.8%.

d) Pension Benefits

Prior to 1 April 2014 pension benefits under the LGPS were based on final pensionable pay and length of pensionable service. From 1 April 2014, the scheme became a career average scheme, whereby members accrue benefits based on their pensionable pay in that year at an accrual rate of 1/49th. Accrued pension is updated annually in line with the Consumer Prices Index.

A range of other benefits are also provided including early retirement, disability pensions and death benefits, as explained on the LGPS website.

Actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits

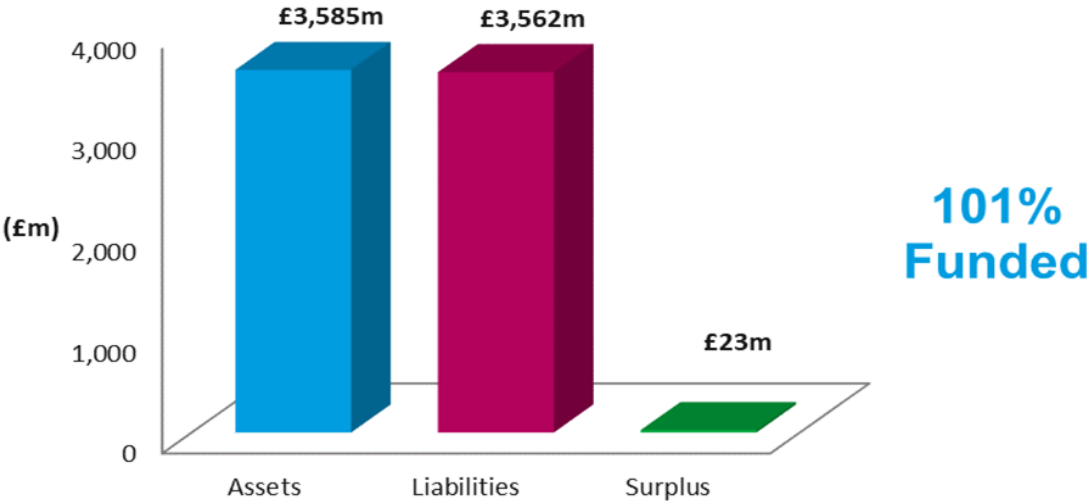
The actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits is assessed on a triennial basis by the scheme actuary in accordance with the requirements of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 and relevant actuarial standards. As permitted under the Code, the Fund has opted to disclose the actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits by way of a note to the Net Assets Statement (Note 2 below).

NOTE 2: FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS AND ACTUARIAL PRESENT VALUE OF PROMISED RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Funding Arrangements

This statement has been provided to meet the requirements under Regulation 57(1)(d) of The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013. An actuarial valuation of the Worcestershire Pension Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022 to determine the contribution rates with effect from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

On the basis of the assumptions adopted, the Fund’s assets of £3,585 million represented 101% of the Fund’s past service liabilities of £3,562 million (the “Solvency Funding Target”) at the valuation date. The surplus at the valuation was therefore £23 million.



The valuation also showed that a Primary contribution rate of 18.8% of pensionable pay per annum was required from employers. The Primary rate is calculated as being sufficient, together with contributions paid by members, to meet all liabilities arising in respect of service after the valuation date.

The funding objective as set out in the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS) is to achieve and maintain a solvency funding level of 100% of liabilities (the solvency funding target). In line with the FSS, where a shortfall exists at the effective date of the valuation, a deficit recovery plan will be put in place which requires additional contributions to correct the shortfall. Equally, where there is a surplus, it is usually appropriate to offset this against contributions for future service, in which case contribution reductions will be put in place to allow for this.

The FSS sets out the process for determining the recovery plan in respect of each employer. At this actuarial valuation the average recovery period adopted was 12 years for employers in deficit and 14 years for employers in surplus, and the total initial recovery payment (the “Secondary rate” for 2023/26) was an addition of approximately £2.7m per annum in £ terms (which allows for the contribution plans which have been set for individual employers under the provisions of the FSS), although this varies year on year. Further details regarding the results of the valuation are contained in the formal report on the actuarial valuation dated March 2023.

In practice, each individual employer’s position is assessed separately, and the contributions required are set out in the report. In addition to the certified contribution rates, payments to cover additional liabilities arising from early retirements (other than ill-health retirements) will be made to the Fund by the employers

The funding plan adopted in assessing the contributions for each individual employer is in accordance with the Funding Strategy Statement (FSS). Any different approaches adopted, e.g. with regard to the implementation of contribution increases and deficit recovery periods, are as determined through the FSS consultation process.

The valuation was carried out using the projected unit actuarial method and the main actuarial assumptions used for assessing the Solvency Funding Target and the Primary rate of contribution were as follows:

	For past service liabilities (Solvency Funding Target)	For future service liabilities (Primary rate of contribution)
Rate of return on investments (discount rate) *	4.60% per annum	5.10% per annum
Rate of pay increases (long term) **	4.60% per annum	4.60% per annum
Rate of increases in pensions in payment (in excess of GMP)	3.10% per annum	3.10% per annum

* This is the discount rate for the “growth pot” and applies to the majority of employers. Certain employers have a more cautious investment strategy, and so a lower discount rate.

** A minimum of 4% p.a. over the 3 years to 31 March 2026 and then reverting to the long-term rate.

The next triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund is due as at 31 March 2025. Based on the results of this valuation, the contribution rates payable by the individual employers will be revised with effect from 1 April 2026.

The McCloud Judgement

The “McCloud judgment” refers to a legal challenge in relation to historic benefit changes for all public sector schemes being age discriminatory. The Government has accepted that remedies are required for all public sector pension schemes and a consultation was issued in July 2020 including a proposed remedy for the LGPS. The key feature of the proposed remedy was to extend the final salary underpin to a wider group of members for service up to 31 March 2022. This applies to all members who were active on or before 31 March 2012 and who either remain active or left service after 1 April 2014. The figures above allow for the impact of the judgment based on the proposed remedy.

Impact of Covid 19 / Ukraine inflation

The financial assumptions allow for these factors to the degree that they are reflected in the market values on which the assumptions are based. The impact of COVID deaths over the period 2019/22 will be included in the actuarial gains / losses item above. The mortality assumption includes no specific adjustment for COVID as our view is that it is not possible at this point to draw any meaningful conclusions on the long-term impact.

The period-end above figures allow for the impact of actual known CPI at the accounting date as noted above. The period-end assumptions then allow for expected (market implied) CPI from that point.

Actuarial Present Value of Promised Retirement Benefits for the Purposes of IAS 26

IAS 26 requires the present value of the Fund’s promised retirement benefits to be disclosed, and for this purpose the actuarial assumptions and methodology used should be based on IAS 19 rather than the assumptions and methodology used for funding purposes.

To assess the value of the benefits on this basis, we have used the following financial assumptions as at 31 March 2023 (the 31 March 2022 assumptions are included for comparison):

	31 March 2022	31 March 2023
Rate of return on investments (discount rate)	2.8% per annum	4.8% per annum
Rate of CPI Inflation / CARE benefit revaluation	3.4% per annum	2.7% per annum
Rate of pay increases*	4.9% per annum*	4.2% per annum**
Rate of increases in pensions in payment (in excess of GMP) / Deferred revaluation	3.5% per annum	2.8% per annum

* This is the long-term assumption. An adjustment has been made for the short-term salary growth assumption in line with the 2019 actuarial valuation.

** This is the long-term assumption. An adjustment has been made for the short-term salary growth assumption in line with the 2022 actuarial valuation.

The demographic assumptions are the same as those used for funding purposes:

- the start of period assumptions are based on the 2019 actuarial valuation assumptions (but updated to the 2021 CMI future improvement tables)
- the end of period assumptions are based on the updated assumption adopted for the 2022 actuarial valuation, with a long-term rate of life expectancy improvement of 1.5% pa.

Full details of the demographic assumptions are set out in the formal reports to the respective valuations.

The movement in the value of the Fund's promised retirement benefits for IAS 26 is as follows:

Start of period liabilities	£5,148m
Interest on liabilities	£143m
Net benefits accrued/paid over the period*	£93m
Actuarial gains (see below)	-£1,726m
End of period liabilities	£3,658m

Key factors leading to actuarial gains above year are:

- **Change in financial assumptions:** Corporate bond yields increased significantly over the year, with a corresponding increase in discount rate to 4.8% p.a. from 2.8% p.a. In addition, there has been a reduction in long-term assumed CPI to 2.7% p.a. from 3.4%. In combination, these factors lead to a significant reduction in liabilities.
- **Change in demographic assumptions:** As noted above, the assumptions have been updated to reflect the 2022 actuarial valuation assumptions. This acts to reduce the liabilities.

- **Pension increases / high short-term inflation:** The figures allow for the impact of the April 2023 pension increase of 10.1%, along with the high levels of CPI since September 2023 (which will feed into the 2024 pension increase). As current inflation is higher than the long-term assumption, this increases the liabilities.
- **2022 actuarial valuation:** The year-end liabilities allow for the final 2022 valuation results, and so will allow for the difference between the assumptions and actual member experience over 2019/22. This will include factors such as the impact of actual pay increases awarded, actual rates of ill-health retirement, etc.

GMP Indexation

The above figures allow for the provision of full CPI pension increases on GMP benefits for members who reach State Pension Age after 6 April 2016.

Paul Middleman
Mercers Ltd
Fellow of the Institute and
Faculty of Actuaries

Laura Evans
Mercers Ltd
Fellow of the Institute and
Faculty of Actuaries

Mercer Limited
May 2023

NOTE 3: EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING DATE

These are events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue. The two types of events are:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period (adjusting events); and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period (non-adjusting events).

An entity adjusts the amounts recognised in its financial statements to reflect adjusting events, but it does not adjust those amounts to reflect non-adjusting events. Management have reviewed and can confirm that there are no significant events after the reporting period.

It is anticipated that the future value of investments may continue to be exposed to increased market volatility as a result of COVID-19 and more recently the effects of the Russia / Ukraine conflict as well as inflation rises which may impact on the value of the Fund in the short to medium term; however, it is not possible to reliably estimate the financial impact of this on the position and performance of the Fund in future periods.

The impact of inflation and consequent price rises on fuel and the cost of living is likely to impact on increasing budgetary pressures and it is unlikely that the level of funding that local government bodies receive in future years will keep pace with pressures being faced. This will need to be taken into account for employer's contributions to the Fund.

The Fund Accounts include more detail regarding the impact of COVID-19, the Russia / Ukraine conflict and inflation in the accompanying disclosure notes concerning Funding Arrangements and Accounting Assumptions and the Chief Financial Officer's foreword.

NOTE 4: CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVABLE

Normal contributions, both from the members and from employers, are accounted for on an accruals basis at the percentage rate recommended by the Fund's actuary in the payroll period to which they relate.

Employer deficit funding contributions are accounted for on the due dates on which they are payable under the schedule of contributions set by the actuary or on receipt if earlier than the due date.

Employers' augmentation contributions and pension strain contributions are accounted for in the period in which the liability arises. Any amount due in year but unpaid will be classed as a current financial asset. Amounts not due until future years are classed as long-term financial assets. The contributions received are detailed below:

	2021/22	2022/23
By Category	£m	£m
Employers		
Normal contributions	47.6	54.2
Deficit recovery contributions	14.6	14.9
Augmentation contributions	2.6	0.7
Additional contributions	0	0
Employees		
Normal contributions	25.6	27.8
Additional contributions	0.3	0.3
	90.7	97.9

	2021/22	2022/23
By authority:	£m	£m
Worcestershire County Council	11.2	13.8
Scheduled bodies	68.3	72.2
Community admission bodies	3.8	3.8
Transferee admission bodies	6.4	7.1
Designated bodies	1	1
	90.7	97.9

The increase in contributions in 2022/23 was due an increase in the number of members and the unwinding of a number of major employers previously paying three years of contributions upfront.

NOTE 5: TRANSFERS IN AND FROM OTHER PENSION FUNDS

Transfer values represent the amounts received and paid during the year for members who have either joined or left the Fund during the financial year and are calculated in accordance with LGPS regulations. Individual transfers in/out are accounted for when received/paid, which is normally when the member liability is accepted or discharged. Bulk (group) transfers are accounted for on an accruals basis in accordance with the terms of the transfer agreement. Individual transfers in and from other pension funds are as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Individual transfers	13.7	18.1
Bulk transfers	0	3.9
	13.7	22.0

NOTE 6: BENEFITS PAYABLE

Pensions and lump-sum benefits payable include all amounts known to be due as at the end of the financial year. Any amounts due but unpaid are disclosed in the Net Assets Statement as current liabilities. The benefits paid are as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23
By category	£m	£m
Pensions	95.5	100.3
Commutations and lump sum retirement benefits	17.4	19.7
Lump sum death benefits	2.7	2.6
	115.6	122.6

	2021/22	2022/23
By authority	£m	£m
Worcestershire County Council	40.9	43.5
Scheduled bodies	61.2	65.4
Admitted bodies	1.7	1.7
Community admission bodies	7.1	7.7
Transferee admission bodies	4.1	3.7
Designated bodies	0.6	0.6
	115.6	122.6

NOTE 7: PAYMENTS TO AND ON ACCOUNT OF LEAVERS

	2021/22	2022/23
By authority	£m	£m
Individual transfers	10.0	12.7
Group transfers	0.0	0.0
	10.0	12.7

At year-end there were no potential liabilities in respect of individuals transferring out of the Fund upon whom the Fund is awaiting final decisions.

NOTE 8: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

All administrative expenses are accounted for on an accruals basis. All staff costs of the Fund's administration team are charged direct to the Fund. Associated management, accommodation and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the Fund.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Employee expenses	0.6	1.1
Support services	0.5	0.1
Actuarial services	0.4	0.5
Other expenses	0.2	(0.2)
	1.7	1.5

The audit fee (included in support services above) for work completed by the Fund's external auditors for the year ended 31 March 2023 was £36,073 (31 March 2022: £32,473), 2.1% (31 March 2022: 1.8%) of total admin costs. A non audit service fee of £17,000 (31 March 2022: £8,500) included in support services above was incurred relating to IAS19 requirements. An additional non audit service fee of £6,500 (31 March 2022: £nil) relating to requirements associated with the latest triennial valuation is included within support services above.

NOTE 9: MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 1998 permit costs incurred in connection with the investment and administration of the Fund to be charged against the Fund.

The Code of Practice does not require any breakdown of the Fund's administrative expenses. However, in the interests of greater transparency, the Fund discloses its management expenses in accordance with CIPFA guidance *Accounting for Local Government Pension Scheme Management Costs*.

All oversight and governance expenses are accounted for on an accrual's basis. All staff costs associated with governance and oversight are charged direct to the Fund. Associated management, accommodation, and other overheads are apportioned to this activity and charged as expenses to the Fund.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Oversight and Governance	0.4	0.4
LGPSC*	0.7	0.6
Investment Management Expenses		
Administration, management and custody fees	20.4	14.4
Other expenses	0	0.7
	21.5	16.1

*LGPSC is the governance and management costs the Fund contributes towards the pooling company

NOTE 9A: INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

Fixed income and equity investment managers' expenses are charged on a percentage basis of the market value of assets under management and therefore increase or reduce as the value of these investments change. Global custodian fees are agreed in the respective mandate governing their appointment.

The cost of obtaining investment advice from the Fund's independent investment adviser is included in oversight and governance. All investment management expenses are accounted for on an accrual's basis. The management costs are as follows:

2022/23	Management Fees	Transaction Costs	Performance Related Fees	Total
			£m	£m
LGPS Central (Bonds)	0.2	0.6	0	0.8
LGPS Central (Emerging Markets)	1.2	0.6	0	1.8
LGPS Central (Global Climate Fund)	0.1	0.4	0	0.5
LGPS Central (Global Targeted Fund)	0.2	0.2	0	0.4
LGPS Central (Global Thematic Fund)	0.3	0	0	0.3
Nomura Asset Management UK Ltd	0.4	0.3	0	0.7
Legal & General Asset Management	0.3	0	0	0.3
Green Investment Bank	0.6	0	0	0.6
Hermes	0.6	0	0	0.6
Invesco	0.9	0	0	0.9
VENN	0.7	0	0	0.7
Walton Street	0.2	0	0	0.2
AEW	0.1	0	0	0.1
Stonepeak	0.8	0	0	0.8
Igneo (was First Sentier)	0.9	0	0	0.9
First Sentier EDIF III	0	0	0	0.0
Bridgepoint (was EQT)	0.8	0	0	0.8
Bridgepoint Fund III (was EQT)	0.7	0	0	0.7
River and Mercantile	0.2	1.6	0	1.8
Gresham Forestry	(0.6)	0	0	(0.6)
Gresham Forest Fund VI	0.3	0	0	0.3
Gresham (BSIF)	0	0	0	0.0
Gresham (BSIF II)	1.6	0	0	1.6
Closed Mandates & one-off advisory fees	0	0	0	0.0
Subtotal	10.6	3.7	0	14.3
Custody Fees				0.1
Total Fees				14.4

2021/22	Management Fees	Transaction Costs	Performance Related Fees	Total
			£m	£m
LGPS Central (Bonds)	0.2	1	0	1.2
LGPS Central (Equity Climate Fund)	0.1	0	0	0.1
LGPS Central (Emerging Markets)	1.5	1.6	0	3.1
Nomura Asset Management UK Ltd	0.7	0.4	0	1.1
Legal & General Asset Management	0.5	0	0	0.5
Green Investment Bank	0.6	0	0	0.6
Hermes	0.7	0	0	0.7
Invesco	0.8	0	0	0.8
VENN	0.3	0	0	0.3
Walton Street	0.1	0	0	0.1
AEW	0.1	0	0	0.1
Stonepeak	8	0	0	8
First State	0.9	0	0	0.9
Bridgepoint (was EQT)	1	0	0	1
River and Mercantile	0.5	0.1	0	0.6
Gresham Forestry	0.3	0	0	0.3
BSIF	0.5	0	0	0.5
Closed Mandates & one off advisory fees	0.4	0	0	0.4
Subtotal	17.2	3.1	0	20.3
Custody Fees				0.1
Total Fees				20.4

The £14.3m investment management expenses incurred in 2022/23 represent 0.40% or 40 basis points (bps) of the market value of the Fund's assets as at 31st March 2023 (0.57% or 57bps as 31 March 2022). The cash for pooled property investments, pooled infrastructure investment and equity protection strategy drawdowns was transitioned from the overweight position held in UK passive equities, which have a very low management fee in comparison.

The reason for the investment in pooled property investments and pooled infrastructure investments was to further diversify the Fund's assets whilst maintaining long term target investment returns. These investments have a J-Curve return profile, so are expected to provide increased returns as the pooled funds mature.

* The Fund has applied CIPFA's guidance 'Accounting for Local Government Pension Scheme Management Costs', which requires external investment management fees and transaction costs to be deducted from asset values (rather than invoiced and paid directly). These are shown gross: the application of the guidance increases management expenses from £6.6 million to £14.9 million for 2022/23 (£13.0 million to £20.2 million for 2021/22). It is important to note that the application of the guidance does not represent an actual increase in costs, or a decrease in the Fund's resources to pay pension benefits.

NOTE 10: INVESTMENT INCOME

Income from equities (dividend income) is accounted for on the date stocks are quoted ex-dividend. Any amount not received by the end of the reporting period is disclosed in the net assets statement as a current financial asset.

Income from fixed interest, cash and short-term deposits is accounted for on an accruals basis, using the effective interest rate of the financial institution as at the date of acquisition or origination. Income includes the amortisation of any discount or premium, transaction costs (where material) or other differences between the initial carrying amount of the instrument and its amount at maturity calculated on an effective interest rate basis. Income from other investments is accounted for on an accrual's basis.

The changes in market value of investments during the year are recognised as income and comprise all increases and decreases in the market value of investments held at any time during the year, including profits and losses realised on sales of investments and unrealised changes in market value.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Fixed interest securities	(0.3)	(0.2)
Equity dividends	11.5	10.3
Pooled property & infrastructure investments	26.1	26.5
Interest on cash deposits	(0.1)	1.3
Securities lending	0.0	0.0
	37.2	37.9

NOTE 11: TAXES ON INCOME

The Fund is a registered public service scheme under section (1) of schedule 36 of the Finance Act 2004 and as such is exempt from UK income tax on interest received and from capital gains tax on the proceeds of investments sold. Income from overseas investments suffers withholding tax in the country of origin unless exemption is permitted. Irrecoverable tax is accounted for as a fund expense as it arises.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Withholding tax - equities	(0.2)	0.1
	(0.2)	0.1

NOTE 12: INVESTMENTS

	Market value 31 March 2022	Market Value 31 March 2023
	£m	£m
Long term Investment Assets		
LGPS Central shares	1.4	1.4
Investment Assets -LGPS Central Managed		
Equities	322.5	306.9
Pooled investment vehicles	207.1	402.7
Fixed Interest Securities	206.4	184
Investment assets -WPF Managed		
Fixed interest securities	190.4	0.0
Equities	332.9	328.5
Pooled investment vehicles	1,508.80	1,393.80
Pooled property investments	221.9	323.6
Pooled infrastructure investments	426.7	511.8
Pooled debt Assets	76.3	92.3
Derivatives - futures	198.7	0.0
Derivatives - forward FX	0.0	0.0
Cash deposits	13	8.7
Investment income due	4.4	3.7
Amounts receivable for sales	0.0	0.3
Total investment assets	3,710.5	3,557.7
Investment liabilities		
Derivatives - futures	(167.1)	(0.0)
Derivatives - forward FX	(0.0)	(0.0)
Amounts payable for purchases	(0.0)	(0.3)
Total investment liabilities	(167.1)	(0.3)
Net investment assets	3,543.4	3,557.4

NOTE 12A: RECONCILIATION OF MOVEMENTS IN INVESTMENTS AND DERIVATIVES

	Market value 31 March 2022	Purchases during the year and derivative payments	Sales during the year and derivative receipts	Change in market value during the year	Market value 31 March 2023
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
-					
Long-term Investment Assets					
LGPS Central – Shares	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4
Investment Assets -LGPS Central Managed					
Fixed Interest Securities	206.4	0	(0.8)	(21.6)	184.0
Pooled investment vehicles	207.1	201.3	(1.1)	(4.6)	402.7
Equities	322.5	0	(1.7)	(13.9)	306.9
	737.4	201.3	(3.6)	(40.1)	895
Investment Assets -WPF Managed					
Fixed interest securities	190.4	191.4	(382.5)	0.7	0
Equities	332.9	162.7	(147.5)	(19.6)	328.5
Pooled investment vehicles	1,508.80	231.7	(375.5)	28.8	1,393.80
Pooled property investments	221.9	127.1	(30.4)	5	323.6
Pooled infrastructure investments	426.7	106	(49.8)	28.9	511.8
Pooled debt investments	76.3	27	(16.1)	5.1	92.3
	3,494.4	1,047.2	(1,005.40)	8.8	3,545.00
Derivative contracts:					
Futures	31.6	343.4	(381.2)	6.2	(0.0)
Forward currency contracts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3,526.0	1,390.6	(1,386.6)	15.0	3,545.0
Other investment balances:					
Cash deposits	13.0			4.1	8.7
Investment income due	4.4				3.7
Amount receivable for sales of investments	0.0				0.3
Amounts payable for purchases of investments	0.0				(0.3)
Net investment assets	3,543.4			19.1	3,557.4

Prior year comparators:

	Market value 31 March 2021	Purchases during the year and derivative payments	Sales during the year and derivative receipts	Change in market value during the year	Market value 31 March 2022
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Long-term Investment Assets					
LGPS Central – Shares	1.4	0	0	0	1.4
	1.4	0	0	0	1.4
Investment Assets -LGPS Central Managed					
Fixed Interest Securities	159.7	60	(1.1)	(12.2)	206.4
Pooled investment vehicles	0	212.8	(0.1)	(5.6)	207.1
Equities	402.4	0	(43.1)	(36.8)	322.5
	563.5	272.8	(44.3)	(54.6)	737.4
Investment Assets -WPF Managed					
Fixed interest securities	192.7	196.7	(198.6)	(0.4)	190.4
Equities	448.8	207.2	(296.9)	(26.2)	332.9
Pooled investment vehicles	1,518.70	263.4	(489.2)	215.9	1,508.80
Pooled property investments	160.7	75.6	(18.2)	3.8	221.9
Pooled infrastructure investments	332.6	63.4	(33.9)	64.6	426.7
Pooled debt investments	42.2	36.9	(4.5)	1.7	76.3
	3,259.20	1,116.00	(1,085.60)	204.8	3,494.40
Derivative contracts:					
Futures	4.2	47.4	(42.8)	22.8	31.6
Forward currency contracts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3,263.4	1,163.4	(1,128.4)	227.6	3,526.0
Other investment balances:					
Cash deposits	13.6			(0.4)	13
Investment income due	5.3				4.4
Amount receivable for sales of investments	0.0				0
Amounts payable for purchases of investments	0.0				0
Net investment assets	3,282.3			227.2	3,543.4

The change in market value of investments during the year comprises all increases and decreases in the market value of investments held at any time during the year, including profits and losses realised on sales of investments during the year. The changes in purchases and sales in derivatives relate to transactions made within the equity protection strategy maintained by River and Mercantile.

Transaction costs are not included in the cost of purchases and sale proceeds, as they have been included in investment management expenses as per CIPFA guidance. Transaction costs include costs charged directly to the Fund such as fees, commissions, and other fees.

Transaction costs incurred during the 2022/23 year amounted to £3.7 million, (2021/22: £3.0 million). These transaction costs represent 0.09% or 9bps of the market value of the Fund's assets as at 31 March 2023 (0.8bps at 31 March 2022).

Indirect costs are incurred through the bid-offer spread on investments within pooled investments vehicles. The amount of indirect costs is not provided separately to the Fund.

NOTE 12B: PENSION FUND INVESTMENTS ANALYSED BY FUND MANAGER

The proportion of the market value of investment assets held by external fund managers at the year-end was:

External Fund Manager	2021/22		2022/23	
	£m	%	£m	%
LGPSC (Bonds)	206.4	6	184	5
LGPSC (Emerging Markets)	322.5	9	306.9	9
LGPSC (Global All World Climate Factor Fund)	207.1	6	208.2	6
LGPSC (Global Sustainable Active Equities)	0	0	194.5	5
JP Morgan Asset Management (Bonds)	0.2	0	0.2	0
JP Morgan Asset Management (Emerging Markets)	1.5	0	1.6	0
Nomura Asset Management UK Ltd	365.8	10	355.5	10
Schroder Investment Management	1.4	0	1.5	0
Legal & General Asset Management	1,480.10	43	1366.8	38
Green Investment Bank	44.7	1	46.7	1
Hermes (Fund I and II)	103.6	3	91	3
Invesco (Euro and a UK Property Fund)	107.6	3	116.9	3
VENN (Fund I & II)	25.2	1	18.2	0
Walton Street (Fund I & II)	10.2	0	10.6	0
AEW	19.9	1	18.6	1
Stonepeak (III & IV)	134.9	4	174.2	5
Igneo (II & III, was First Sentier)	114.7	3	133.4	4
Bridgepoint Fund II & III (was EQT)	76.3	2	92.2	3
River and Mercantile	223.4	6	0.0	0
WCC Managed Account	5.4	0	5.4	0
Gresham House (BSIF I & II)	44.2	1	86.6	3
Gresham House Forestry Growth & Sustainability	42.5	1	54.6	2
Gresham House Forest Fund IV	0.0	0	84.7	2
	3,537.6	100	3,552.3	100

The above excludes £1.4m (2021/22: £1.4m) Invested in LGPSC and £3.7m (2021/22: £4.4m) of investment income due. The following investments represent more than 5% of the net assets of the Fund:

	Market value 31 March 2022	% of total Fund	Market value 31 March 2023	% of total Fund
Security	£m		£m	
LGIM – UK Equity Index Pooled Fund	556.1	15.7	608	17.1
LGIM - Client Specific unitised Fund -STAJ	352.6	10	354.2	10
LGPS Central Emerging Market Equity Pool	322.6	9.1	306.9	8.7
LGIM – Europe (ex-UK) Index Pooled Fund	216.1	6.1	221.8	6.3
LGPS Central All World Equity Climate Factor Fund	207.1	5.9	208.2	5.9
LGPS Central Global Active Investment Grade Corporate Bond Fund	206.3	5.8	184	5.2
LGIM – North America Index Pooled Fund	355.2	10.1	182.8	5.2
River and Mercantile UK Gilts	190.3	5.4	0.0	0.0

NOTE 12 C STOCK LENDING

The Fund operates the practice of lending stock to a third party for a financial consideration. Securities released to a third party under the stock lending agreement with the Fund's custodian, BNY Mellon, are included in the Net Assets Statement to reflect the Fund's continuing economic interest of a proprietary nature in those securities.

The total amount of stock lent at the year-end was £3.6 million (2021/22: £0.8 million). Counterparty risk is managed through holding collateral at the Fund's custodian bank. The total collateral, which consisted of acceptable corporate and sovereign debt as well as equities was £3.7 million (2021/22: £0.8 million) representing 105.0% of stock lent.

Income received from stock lending activities was £0.0 million for the year ending 31 March 2023 (2021/22: £0.0 million). This is included within the 'Investment Income' figure detailed on the Fund Account.

Stock lending commissions are remitted to the Fund via the custodian. During the period the stock is on loan, the voting rights of the loaned stocks are passed to the borrower. There are no liabilities associated with the loaned assets.

NOTE 13A: ANALYSIS OF DERIVATIVES

During the year ending 31 March 2023, The Fund used derivative financial instruments to manage its exposure to specific risks arising from its investment activities. The Fund did not hold derivatives for speculative purposes.

The value of a futures contract is determined using exchange prices at the reporting date. Amounts due from or owed to the broker are the amounts outstanding in respect of the initial margin and variation margin. The future value of forward currency contracts is based on market forward exchange rates at the year-end date and determined as the gain or loss that would arise if the outstanding contract were matched at the year-end with an equal and opposite contract.

Objectives and Policies for holding derivatives

The holding in derivatives was designed to hedge exposures to reduce risk in the Fund. Derivatives were used to gain exposure to an asset more efficiently than holding the underlying asset. The use of derivatives was managed in line with the investment management agreement between the Fund and its investment managers.

Due to the downward trends in equity market valuations at the time, the Fund took the opportunity to exit the protection of the hedge entered into during 2019/20. This was fully exited in early November and the funds were then reinvested back into the passive equity market cap funds on 10 November 2022.

a) Futures

The Fund's investment managers hold cash balances to ensure efficient and timely trading when opportunities arise. The Fund's management did not want this cash to be 'out of the market' and so enabled several investment managers to buy and sell futures contracts which had an underlying economic value broadly equivalent to the cash held. The economic exposure represents the notional value of the stock purchased under futures contracts and is therefore subject to market movements. The portfolio cannot be geared to and must have the liquidity needed to cover open positions. Derivative receipts and payments represent the realised gains and losses on futures contracts.

b) Forward Foreign Currency

To maintain appropriate diversification and to take advantage of overseas investment returns, the Fund's bond mandate targets outperformance against a global benchmark index. To reduce volatility associated with the fluctuating currency rates, the Fund has enabled the bond mandate investment manager to purchase and sell forward foreign currencies as a hedge.

Dividends, interest and purchases and sales of investments in foreign currencies have been accounted for at the spot market rates at the date of transaction. End-of-year spot market exchange rates are used to value cash balances held in foreign currency bank accounts, market values of overseas investments and purchases and sales outstanding at the end of the reporting period.

Futures

Outstanding exchange traded futures contracts are as follows:

Assets		Economic Exposure	Market Value 31 March 2022	Economic Exposure	Market Value 31 March 2023
Type of future	Expiration	£m	£m	£m	£m
UK Gilt exchange traded	Under one year	0	0	0	0
UK FTSE exchange traded option	Under one year	0	138.4	0	0
EUROSTOXX exchange traded option	Under one year	0	21.4	0	0
US S+P exchange traded option	Under one year	0	38.9	0	0
Overseas exchanged traded	under one year	0	0	0	0
Total assets			198.7		0
Liabilities		Economic Exposure Value	Market Value 31 March 2022	Economic Exposure Value	Market Value 31 March 2023
Type of future	Expiration	£m	£m	£m	£m
UK Gilt exchange traded	Under one year	0	0	0	0
UK FTSE exchange traded option	Under one year	0	(98.7)	0	0
EUROSTOXX exchange traded option	Under one year	0	(29)	0	0
US S+P 500 exchange traded option	Under one year	0	(39.4)	0	0
Overseas exchanged traded	Under one year	0	0	0	0
Total liabilities			(167.1)		0.0
Net futures			31.6		0.0

OPEN FORWARD CURRENCY CONTRACTS AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

Settlement	Currency Bought	Local Currency Value	Currency Sold	Local Currency Value	Asset Value	Liability Value
		£m		£m	£m	£m
One to Six Months	JPY	(0.3)	USD	0.3	0.0	
One to Six Months	USD	(0.3)	JPY	0.3		0.0
					0.0	(0.0)
Net forward currency contracts at 31 March 2023						0.0
Prior year comparative:						
Open forward currency contracts at 31 March 2022					0.0	0.0
Net forward currency contracts at 31 March 2022						0.0

ANALYSIS OF CASH

Cash comprises demand deposits and cash equivalents; these include amounts held by the Fund's external managers. Cash equivalents are short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and that are subject to minimal risk of changes in value. Please see Note 16 for further analysis of Cash Instruments.

	2021/22	2022/23
Cash	£m	£m
Cash deposits	5.3	4.7
Cash instruments	7.7	4
	13.0	8.7

NOTE 14: FAIR VALUE

NOTE 14 A: BASIS OF VALUATION

The basis of the valuation of each class of investment asset is set out below. There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year. All assets have been valued using fair value techniques which represent the highest and best price available at the reporting date.

Description of asset	Valuation hierarchy	Basis of valuation	Observable and unobservable inputs	Key sensitivities affecting the valuations provided
Market-Quoted Investments	Level 1	Published bid market price ruling on the final day of the accounting period	Not required	Not required
Fixed Interest Securities	Level 1	Fixed interest securities are valued at net market value based on current yields	Not required	Not required
Pooled Equity Funds	Level 2	Closing bid price where bid and offer prices are published; or the single price, as applicable	Net Asset Value (NAV)-based pricing set on a forward pricing basis and in the case of accumulation funds, reinvested income net of applicable withholding tax	Not required
Forward Foreign Exchange Derivatives	Level 2	Market forward exchange rates at the year-end	Exchange rate risk	Not required
Derivatives -Futures	Level 2	Option pricing model	Annualised volatility of counterparty credit risk	Not required
Property, Infrastructure and Debt Funds	Level 3	Unit or security price as advised by Investment Manager or responsible entity	Funds share of net assets in limited partnership, using Financial Statements published by the manager as at the final day of the accounting period	Valuations could be affected by material events occurring between the date of the financial statements provided and the fund's own reporting date, by changes to expected cashflows, and by any differences between audited and unaudited accounts

Please see paragraphs under the Net Assets Statement for more detail of our basis for measurement for the above Financial Instruments.

NOTE 14 B: FAIR VALUE HIERARCHY

Level 1

Financial instruments at Level 1 are those where the fair values are derived from unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets or liabilities. Products classified as level 1 comprise quoted equities, quoted fixed interest securities and quoted index linked securities.

Listed investments are shown at bid prices. The bid value of the investment is based on the bid market quotation of the relevant stock exchange.

Level 2

Financial instruments at Level 2 are those where quoted market prices are not available; for example, where an instrument is traded in a market that is not considered to be active, or where valuation techniques are used to determine fair value and where these techniques use inputs that are based significantly on observable market data.

Level 3

Financial instruments at Level 3 are those where at least one input could have a significant effect on the instrument's valuation is not based on observable market data.

Such instruments would include unquoted equity investments, pooled property investments and pooled infrastructure investments which are valued using various valuation techniques that require significant judgement in determining appropriate assumptions.

The following table provides an analysis of the financial assets and liabilities of the Fund into levels 1 to 3, based on the level at which the fair value is observable:

	Quoted market price	Using observable inputs	With significant unobservable inputs	Total
Values at 31 March 2023	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Fair Value Financial assets				
Financial assets at fair value through profit and loss	1,017.9	1,602.0	927.7	3,547.6
Total fair value financial assets	1,017.9	1,602.0	927.7	3,547.6
Fair Value Financial Liabilities				
Financial liabilities at fair value through profit and loss	0.0	(0.3)	0.0	(0.3)
Total fair value financial liabilities	0.0	(0.3)	0.0	(0.3)
Net fair value financial assets	1,017.9	1,601.7	927.7	3,547.3

	Quoted market price	Using observable inputs	With significant unobservable inputs	Total
Values at 31 March 2022	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Fair Value Financial assets				
Financial assets at fair value through profit and loss	1,056.6	1,914.6	724.9	3,696.1
Total fair value financial assets	1,056.6	1,914.6	724.9	3,696.1
Fair Value Financial Liabilities				
Financial liabilities at fair value through profit and loss	0	(167.1)	0	(167.1)
Total fair value financial liabilities	0	(167.1)	0	(167.1)
Net fair value financial assets	1,056.60	1,747.50	724.9	3,529.0

NOTE 14 C: SENSITIVITY OF ASSETS VALUED AT LEVEL 3

Having analysed historical data and current market trends, and consulted with independent investment advisors, the Fund has determined that the valuation methods described in Note 14a are likely to be accurate to within the following ranges. This sets out below the consequent potential impact on the closing value of investments held at 31 March 2023.

Sensitivity Analysis	Valuation range	Value as at 31 st March 2023	Valuation Increase	Valuation Decrease
	+/- %	£m	£m	£m
Pooled Investments - Property Funds	5.6%	323.6	341.6	305.6
Pooled Investments - Infrastructure Funds	6.6%	511.8	545.5	478.1
Pooled Investments - Debt Funds	5.6%	92.3	97.4	87.2
Total		927.7	984.6	870.8

The valuation for these asset classes are based on the volatility over three years of monthly investment returns. The return is based upon the market value and income and trades supplied by our underlying managers and grouped accordingly.

Reconciliation of Fair Value Measurements within Level 3

Investment Movement	Pooled Investments - Property Funds	Pooled Investments - Infrastructure Funds	Pooled Investments - Debt Funds	Total
	£m	£m		£m
Market Value 1 st April 2022	221.9	426.7	76.3	724.9
Transfers into Level 3	0	0	0	0
Transfers out of Level 3	0	0	0	0
Purchases and derivative Pymts	127.1	106	27	260.1
Sales and derivative receipts	(30.4)	(49.8)	(16.1)	(96.3)
Unrealised gains	5.3	21.8	4.8	31.9
Realised gains/(losses)	(0.3)	7.1	0.3	7.1
Market value 31st March 2023	323.6	511.8	92.3	927.7

NOTE 15: FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

NOTE 15 A: CLASSIFICATION OF FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Accounting policies describe how different asset classes of financial instruments are measured, and how income and expenses, including fair value gains and losses, are recognised. The following table analyses the carrying amounts of financial assets and liabilities by category and Net Assets Statement heading.

Fair value through profit and loss	Financial Instruments at Amortised Cost		Fair value through profit and loss	Financial Instruments at Amortised Cost
2021/22	2021/22		2022/23	2022/23
£m	£m		£m	£m
		Financial assets		
	1.4	Other share capital		1.4
736		LGPS Central Managed	893.6	
190.4		Fixed interest securities	0	
332.9		Equities	328.5	
1,508.80		Pooled investment vehicles	1,393.80	
221.9		Pooled property investments	323.6	
426.7		Pooled Infrastructure investments	511.8	
76.3		Pooled Debt investments	92.3	
198.7		Derivatives - Futures	0.0	
0		Derivatives - Forward FX	0.0	
	49.4	Cash		51.2
4.4		Other investment Balances	4.0	
	9.8	Current assets		13.0
	1.5	Non-current assets		1.7
3,696.1	62.1		3,547.6	67.3
		Financial liabilities		
(167.1)		Derivatives - Futures	0.0	
0		Derivatives - Forward FX	0.0	
0		Other investment balances	(0.3)	
	(6.5)	Current liabilities		(6.1)
(167.1)	(6.5)		(0.3)	(6.1)
3,529.0	55.6		3,547.3	61.2

NOTE 15 B: NET GAINS AND LOSSES ON FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

31 March 2022		31 March 2023	
£m		£m	
		Financial assets	
204.8		Fair value through profit and loss	8.8
(0.4)		Financial Assets at Amortised Cost	4.1
		Financial liabilities	
22.8		Fair value through profit and loss	6.2
227.2		Total	19.1

Fair value through profit and loss is the combination of realised and unrealised profit and loss. The Fund has not entered into any financial guarantees that are required to be accounted for as financial instruments.

NOTE 16: NATURE AND EXTENT OF RISKS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

In the course of every day operating, the Fund is subject to a number of risk factors arising from the holding of financial instruments. The main risks arising from the holding of the Fund's financial instruments are market risk, credit risk and liquidity risk.

As detailed in the Investment Strategy Statement, the Fund holds equity and bond instruments in order to meet its investment objectives. The Fund's investment objectives and risk management policies are as follows.

- 1) The investment objective for the Fund is to:
 - a. ensure that sufficient assets are available to meet liabilities as they fall due.
 - b. Maximise the return at an acceptable level of risk.
- 2) Risk management is mostly concerned with:
 - a. avoiding the possibility of loss, or
 - b. limiting a deficiency in the underlying Fund, or
 - c. avoiding a contribution rate increase in the future.

Market Risk

Market risk is the risk of loss from fluctuations in equity and commodity prices, interest and foreign exchange rates and credit spreads. The Fund is exposed to market risk from its investment activities, particularly through its equity holdings. The level of risk exposure depends on market conditions, expectations of future price and yield movements and the asset mix.

The objective of the Fund's risk management strategy is to identify, manage and control market risk exposure within acceptable parameters, whilst optimising the return on risk. There are three main types of market risk that the Fund is exposed to as at 31 March 2023:

- Equity Risk
- Interest Rate Risk
- Foreign Exchange Risk

Equity risk refers to the risk arising from the volatility in stock prices; this can be systematic risk, the risk due to general market factors and affects the entire industry, or unsystematic risk, which refers to the risk specific to a company that arises due to the company specific characteristics. Interest rate risk is the risk that the value of a

security will fall as a result of increase in interest rates. Foreign exchange risk arises because of fluctuations in the currency exchange rates.

The Fund reduces its unsystematic equity risk by diversifying investments across global markets, investing in over 1,000 companies worldwide through active segregated mandates and passive pooled funds. Investment restrictions are built into contracts held with each investment manager to ensure risk concentration is minimal and gearing of the Fund's equity and fixed income assets cannot take place. An equity protection strategy has also been implemented to protect against significant market falls in its passive equity portfolio.

Interest rate risk has been reduced through the holding of fewer bonds as a percentage of the Fund's total assets.

Foreign exchange risk exists in relation to the Fund's overseas equity investments. The Fund runs un-hedged equity portfolios and therefore is subject to currency fluctuations. It is the Fund's view that in the long-run currency volatility trends to an average of nil against Sterling and therefore any hedging of currency would just be an additional cost to the Fund.

The Fund contracts Portfolio Evaluation Ltd to measure the Fund's investment returns and the absolute and relative risk for each portfolio independently. The Fund receives quarterly reports from Portfolio Evaluation Ltd listing returns and risk. The Fund's independent investment adviser also provides a yearly report to the Pension Investment Sub Committee, providing details of the Fund's risk and comparisons to other LGPS funds.

Equity Risk Analysis

Following analysis of historical data and expected investment return movement during the financial year, in consultation with the Fund's independent investment adviser and Portfolio Evaluation Ltd, the Fund has determined that the following movements in market price risk are reasonably possible for the 2022/23 reporting period:

Asset Type	Potential Market Movements (+/-)
Fixed interest securities	7.0%
Global bonds	7.0%
UK equities	12.5%
Overseas equities	12.6%
UK pooled investment vehicles	12.5%
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	10.7%
Global pooled investment vehicles	10.7%
Emerging markets pooled equities	10.7%
Pooled property investments	5.6%
Pooled infrastructure investments	6.6%
Pooled debt investments	5.6%

The potential price changes disclosed above are broadly consistent with a one standard deviation movement in the value of the assets. The analysis assumes that all other variables, in particular foreign exchange rates and interest rates, remain the same.

If the market price of the Fund's investments increases/decreases in line with the potential market movements above, the change in the net assets available to pay benefits will be as follows (the actual prior year movement in all asset classes is shown in Note 12):

Asset Type	Value as at 31 March 2023	Percentage change	Value on increase	Value on decrease
	£m	%	£m	£m
Cash and cash equivalents	8.7	0	8.7	8.7
Investment portfolio assets:				
UK fixed interest securities	0	7	0	0
Overseas fixed interest securities	0	7	0	0
Global bonds	184	7	196.9	171.1
UK equities	4.2	12.5	4.7	3.7
Overseas equities	322.8	12.6	363.5	282.1
UK pooled investment vehicles	608	12.5	684	532
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	407.1	10.7	450.7	363.5
Global pooled investment vehicles	756.9	10.7	837.9	675.9
Emerging market pooled equities	332.9	10.7	368.5	297.3
Pooled property investments	323.6	5.6	341.6	305.6
Pooled infrastructure investments	511.8	6.6	545.5	478.1
Pooled debt investments	92.3	5.6	97.4	87.2
Net derivative assets	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Investment income due	3.7	0.0	3.7	3.7
Amounts receivable for sales	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.3
Amount payable for purchases	(0.3)	0.0	(0.3)	(0.3)
Total	3,556.00		3,903.1	3,208.9

Prior-year comparators

Asset Type	Value as at 31 March 2022	Percentage change	Value on increase	Value on decrease
	£m	%	£m	£m
Cash and cash equivalents	13	0	13	13
Investment portfolio assets:				
UK fixed interest securities	190.4	6.9	203.5	177.3
Overseas fixed interest securities	0	6.9	0	0
Global bonds	206.3	6.9	220.5	192.1
UK equities	4.5	15.4	5.2	3.8
Overseas equities	323.5	12.4	363.6	283.4
UK pooled investment vehicles	556.1	15.4	641.7	470.5
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	576.4	11.5	642.7	510.1
Global pooled investment vehicles	559.7	11.5	624.1	495.3
Emerging market pooled equities	351.2	11.5	391.6	310.8
Pooled property investments	221.9	2.7	227.9	215.9
Pooled infrastructure investments	426.7	5.2	449.1	404.3
Pooled debt Investments	76.3	2.7	78.4	74.2
Net derivative assets	31.6	0	31.6	31.6
Investment income due	4.4	0	4.4	4.4
Amounts receivable for sales	0	0	0	0
Amount payable for purchases	0	0	0	0
Total	3,542.0		3,897.3	3,186.7

Interest Rate Risk Analysis

The Fund's direct exposure to interest rate movements is set out below. These disclosures present interest rate risk based on the underlying financial assets at fair value:

Asset type	Value as at 31 March 2022		Value as at 31 March 2023	
	£m		£m	
Cash and cash equivalents	13.0		8.7	
Cash balances	36.4		42.5	
Fixed interest securities	190.4		0.0	
Total change in assets available	239.8		51.2	

Interest Rate Risk Sensitivity Analysis

The Fund recognizes that interest rates can vary and can affect both income to the Fund and the value of the net assets available to pay benefits. The Fund's performance reporting advisor, Portfolio Evaluation Limited, has advised that medium to long-term average rates are expected to move less than 100 basis points from one year to the next and experience suggests that such movements are likely to happen.

The analysis that follows assumes that all other variables, in particular exchange rates, remain constant, and shows the effect in the year on the net assets available to pay benefits as at 31 March 2022 and 31 March 2023 of a +/- 100 basis points (BPS) change in interest rates:

Asset type	Carrying amount as at 31 March 2023	Change in year in the net assets available to pay benefits	
		+100 BPS	-100 BPS
		£m	£m
Cash and cash equivalents	8.7	8.8	8.6
Cash balances	42.5	42.9	42.1
Fixed interest securities	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total change in assets available	51.2	51.7	50.7

Asset type	Carrying amount as at 31 March 2022	Change in year in the net assets available to pay benefits	
		+100 BPS	-100 BPS
		£m	£m
Cash and cash equivalents	13.0	13.1	12.9
Cash balances	36.4	36.8	36.0
Fixed interest securities	190.4	192.3	188.5
Total change in assets available	239.8	242.2	237.4

A 1% increase in interest rates will not affect the interest received on fixed income but will reduce their fair value and vice versa. Changes in interest rates do not impact the value of cash deposits / cash and cash equivalent balances but they will have a small effect on the interest income received on those balances. Changes to both the fair value of assets and the income received from investments impact on the net assets available to pay benefits.

Currency Risk

The following table summarises the Fund's currency exposure:

Currency exposure - asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2022	Asset value as at 31 March 2023
	£m	£m
Overseas quoted securities	323.5	322.8
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	576.4	407.1
Global pooled investment vehicles	559.7	756.9
Global bonds and pooled EM equities	557.5	516.9
Overseas pooled property investments	104.5	90.8
Total overseas assets	2,121.6	2,094.5

Overseas bonds are 100% hedged to GBP as at 31 March 2023.

Currency Risk – Sensitivity Analysis

Following analysis of historical data in consultation with the Fund's performance measurement provider, the Fund considers the likely volatility associated with foreign exchange rate movements to be 5.9% (as measured by one standard deviation).

This analysis assumes that all other variables, in particular interest rates, remain constant.

A 5.9% strengthening/weakening of the pound against various currencies in which the Fund holds investments would increase/decrease the net assets available to pay benefits as follows:

Currency exposure - asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2023	Change to net assets available to pay benefits	
		5.90%	-5.90%
	£m	£m	£m
Overseas quoted securities	322.8	341.8	308.8
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	407.1	431.1	383.1
Global pooled investment vehicles	756.9	801.6	712.2
Global bonds and pooled EM equities	516.9	547.4	486.4
Overseas pooled property investments	90.8	96.2	85.4
Total change in assets available	2,094.5	2,218.1	1,970.9

Currency exposure - asset type	Asset value as at 31 March 2022	Change to net assets available to pay benefits	
		6.50%	-6.50%
	£m	£m	£m
Overseas quoted securities	323.5	344.5	302.5
Overseas pooled investment vehicles	576.4	613.9	538.9
Global pooled investment vehicles	559.7	596.1	523.3
Global bonds and pooled EM equities	557.7	594	521.4
Overseas pooled property investments	104.5	111.3	97.7
Total change in assets available	2,121.8	2,259.8	1,938.8

Credit Risk

Credit risk is an investor's risk of loss arising from a borrower who does not make payments as promised. In essence the Fund's entire investment portfolio is exposed to some form of credit risk, except for the derivatives position, where the risk equates to the net market value of a positive derivative position. However, the selection of high-quality counterparties, brokers and financial institutions minimises credit risk that may occur through the failure to settle a transaction in a timely manner. Investment restrictions are listed in the contract held with the manager, which limit the amount of credit risk the manager is allowed to take and states an average credit rating with regards to bonds held that should be maintained.

The bond manager provides a quarterly investment report to the Fund, which details the credit risk held in the portfolio. The Fund's independent investment adviser also provides a yearly report to the Pension Investment Sub Committee, providing details of the Fund's bond portfolio absolute and relative risk.

Deposits are not made with banks and financial institutions unless they are rated independently and have a strong credit rating. In addition, the Fund invests in Cash Instruments, which facilitate management of assets under custody, all liquidity funds chosen have an 'AAA' rating from a leading rating agency. Swap collateral is held to support our equity protection hedge.

The Fund's cash holding at 31 March 2023 was £51.2 million (31 March 2022: £49.4 million). This was held with the following institutions:

Summary	Rating	Balances as at 31 March 2022	Balances as at 31 March 2023
		£m	£m
Cash Instruments			
BNY Mellon US Dollar Liquidity Fund	AAA	7.7	4.1
Bank deposit accounts			
The Bank of New York Mellon	A-1+	5.3	4.6
Barclays Bank PLC – Notice Account	A-1	0	10
Bank current accounts			
Barclays Bank PLC	A-1	36.4	32.5
Total		49.4	51.2

The above assets are held at amortised cost and are either liquid or very short-dated securities in high-quality counterparties. Therefore, the expected loss is assessed as a trivial sum and no allowance has been set aside for this.

Liquidity Risk

Market liquidity risk is the risk that a given security or asset cannot be traded quickly enough in the market to prevent a loss (or make the required profit) or to meet the financial obligations of the Fund as they fall due. The Fund's investment managers purchase quoted and tradable securities. Equities held are listed on major world stock markets and managers employed are highly experienced in equity trading. The liquidity risk relating to the bond holdings is monitored and managed by the bond manager on an on-going basis. The Council also takes steps to ensure that the Fund has adequate cash resources to meet commitments.

NOTE 17: CURRENT ASSETS

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Contributions due from employer in respect of:		
Employer	6.4	7.3
Members	2.0	2.0
Cash balances	36.4	42.5
Other debtors	1.4	3.7
	46.2	55.5

The above assets are carried at amortised cost, other than cash balances and other debtors (see below), as the funds are due from Government institutions and therefore no allowance for expected losses has been set aside.

NOTE 18: NON-CURRENT ASSETS

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
*LGPSC capital advance treated as loan	0.7	0.7
**Reimbursement of lifetime tax allowances	0.5	0.7
Contributions from employers	0.1	0.2
Augmentation	0.2	0.1
	1.5	1.7

*This was part of the regulatory capital required to set up the company LGPS Central Limited.

**This includes debtor in relation to the lifetime tax allowance limit, as the Fund pays all the tax upfront on behalf of the pensioner and is reimbursed from additional pension deductions over time.

NOTE 19: CURRENT LIABILITIES

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Investment management expenses	(0.9)	(0.7)
Payroll and external vendors	(0.6)	(0.6)
Other expenses	(5.0)	(4.8)
	(6.5)	(6.1)

NOTE 20: RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Worcestershire County Council

The Fund is administered by Worcestershire County Council. Consequently, there is a strong relationship between the Council and the Fund.

The Council incurred costs of £1.8 million in 2022/2023 (2021/2022: £1.4 million) in relation to the administration of the Fund and was subsequently reimbursed by the Fund for these expenses. The Council is also the single largest employer of members of the Fund and contributed £11.5 million to the Fund in 2022/2023 (2021/2022: £11.2 million).

LGPSC has been established to manage investment assets on behalf of eight LGPS funds across the Midlands. It is jointly owned in equal shares by the eight Funds participating.

The Fund's share of LGPSC annual running costs of £0.7 million was charged to the Fund in 2022/2023 by LGPSC (£0.7 million in 2021/2022).

Worcestershire County Council, as the Administering Authority of the Worcestershire Pension Fund has guaranteed a share of the pension liability relating to employees of LGPS Central Limited that transferred into the company on creation. If this guarantee is called, this will be funded by the Fund.

Key Management Personnel

The posts of Chief Financial Officer, Senior Finance Manager and Head of Pensions Administration are deemed to be key management personnel. The financial value of their relationship with the Fund (in accordance with IAS24) is set out below:

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Short-term benefits*	81	106
Long term/ post-retirement benefits**	213	143
	294	249

*This is annual salary, benefits in kind and employer contributions.

**This is the accrued pension benefits, expressed as cash equivalent transfer value.

Governance

The Pensions Committee Employer Representative, Employee Representative and Chief Financial Officer are active members of the Fund.

NOTE 21: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place prior to the year-end giving rise to a possible financial obligation whose existence will only be confirmed or otherwise by the occurrence of future events.

Outstanding capital commitments (investments) at 31 March 2023 totalled £332.9 million (31 March 2022: £488.4 million). Outstanding capital commitments are reduced due to the further drawdowns made during 2022, resulting in some investments becoming fully committed.

These commitments relate to outstanding call payments due on unquoted limited partnership funds held in pooled property investments, pooled infrastructure investments and pooled debt investments. The amounts 'called' by these funds are irregular in both size and timing over a period of between one and three years from the date of the original commitment.

NOTE 22: GUARENTEES

The Councils below have provided guarantees to a number of organisations that have been admitted to the Fund to fund any potential pension liability. The organisations with a pension liability more than £195,000 (which the Fund considers to be material for these purposes) are: -

- HALO Leisure (£0.168million), **Herefordshire Council**.
- Community Housing Group (£3.877 million), **Wyre Forest District Council**.
- Freedom Leisure (£0.323 million), **Worcester City Council**.

There are a further 4 organisations with a pension liability less than £195,000. The Fund has considered various factors in determining the potential risk of having to fund any future liability, including risk of failure of the business and membership profile, and is satisfied that they do not represent a significant potential liability. There are also 17 organisations with a guarantee via pass through arrangements. As new contractors, these employers will all commence fully funded with no initial funding deficit. In line with the 'Initial pension guarantee' employers above, we are assuming that the active members would remain active on termination of the contract and be transferred back to the relevant school/academy or to the new service provider. On this basis, the amount for all these employers is reflected as nil for this year's accounts.

Three admitted body employers in the Fund hold insurance bonds to guard against the possibility of being unable to meet their pension obligations. These bonds are drawn in favour of the Fund and payment will only be triggered in the event of employer default. No bonds were called upon in this financial year.

Note that the existing bonds and guarantees from the previous financial year have all been discussed with the actuary and updated where necessary.

NOTE 23: ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS (AVCS)

The Fund provides an in-house AVC scheme for its members. In 2022/2023 some members of the Fund paid voluntary contributions and transfers to Scottish Widows and Utmost Life to buy extra pension benefits when they retire. Retirement benefits were also purchased during the year. The contributions are paid directly from scheme employers to the AVC provider. Each AVC contributor receives an annual statement showing the amount held in their account and the movements in the year.

AVCs are not included in the Fund Account in accordance with Regulation 4(1) (b) of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of funds) Regulations 2016 but are disclosed as a note only.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Contributions received	0.2	0.2
Investments purchased	0.2	0.2
Change in market value	0.1	0.2
Retirement benefits paid or transferred	(0.6)	(0.3)

The combined value of the AVC funds as at 31 March 2023 was £3.0 million (31 March 2022: £2.9 million).

NOTE 24: AGENCY SERVICES

The Fund pays discretionary awards to the former employees of Herefordshire County Council. The amounts paid are not included within the Fund Account but are provided as a service and fully reclaimed from the employer. The sums are disclosed below.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£m	£m
Payments on behalf of Herefordshire County council	0.1	0.1
	0.1	0.1

NOTE 25: CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

There are no critical judgements in applying accounting policies in 2022/23.

There were no significant changes to the CIPFA code of practice on local authority accounting (the code).

NOTE 26: ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND ANY OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported for assets and liabilities at the year-end date and the amounts reported for the revenues and expenses during the year. Estimates and assumptions are made considering historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, the nature of estimation means that the actual outcomes could differ from the assumptions and estimates.

The item in the notes to the accounts as at 31 March 2023 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year is as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions
Actuarial present value of promised retirement benefits (note 2)	Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, inflation, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Fund with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	<p>The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a 0.25% real investment return lower than assumed would result in an 4.4% increase in the pension liability, which is equivalent to £157m. ● a 0.25% increase in assumed earnings inflation would result in a 0.5% increase in the value of liabilities, which is equivalent to £19m. ● a 0.25% increase in assumed life expectancy would result in a 0.7% increase in the value of liabilities, which is equivalent to £26m.
Property and infrastructure valuations (Level 3 investments)	The Fund's directly held investment properties are valued at fair value by independent valuers in accordance with RICS valuation professional standards, whilst infrastructure investments are valued at fair value by independent experts. There is continuing uncertainty regarding the property and infrastructure valuations due to the time that it will take to fully realise the impact of geopolitical issues upon these illiquid assets as well as the concerns as to the current inflationary environment. The valuations have been updated based on the information available as at 31 March 2023 and may be subject to variations as further market information becomes available. Investments are valued each month as per the latest quarterly statements available to our custodian, which are usually received between 45 and 60 days after quarter end, +/- any activity post statement date.	<p>The total value of indirect property investments in the financial statements is £323.6m (£221.9m in 2021/22). There is a risk that this investment may be under or overstated in the accounts.</p> <p>The total value of direct infrastructure investments in the financial statements is £511.8m (£426.7m in 2021/22). There is a significant risk of valuation updates resulting in a material adjustment in the carrying amount within the next financial year.</p>

VALUATION OF INVESTMENTS LEVEL 3

Financial instruments at level 3 are those where at least one input could have a significant effect on the instrument's valuation is not based on observable market data. Such instruments would include unquoted equity investments, pooled property investments and pooled infrastructure investments which are valued using various valuation techniques that require significant judgement in determining appropriate assumptions. As well as the details in the table above, further detail is provided in Notes 14a to c above.

Independent auditor's report to the members of Worcestershire County Council on the pension fund financial statements of Worcestershire Pension Fund

Opinion on financial statements

We have audited the financial statements of Worcestershire Pension Fund (the 'Pension Fund') administered by Worcestershire County Council (the 'Authority') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement and notes to the pension fund 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 2022/23.

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial transactions of the Pension Fund during the year ended 31 March 2023 and of the amount and disposition at that date of the fund's assets and liabilities,
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law, as required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) ("the Code of Audit Practice") approved by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the Pension Fund's financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

In our evaluation of the Chief Financial Officer's conclusions, and in accordance with the expectation set out within the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 that the Pension Fund's financial statements shall be prepared on a going concern basis, we considered the inherent risks associated with the continuation of services provided by the Pension Fund. In doing so we had regard to the guidance provided in Practice Note 10 Audit of financial statements and regularity of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom (Revised 2022) on the application of ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern to public sector entities. We assessed the reasonableness of the basis of preparation used by the Authority in the Pension Fund financial statements and the disclosures in the Pension Fund financial statements over the going concern period.

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Chief Financial Officer's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the Pension Fund financial statements is appropriate.

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

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Financial Report and Statement of Accounts other than the Pension Fund's financial statements, our auditor's report thereon, and our auditor's report on the Authority's and group's financial statements. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the Pension Fund's financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the Pension Fund financial statements themselves.. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters required by the Code of Audit Practice (2020) published by the National Audit Office on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (the Code of Audit Practice)

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit of the Pension Fund's financial statements, the other information published together with the Pension Fund's financial statements in the Annual Financial Report and Statement of Accounts, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the Pension Fund financial statements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of the Authority and the Chief Financial Officer

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities set out on page 17, the Authority is required to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this authority, that

officer is the Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Annual Financial Report and Statement of Accounts, which includes the Pension Fund's 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 2022/23, for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

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

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Pension Fund's financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements. Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below.

We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Pension Fund and determined that the most significant, which are directly relevant to specific assertions in the financial statements, are those related to the reporting frameworks (international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, The Local government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016.

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

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

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

We assessed the susceptibility of the Pension Fund's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur, by evaluating management's incentives and opportunities for manipulation of the financial statements. This included the evaluation of the risk of management override of controls. We determined that the principal risks were in relation to:

- journals processed by senior finance officers, as we would not expect them to be involved in the normal day to day operations of the general ledger
- journals with a blank description, as this could indicate that there is not a legitimate reason for posting a journal.

Our audit procedures involved:

- evaluation of the design effectiveness of controls that the Chief Financial Officer has in place to prevent and detect fraud,
- journal entry testing, with a focus on any journals posted by senior finance officers,

- challenging assumptions and judgements made by management in its significant accounting estimates in respect of level 3 investments and IAS 26 pensions liability valuations,
- assessing the extent of compliance with the relevant laws and regulations as part of our procedures on the related financial statement item.

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

We communicated relevant laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members. We remained alert to any indications of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, throughout the audit.

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

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

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

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

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of the Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and as set out in paragraph 44 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Authority's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

M C Stocks

Mark Stocks Key Audit Partner

for and on behalf of Grant Thornton UK LLP, Local Auditor

Birmingham

15 December 2023



Appendix A

Funding Strategy Statement

22 March 2023

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 (“the 2013 Regulations”) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 (“the 2014 Transitional Regulations”) and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 (all as amended) (collectively; “the Regulations”) provide the statutory framework from which an Administering Authority is required to prepare an FSS. The FSS can be viewed [here](#):

**Worcestershire
Pension Fund**



Appendix B

Worcestershire Pension Fund Pension Administration Strategy

The Pension Administration Strategy (PAS) has been produced to set out the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) roles and responsibilities of Worcester Pension Fund and our employers & establish the levels of performance we and our participating employers are expected to achieve in carrying out their responsibilities. The PAS can be viewed [here](#):

**Worcestershire
Pension Fund**



Appendix C

Investment Strategy Statement 2023

This is the Investment Strategy Statement (the 'Statement') of the Worcestershire Pension Fund (the Fund) as required by regulation 7 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Management and Investment of Funds) Regulations 2016 (the "Regulations"). In preparing this Statement, the Pensions Committee has consulted with such persons as it considered appropriate.

The overall strategic asset allocation is set out in the Investment Strategy Statement (ISS) which can be viewed [here](#):