



Statement of Accounts 2023 - 2024

Realising our potential

www.midandeantrim.gov.uk

 **Mid & East
Antrim**
Borough Council

Contents Page

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Content	Page Number
Narrative Report	2
Statement of the Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts	16
Annual Governance Statement	17
Remuneration Report	29
Certificate of Chief Financial Officer	34
Council Approval of Statement of Accounts	34
Independent Auditor's Report to the members	35
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	41
Movement in Reserves Statement	42
Balance Sheet	43
Cash Flow Statement	44
Note 1: Accounting Policies	45
Note 2: Expenditure and Funding Analysis	59
Note 3: Expenditure and Income analysed by nature	61
Note 4: Adjustment between an Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations	61
Note 5: Cost of Services on Continuing Operations	62
Note 6: Operating and leases	62
Note 7: Staff Costs	63
Note 8: Other Operating Income and Expenditure	64
Note 9: Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	65
Note 10: Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	66
Note 11: Fixed Assets	67
Note 12: Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing	72
Note 13: Future Capital Commitments	72
Note 14: Inventories	72
Note 15: Debtors	73
Note 16: Investments	73
Note 17: Borrowings	73
Note 18: Creditors	74
Note 19: Provisions	74
Note 20: Financial Instruments	75
Note 21: Retirement Benefits	76
Note 22: Donated Assets Account	81
Note 23: Capital Grants Received in Advance	81
Note 24: Contingencies	81
Note 25: Other cash flow disclosures	83
Note 26: Usable Reserves	84
Note 27: Unuseable Reserves	86
Note 28: Significant Trading Operations	89
Note 29: Agency Services	89
Note 30: Joint Arrangements	89
Note 31: Related Party Transactions	89
Note 32: Detailed Income and Expenditure Analysis	92

Narrative Report

Introduction

The Council's financial performance for the year ended 31st March 2024 is as set out in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and its financial position is as set out in the Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement.

These financial statements have been prepared in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom for the year ended 31st March 2024 (the Code) and the Department for Communities Accounts Direction, Circular LG 05/2024. It is the purpose of this foreword to explain, in an easily understandable way, the financial facts in relation to the Council.

This Statement of Accounts explains Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's finances during the financial year 2023/24 and its financial position at the end of that year. It follows approved accounting standards and is necessarily technical in parts.

The purpose of the Narrative Report is to provide information on the authority, its main objectives and strategies and the principal risks it faces.

Group Accounts

The Code requires Local Authorities to consider all their interests and to prepare a full set of group financial statements where they have material interests in subsidiaries, associates or joint ventures. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council does not have material interests in such bodies and accordingly is not required to prepare group financial statements.

The Movement in Reserves Statement

This Statement, as set out on page 42, shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves. The 'Surplus or (deficit) on the provision of services' line shows the true economic cost of providing the Council's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Summary (CIES). These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance and the Housing Revenue Account for council tax setting and dwellings rent setting purposes. The Net increase/Decrease before transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Council.

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement, as set out on page 41, shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet, as set out on page 43, shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's assets and liabilities. The net assets of the Council (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Council. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Council may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves are those that the Council is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

The Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement, as set out on page 44, shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

Performance Report

For the year ended 31 March 2024, the Council maintained its General Fund at £4,445,594, with no increase from the previous year. The Council's net expenditure reported, as reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is £64.2m.

Council's performance data is reported against each of the 6 Strategic Themes contained within the Corporate Plan 2019-2023.

1. Jobs and Tourism
2. Community Safety and Cohesion
3. Learning for Life
4. Good Health and Wellbeing
5. High Performing and Sustainable Council
6. Our Environment



The key performance data for each are as follows:

1. Strategic Theme one: Jobs and Tourism

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

- Position and promote Mid and East Antrim as a dynamic, outward-looking region that welcomes and supports inward investment.
- Through a variety of support programmes, grow, support and sustain new and existing businesses.
- Drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth through investing in our people, our places and our businesses.
- Create a compelling tourism proposition by investing in the development and promotion of our unique cultural, arts and heritage assets.
- Attract more domestic and international visitors to the borough to stay longer and spend more.

Under this theme:

- 67% of our measures were achieved or on track. (6/9)
- 22% were delayed but progressing. (2/9)
- 11% were not achieved or stopped. (1/9)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Continue to progress the development of the i4C Innovation and CleanTech Centre to support businesses and create jobs.
Measure 1	Secure Outline Business Case Approval for i4C and HyTech by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The Outline Business Case for the i4C project has been approved. The HyTech NI Outline Business Case is currently being appraised.
Action 2	Deliver a suite of business support programmes and projects designed to support business start-up and growth across the borough.
Measure 1	400 businesses engaged across business support programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	795 local businesses have been engaged to date through a variety of business support programmes.
Measure 2	85 jobs promoted through Business Start Interventions by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	103 jobs have been promoted to date.

Action 3	Develop a dynamic 5-year tourism strategy that will drive economic growth, job creation and a thriving tourism economy.
Measure 1	Welcome at least 83,000 visitors to strategic visitor attractions (Carrickfergus Castle, The Gobbins, US Rangers Museum, Andrew Jackson Cottage and Arthur Cottage) by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	98,455 visitors were welcomed to Council's strategic visitor attractions in the reporting year.
Measure 2	At least 7 businesses signed up to Discover NI by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	We are unable to get a final year to date figure as the figure is provided by a third party. The target of 7, however, has been exceeded.
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop at least 5 new tourism products by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	Unfortunately, during the reporting period, no funding was made available. Officers will continue to work with key agencies on funding updates and opportunities.
Action 4	Progress the delivery of Council's 10-year vision for the three town centres to develop, regenerate and attract inward investment.
Measure 1	Finalise the development of the Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme and complete delivery of year 1 actions by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	The Town Centre Revitalisation Scheme continues to be successfully delivered. The first application for funding was successful, with a Letter of Offer received from DfC for over £400k. A second application was also successful and a Letter of Offer for £54k was received for street art within Ballymena and Larne. Third, fourth and fifth applications for funding are scheduled to be submitted early in the 2024/25 reporting year. 89 Letters of Offer have been issued to businesses who applied to the Shopfront Revitalisation Scheme. All three pop-up shops are fully operational in each of the three towns. The town centre sound system has been procured for Ballymena and Carrickfergus. The installation of the systems will be reported against in the 2024/25 reporting year. Enhanced feature lighting for the towns is anticipated to be delivered in the next reporting year. A Steering Group, which consists of DfC, Council officers and community and business representatives from across the towns continues to meet on a monthly basis.
Measure 2	Deliver the Public Realm Improvement Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	As of Monday 29th January 2024 both Public Realm Improvement Scheme projects have been successfully completed.
Measure 3	Support businesses to develop the Townscape Heritage Initiative by 30 September 2023.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The 10th and final property of regeneration under the Townscape Heritage Initiative is due for completion by the end of May 2024. Following this, a post project evaluation, closing event and publication of booklet telling the story of the scheme is expected to be completed by the end of June 2024. The project will be reported against in the 2024/25 reporting year and included within Council's annual Performance Improvement Plan.

2. Strategic Theme two: Community Safety and Cohesion

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

We will work alongside partners to:

- Encourage good relations, civic pride and a sense of belonging by creating vibrant, shared, cohesive and inclusive communities across the borough.
- Build the capacity of local communities to improve resilience and self-sustainability.
- Improve community safety and confidence, enabling people to feel and be safe by providing early intervention and supporting those most at risk of becoming involved in crime.
- Provide support to vulnerable people who need it.

Under this theme:

- 69% of our measures were achieved or on track. (9/13)
- 31% were not achieved or stopped. (4/13)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Through the delivery of various programmes, support our local communities to improve their resilience and build self-sustainability.
Measure 1	Continue to support the Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) to identify, review and shape proposals for the next phase of RCRG priorities by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) collaborates with partners across government, utilities, and the voluntary sector to enhance readiness for weather-related emergencies, especially in rural areas. Our Corporate and Community Resilience Officer and local groups have developed a resource toolkit aimed at improving community preparedness for extreme weather events. As the strategic proposals for RCRG extend into the 2024/2025 period, there are no further inputs required from the Mid and East Antrim council at this stage. Our involvement in the pilot ensures that the Council can significantly contribute to regional resilience planning.
Measure 2	Review the existing MEA Community Resilience Framework and requirement for an MEA Community Resilience Action Plan in tandem with RCRG proposals by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	In collaboration with Community Resilience Groups across the borough, Council engaged in a joint study funded by RCRG alongside Derry City and Strabane District Council. This study successfully identified five key elements that characterise a resilient community and underscored the pivotal role these communities play in ensuring preparedness, response, and recovery from severe disruptions. The findings are set to guide the future strategies of RCRG as it aligns more closely with the broader objectives of the Civil Contingencies Framework. Council secured funding that enabled the MEABC Community Resilience Groups to develop a resilience toolkit and framework via community workshops. Additionally, RCRG's collaboration with the Strategic Investment Board has advanced, marked by a recent meeting that focused on the MEA pilot, an initiative that will evolve concurrently with regional proposals.
Action 2	Deliver comprehensive Good Relations activities, with the aim of influencing positive changes to attitudes and knowledge.
Measure 1	Deliver the agreed Good Relations action plan by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	During the 2023-24 reporting year, the budget for Good Relations was reduced by 47% prompting a reprofiling and resubmission of the Action Plan. Two key initiatives, the Beacon Programme and the Integrate Programme, were prioritised and delivered during Q1 and Q2. Both programs were executed successfully, leading to the fulfilment of the revised Action Plan, with all necessary reports submitted to the funder accordingly.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 Good Relations projects by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	The Beacon project and the Integrate project have both been successfully delivered and completed.
Measure 3	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different religious backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	38% stated that attitudes had improved between people from a different religious background. It should be noted that the two projects delivered were single identity projects - the Beacon Programme and Integrate Programme.
Measure 4	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their attitude towards people from different ethnic backgrounds has improved by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	30% of participants stated that their attitude towards people from different ethnic backgrounds had improved. It should be noted that the two projects delivered were single identity projects - the Beacon Programme and Integrate Programme.
Measure 5	At least 50% of participants in Good Relations activities stating that their knowledge of cultural traditions/backgrounds has increased by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	31% of participants indicated that their knowledge of different cultural backgrounds had increased. The two projects delivered were single identity - the Beacon Programme and Integrate Programme.
Action 3	Work in partnership with the Poverty Action Group to progress initiatives to support the most vulnerable across the borough.
Measure 1	Conduct a review of the Safe, Warm and Well Programme delivery model by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	The review of the Safe, Warm, and Well Programme was completed and the report presented to the Neighbourhood and Communities Committee in December 2023.
Measure 2	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for the over 65s home safety checks by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	To date, 397 home safety checks have taken place, this equates to 168% of the cumulative target.
Measure 3	Deliver 90% of Public Health Agency target for energy efficiency support by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	To date, the Health and Wellbeing team have received 391 referrals, reaching 134% of target.
Measure 4	Support the Poverty Action Group by ensuring continued presence and contribution to meetings by 31 March 2024.
Status: Complete	Council officers continue to proactively engage with the 'Poverty Action Group' and provide support in the delivery of various programmes.

Action 4	Through the Loneliness Network collaborate with statutory and voluntary partners and community groups to promote and deliver initiatives to tackle loneliness in the borough.
Measure 1	At least 40 partner organisations engaged in the network by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Over 40 organizations are engaged in the network, these include but are not limited to; NHSCT, Mid and East Antrim PCSP, Libraries NI, Network Personnel, Carrickfergus YMCA, Larne Community Development Project, Women's Aid ABCLN, Crime Prevention Officer PSNI, Good Morning Carrickfergus, NI Fire and Rescue Service, Good Morning Ballymena, Good Morning Larne, Larne ROC, Volunteer Now, Clanmill Housing, Mae Murray Foundation, Impact Network NI, Carrickfergus Junior Gateway, Ballymena South Community Cluster, MEAAP, Simon Community, Larne Well Being Hub, Bann Maine West, Alzheimer's Society, Age Friendly Coordinator, Doury Rd Development Group, Cons Magees Healthy Club Group, Galgorm Care Home, Cedar Foundation, Guide Dogs NI, Radius Housing, The Rainbow Project, Start 360, Ballykeel 2 CDA Ltd, and Larne Community Care Centre.
Measure 2	At least 40 support programmes delivered by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	Although we faced budget and resource constraints that prevented us from meeting our target, we successfully delivered 27 projects aimed at enhancing community engagement and support. These initiatives included the installation of 6 chatty benches and 2 chatty cafes designed to encourage social interactions, 3 kindness post-boxes to foster community spirit, and the appointment of 6 new loneliness champions who are dedicated to addressing isolation within the community. Additionally, we rolled out 5 activity programs to keep the community active and engaged, launched a Facebook page to enhance our online presence, organized a photography exhibition to showcase local talent, and set up 3 information stands at various roadshows to disseminate important community information.

3. Strategic Theme three: Learning for Life

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

- Develop the skills needed to embrace opportunities for a prosperous and more sustainable future.
- Through our various programmes, develop a sense of ambition towards achievement regardless of location, community background or socio-economic factors.
- Promote to stakeholders the benefits of creating volunteer and enhanced work experience opportunities.
- Lead by example by developing and implementing a work placement programme within Council.
- Support our staff to achieve their full potential by investing in training, development and cross Council collaborative opportunities.

Under this theme:

- 100% of our measures were achieved or on track. (7/7)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Deliver a suite of employability programmes to support our citizens to develop their skills, gain qualifications and secure employment.
Measure 1	At least 140 participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	268 participants took part in employability interventions and academies.
Measure 2	At least 80 qualifications achieved by participants in employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	319 qualifications achieved by participants in employability interventions and academies.
Measure 3	At least 80 participants gaining employment/self-employment as a result of employability interventions and academies by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	101 participants have progressed into employment/self-employment as a result of employability interventions and academies.
Action 2	Position MEABC as an employer of choice by providing opportunities for work placement or work experience.
Measure 1	Deliver at least 8 work experience or work placements by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	During the 2023/24 reporting year, Council welcomed 17 work placements and volunteer opportunities across Council, including Museums, Parks, Capital Works, Sustainability, Building Control & Planning and the Gobbins.

Action 3	Deliver a suite of environmental education programmes for citizens, businesses and young people across the borough.
Measure 1	Deliver 8 climate and sustainability education programmes across schools, communities and businesses by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	<p>Our Climate Change and Sustainability officers delivered several educational and engagement programmes to local schools, communities and businesses promoting sustainable practices and encouraging greater awareness of our impact on the environment.</p> <p>1.Eco Schools Programme: Council supports 76 schools registered in the program through financial backing, educational talks, and partnerships, notably with Arc21 waste management. This support has led to 20 schools achieving Green Flag status, 36 receiving Silver Certificates, and 7 earning Bronze Certificates.</p> <p>2.Community Education: Talks on waste, recycling, climate, and sustainability were delivered to various community groups across the borough.</p> <p>3.Business Communication: Monthly e-zines provide educational information on funding, training, and support for MEA businesses, with the latest focus on reducing single-use plastics and adopting circular economy principles.</p> <p>4.QUB BSc Student Placement: A BSc student, is actively contributing to various projects including ISO14001, the Plot to Plate PeacePlus review, and a project prioritizing buildings based on risk from extreme weather using ArcGIS.</p> <p>5.Eco Homes Programme: The council is collaborating with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB) and The Energy Team from the Republic of Ireland to enhance and promote the Eco Homes Programme, which aids residents in adopting renewable technologies and accessing funding.</p> <p>6.ISO14001 Reuse Event: A new objective under ISO14001 was successfully achieved by hosting a reuse-themed webinar with good attendance from MEA staff.</p> <p>7.Development of ECOS as a Sustainability Hub: Ongoing efforts to transform ECOS into a hub for educational and sustainability activities, with recent activities including a schools competition judged in partnership with Economic Development and a tour for the winning school.</p> <p>8.MEANZ (Mid and East Antrim Net Zero) – The MEANZ Business project, funded by Innovate UK, will spearhead an innovative and comprehensive programme of engagement, support and dissemination centred around delivering Net Zero to businesses across the borough.</p> <p>9.Re-use Schemes – developed to promote the development of a circular economy, these schemes included the School Uniform Scheme, Christmas Toy Container Scheme and the Community RePaint Scheme.</p>

Action 4	Develop MEABC employees to deliver high quality and responsive services to citizens through the provision of comprehensive and bespoke training.
Measure 1	Ensure at least 1.5 days are spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	3.46 days have been spent, per full time equivalent, on employee learning and development to date.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 100 training courses to staff by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	296 training courses were delivered to staff during the reporting year.

4. Strategic Theme four: Good Health and Wellbeing

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

- Deliver a coordinated partnership approach to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of our citizens.
- Ensure our citizens and visitors have accessible and inclusive Council facilities.
- Enable vulnerable groups within our borough to be active, respected and supported in their community.
- Encourage our staff to use the resources and tools available to improve and maintain their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing.

Under this theme:

- 73% of our measures were achieved or on track. (8/11)
- 18% were delayed but progressing. (2/11)
- 9% were not achieved or stopped. (1/11)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Support our citizens to lead healthy and active lives by increasing our offering of physical activity sessions and support schemes across the borough.
Measure 1	Launch the MEAqua Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2025, including delivery of first year actions by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The MEAqua Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2025 is underway, with significant progress already achieved in its first year of implementation, scheduled for completion by March 31, 2024. Key accomplishments include the appointment of additional qualified swimming teachers to enhance the MEAqua Programme. Parent and toddler swimming lessons have been introduced across all three leisure centres for the first time, expanding family participation. Additionally, £4,000 of funding was secured from Disability Sport NI to purchase sensory equipment for the MEAqua Swim Academy, enriching our offerings for participants with disabilities. The program was expanded to include the summer months at all three leisure centres. The launch of the Strategy will continue as part of the 24/25 PIP, with a focus on further expanding access to the MEAqua program for toddlers and individuals with disabilities. The program has seen tremendous growth, with participation more than doubling since September 2021, now boasting 296 classes and 2,075 participants per week.

Measure 2	Deliver the MEActive programme by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Our MEActive programme continues to make a significant impact across the borough, growing in both scope and reach. The latest figures show that we have offered 29,285 participant opportunities through 1,389 sessions, including activities such as dodgeball, basketball, pilates, danderball, boccia, pickleball, and walking netball. Out of the 10,157 participants who joined these sessions, 5,675 were women and girls. Additionally, we provided inclusive opportunities for 3,484 individuals living with a disability or lifelong illness. The program has been supported by 474 different groups. Also, in March 2024 Council successfully held the Sports Awards.
Measure 3	Continue to support the delivery of the Move More programme by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	In collaboration with Macmillan Cancer Support, our Move More programme offers a free tailored programme to help individuals suffering from cancer to get and stay active at a level that is right for them. 1,809 individuals were offered opportunities to participate, and we delivered 418 classes.
Measure 4	Continue to support the delivery of the GP Referral Scheme by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Our Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) has had a positive impact on our residents. Delivered in partnership with the Public Health Agency (PHA) PARS is a 12-week prescribed physical activity programme. The scheme received 227 referrals, of which 64 are active. From those approved for participation 52 completed the scheme.

Action 2	Develop an Age Friendly Action Plan to ensure our older citizens feel supported and included within their local communities.
Measure 1	Establishment of an MEA Age Friendly Alliance by 30 December 2023.
Status: Achieved	The MEA Age Friendly Alliance has been established with the first meeting held on 16 November 2023 and a second on 23 January 2024.
Measure 2	Development of an MEA Age Friendly action plan by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The draft Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan consultation is underway and closes on 31 May 2024. It is anticipated that on inclusion of feedback from the public and stakeholders, the target for launching the Strategy and Year 1 Action Plan is achievable and will be met. The action to launch by 30/6/24 is included within the Performance Improvement Plan for 24/25.
Measure 3	Development of a borough-wide Landlord Forum by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	The Landlord Forum, featuring representatives from the Landlord Association (NI) and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is now fully established. Arrangements for the MEA Landlord Forum to act as a subgroup of the Landlord Association (NI) are now in place.

Action 3	Encourage the use of outdoor spaces for health and wellbeing, through the delivery of our Outdoor Recreation strategy.
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 outdoor recreation programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	By the end of the 2023/24 reporting period, three key programs were successfully delivered to enhance engagement with natural environments and promote community well-being. The "Natural Connections Photography" initiative provided teenagers with the opportunity to connect with nature and each other through a series of workshops, culminating in a presentation of their work at Carrick Town Hall. The "Healthy Oceans Healthy Minds" campaign, a collaboration with Live Here Love Here, featured a late summer tour of local blue spaces to foster a lasting connection with our waterways. This campaign included six sessions over three weeks with activities such as Beach Babbies, Rockpool Safari, Stand Up Paddleboarding, Pollution Art, and Seaweed Tasting. Additionally, the "Plot to Plate" program, which was anticipated for Q3, was successfully delivered, focusing on sustainable food practices from cultivation to consumption.
Measure 2	Support at least 60 participants in citizen focused health and wellbeing programmes by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	194 participants took part in citizen focused health and wellbeing programmes.

Action 4	Ensure we continue to provide reliable, value for money services to our citizens by focusing on the health and wellbeing of our employees, and through the management of employee attendance.
Measure 1	Ensure absence levels do not exceed 14 days per annum, per full time equivalent, by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not achieved	16.46 days lost. There have been continued issues in 2023/24 with staff being unable to access medical consultations and treatment. This has contributed to longer absence durations, with many on waiting lists with no imminent prospect of accessing medical care. In addition, sadly there has been an unprecedented number of employees who have been diagnosed with cancer and other serious health issues. This combination of factors has led to elevated levels of absence during the year. Whilst this figure does not meet the target set, it does represent an improvement from the 2022/23 financial year.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 2 health and wellbeing initiatives for staff by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Throughout the 2023/24 reporting year, our health and wellbeing initiatives included the May Health and Wellbeing Week linked to the national awareness week focused on anxiety, and the "Be Kind to Your Mind" autumn programme. Starting with key dates from World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10 through to World Mental Health Day on October 10, the programme featured workshops on self-care and addressed work-related stress for line managers. Additional resources included the promotion of our Staywell Hub, which offers access to mental health campaigns and free training, and the distribution of BITCNI's autumn calendar and the LGSC Newsletter featuring an article on our May event. The year concluded with a council-wide email on stress management, summing up a robust year of supporting staff mental health and wellbeing.

5. Strategic Theme five: High Performing and Sustainable Council

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

- Take the lead on delivering both the Community Plan and the Local Development Plan, working effectively with our partners and citizens.
- Increase customer satisfaction with our services through innovation and continuous improvement by proactively engaging with and listening to our citizens, customers and staff.
- Using an agile delivery model and adapting to changing landscapes, be recognised as a leading council, ensuring value for money and affordability of council services, facilities and assets.
- Deliver our activities and functions in a sustainable manner, integrating social, economic and environmental factors when planning or decision-making, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- Embed our values in our day-to-day working environment, ensuring our employees feel supported and motivated to achieve their full potential.

Under this theme:

- 50% of our measures were achieved or on track. (5/10)
- 20% were delayed but progressing. (2/10)
- 20% were not achieved or stopped. (2/10)
- 10% were not due for completion or data was not yet available. (1/10)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Ensure we remain responsive to citizen need by developing processes that allow us to engage with, listen to and act on feedback from our stakeholders to increase customer satisfaction with our services.
Measure 1	Establish processes to gauge customer satisfaction levels by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The Council is developing a 'Customer First' approach, and processes to gauge customer satisfaction will be considered as part of that workstream. A scoping exercise into the methods currently used across Council to measure customer satisfaction has been completed and an analysis of the findings is underway. This will help to shape the next steps in the process. Furthermore, during the completion of the public consultation exercise for the annual Performance Improvement Plan 2024/25, respondents were asked an open ended question requesting their feedback on areas which they felt the Council could improve upon. Of the 216 people surveyed, 108 provided feedback to this question and the top themes have been analysed and reported to SMT and Elected Members as part of the Consultation Findings report.
Action 2	Work collaboratively with our community planning partners, to consolidate and capitalise on shared resources to deliver positive outcomes for citizens.
Measure 1	Engage with at least 8 community partners by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	The team has achieved the target of engaging with 8 community planning partners, having met with the Chairs Group, collaborated with Northern Health and Social Care Trust on Autism Friendly and Loneliness Network initiatives, and engaged stakeholders in dementia-friendly work. Workshops on each theme enhanced delivery plans for individual actions, alongside ongoing projects like the Support Hub and Economic Development's Escalator Programme. In February 2024, 4 thematic workshops saw representation from over 30 partner organisations, continuing engagement with networks like the Loneliness and Age Friendly Networks, and Thematic Group Chairs. A Strategic Alliance meeting in March 2024 further confirmed this achievement with 13 community planning partners in attendance.
Measure 2	Deliver at least 8 community planning initiatives by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	We have delivered on Loneliness Network, Autism Friendly, Dementia Friendly, Business Escalator, Place Promotion, Community Fridge, Sensory Gardens, Ageing Well, Affordable Food Hub, Uniform Exchange, Volunteering, Support Hub, Safer places.
Action 3	Ensure we promote sustainable development for the borough across economic, social and environmental dimensions, through the delivery of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.
Measure 1	Deliver a minimum of 10 programmes against each of the 17 Goals by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Council continues to deliver programmes against each of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals. Every two years, we bring in a MSc Leadership in Sustainability student to conduct a study and produce a report on Council's progress on delivery against each goal. The most recent report was published in September 2023 and noted that Council were delivering towards 94 of the applicable 114 targets, and 120 of the applicable 168 indicators.

Action 4	Contribute to a healthy economy by delivering effective and efficient services for the benefit of citizens and businesses across the borough.
Measure 1	Ensure that at least 53% of payments to suppliers are made within 10 working days by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	65% of payments to suppliers, to date, have been made within 10 working days.
Measure 2	Ensure that at least 85% of payments to suppliers are made within 30 calendar days by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not Achieved	Due to a variety of internal factors, we are slightly behind target, with 81% of payments to suppliers, to date, having been made within 30 calendar days.
Measure 3	Processing time for major planning applications within an average of 30 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status: Not Achieved	The average processing time for major planning applications from April to December 2023 was 67.4weeks. Figures until March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 4	Processing time for local planning applications within an average of 15 weeks by 31 March 2024.
Status: On track	The average processing time for local planning applications from April to December was 10weeks. Figures until March 2024 is not yet available.
Measure 5	From April 2023 to March 2024, 87.3% of enforcement cases were concluded within 39 weeks, down from 89.5% in 2022/23. The average across all Northern Ireland councils was 76.4% in 2023/24, up from 74.2% in 2022/23, with 7 councils meeting the target last year. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council ranked third position.
Status: Data not yet available	The number of enforcement cases concluded, and corresponding processing times are not yet published by the Department of Infrastructure.

Action 5	Ensure we remain responsive to employee needs by engaging, listening to and acting on feedback from our employees to increase staff satisfaction levels.
Measure 1	Develop an action plan based on the results of the Listening to Staff survey by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but progressing	The Listening to Staff survey has been completed, and findings have been analysed and shared with officers. Working groups have been established to further investigate and identify next steps. A draft Action Plan has been developed and is currently with the Senior Team for review and approval.

6. Strategic Theme six: Our Environment

Our Strategic Objectives under this theme are:

- Deliver the Local Development Plan in line with Council's climate and sustainability commitments.
- Empower, educate and work in partnership with our citizens and local businesses to progress towards net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Support local communities to create an environmentally resilient and sustainable borough.
- Invest to improve and develop our parks, open spaces and built heritage, ensuring they meet the needs of citizens and visitors, and promote the considerate use of all spaces.
- Lead by example and reduce the impact of Council services, to improve and sustainably manage our environment, protecting it for future generations.

Under this theme:

- 91% of our measures were achieved or on track. (10/11)
- 9% were delayed but progressing. (1/11)

Actions and Measures

Action 1	Utilise nature-based solutions to aid climate change adaptation and improve the health and wellbeing of our citizens across the borough.
Measure 1	Deliver at least 3 nature-based solution projects by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	In Ballymena, a nature-based solution aimed at creating habitat and helping alleviate flooding was completed, developed in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers as part of the Climate Canopy project. Throughout the 2023/24 period, three major projects were developed: Ahoghill Natural Park, which focuses on the development of wet woodland to create habitat and enhance water retention; the Ecos Conservation Grazing, aimed at developing appropriate management of the floodplain; and the Ballymena Urban Forest, which involves planting to both create habitat and alleviate flooding. Additionally, two Ancient Woodland Management Plans and one Conservation Grazing Plan have been developed, with implementation scheduled for the 2024/25 period.

Action 2	Develop a Tree and Woodland Management Strategy to enhance biodiversity, increase carbon store and support ecosystems across the borough.
Measure 1	Plant at least 2,000 trees on Council land by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Approximately 2,000 trees have been planted on Council land.
Measure 2	Plant at least 3,000 trees on public land through Council support by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Approximately 58,000 trees have been planted on public land with Council's support.

Action 3	Support communities, farmers and local businesses to be more sustainable, reduce carbon emissions and adapt to a changing climate.
Measure 1	Work in partnership with Sustainable NI to promote sustainable practices by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Council officers have worked in partnership with Sustainable NI to promote sustainable practices across our service delivery and with our local communities. Council officers have attended regular Sustainable Development Forum meetings incl. 6 March 2024 which was an online session. Council provided an update on activities being delivered. Councils Environmental Education Officer continues to meet Economic Development officers to review and update on net zero delivery with our business sector, including the agri-sector.
Measure 2	Recruit a Net Zero Officer to deliver the Mid and East Antrim Net Zero Business (MEANZ Business) project by 30 September 2023.
Status: Achieved	Following the receipt of funding from Innovate UK KTN, we successfully recruited a Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Manager in July. This officer is working alongside Innovate UK, under the Fast Followers Programme, to develop and deliver net zero activities to businesses across the borough.
Measure 3	Engage with at least 40 businesses to promote net zero activities by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	40 businesses have been engaged with to promote net zero activities.

Action 4	Improve the resource and energy efficiency of our buildings and practices by first establishing baseline data of Council emissions with the goal to reduce costs and our MEABC operation emissions to net zero by 2040.
Measure 1	Establish baseline emissions for Council buildings with a focus on those with larger consumption rates by 31 March 2024.
Status: Achieved	Baseline emissions have been established and recorded. This data will be used to monitor carbon reduction moving forward.
Measure 2	Support the delivery of Council's Green Growth Strategy through the completion of 5 Renewable Technology projects by 31 March 2024.
Status: Delayed but on track	During the 2023/24 financial year, significant progress was made in enhancing our sustainability efforts through the installation of solar arrays. Sullatober Household Recycling Centre, Springwell Street Multi-story Car Park in Ballymena, and Lame Leisure Centre have all been upgraded with new solar arrays. Additionally, enabling works at Carrickfergus Amphitheatre are underway, with completion targeted for early 2024. While procurement for solar installations at The Braid and Waveney Road House Recycling Centre is ongoing, we anticipate completion by the end of January 2025. The application for installing additional solar arrays at ECOS experienced a minor delay due to a necessary redrawing of the project scope but is set to be submitted to the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) within the next few weeks. Our team is also conducting ongoing desktop reviews to identify further potential sites for solar installations. As a result of these reviews, new locations under consideration include Carrick Town Hall, the new development at Carnfunnock Park, and Lame Cemetery, marking a broadened scope of our sustainability initiatives.

Action 5	Deliver an effective and efficient waste service that supports citizens and businesses to reduce waste.
Measure 1	At least 50% of household waste collected to be sent for recycling by 31 March 2024.
Status: On track	The percentage of household waste collected that was sent for recycling from April to December 2023 was 52.48%. Data up to March 2024 has yet to be published.
Measure 2	No more than 16,387 tonnes of biodegradable local authority collected municipal waste to be landfilled by 31 March 2024.
Status: On track	10,302 tonnes were landfilled from April to December 2023. Data up to March 2024 has yet to be published.
Measure 3	The amount (tonnage) of Local Authority collected municipal waste arisings. The Department for Communities requires that each council sets and monitors its own individual target annually. We have set a target of no more than 75,797 tonnes by 31 March 2024.
Status: On track	57,614 tonnes have been collected from April to December 2023. Data up to March 2024 has yet to be published.

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

The objective of the Expenditure and Funding Analysis is to demonstrate to ratepayers how the funding available to the authority (i.e. government grants, rates and business rates) for the year has been used in providing services in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The Expenditure and Funding Analysis also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's directorates [services or departments]. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Council's expenditure budget for 2023/24 was £78.5 million, with £56.7 million generated through domestic and non-domestic rates as agreed at the Council meeting in February 2023. The remaining £21.8 million was generated through a combination of grants and other income from Council activities.

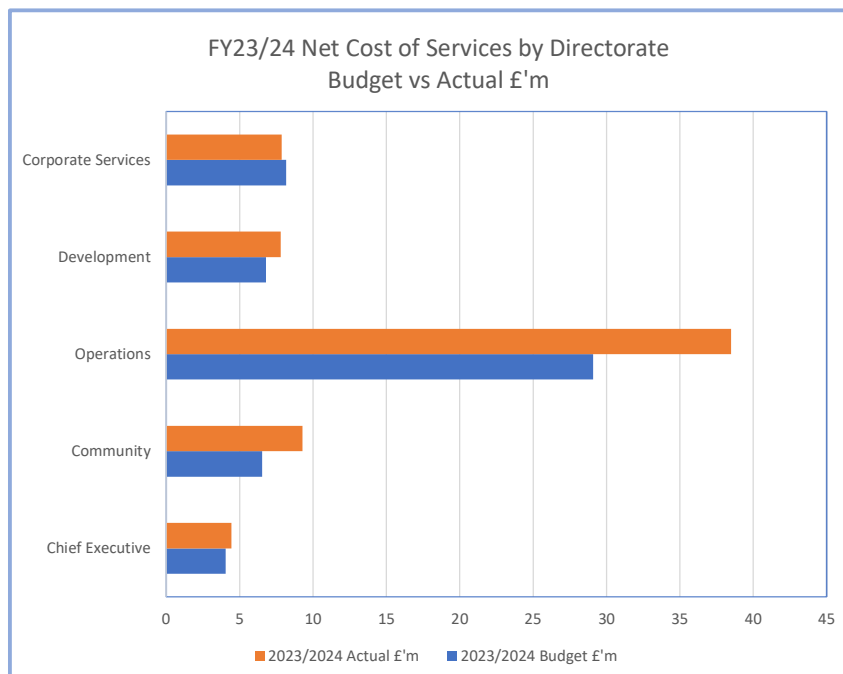
This has been an incredibly challenging financial year, with increasing costs due to rising inflation, higher salary costs and significant cuts to critical Central Government grant funding. Notably, the regional Rates Support Grant fund was reduced by the Department for Communities from £8.924m to £4.924m during the year creating an unbudgeted pressure of £709k for the Council. Additionally, system issues identified potential budget pressures against the annual budget, prompting a review by external consultants to appraise projected spending and assess the potential deficit. Midway through the year, the Council projected a significant deficit, which led to initiatives to resolve the issue.

To address this, several measures were implemented to control expenditure for the remaining months of the financial year. These measures included a spend control approach and the establishment of a spend control panel consisting of the Interim Chief Executive and Senior management team. As a result of this panel, spending was curtailed where possible, staff recruitment was controlled and reduced where possible, contract renewals were closely scrutinised and service areas identified savings by adapting or pausing service models until the new financial year.

As a result of the spend control process, coupled with the Council receiving a rates finalisation surplus of £719k at the end of the year, the Council was able to reduce expenditure and prevent a deficit from occurring. Additionally the Council received a VAT repayment of £4.7m on the settlement of a court case with HMRC regarding the provision of sporting and leisure facilities as a public body which would therefore be exempt from VAT. This has been disclosed as an extraordinary item under other income.

The Council has therefore been able to take measures to consider medium and longer term financial matters. This included transfers to reserves to provide additional financial resilience, ensuring continued investment in our improvement journey and enabling the Council to support recovery within our businesses and communities.

The chart below shows the Council's budgeted expenditure versus actual expenditure for each service area. Most of the Council's expenditure continues to be centred on Leisure and Recreation Services and Environmental Services.



Capital Investment

The Council has worked with the community to deliver capital projects across the Borough and attract the maximum amount of funding to the Borough.

During the year to 31 March 2024, the Council incurred £8.3m of expenditure on capital schemes. The principal areas of Council capital spend in 2023/24 included:

- Public Realm works on Castle Street, Ballymena
- Park refurbishments throughout the Borough
- Marine Gardens Park
- Design work on Seven Towers Leisure Centre
- Gobbins bridge & path works
- Portglenone Multi-Use Games Area
- Eglantine Barn (Glenarm)
- Energy Efficiency (Invest to Save) projects
- Community Centre Refurbishments throughout the Borough
- Play Area Refurbishments throughout the Borough

Organisational overview and external environment

On 1st April 2015, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was established by the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. The new council included the legacy councils of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Lame, the Planning Service for the geographic area, a significant number of car parks and various economic development responsibilities.

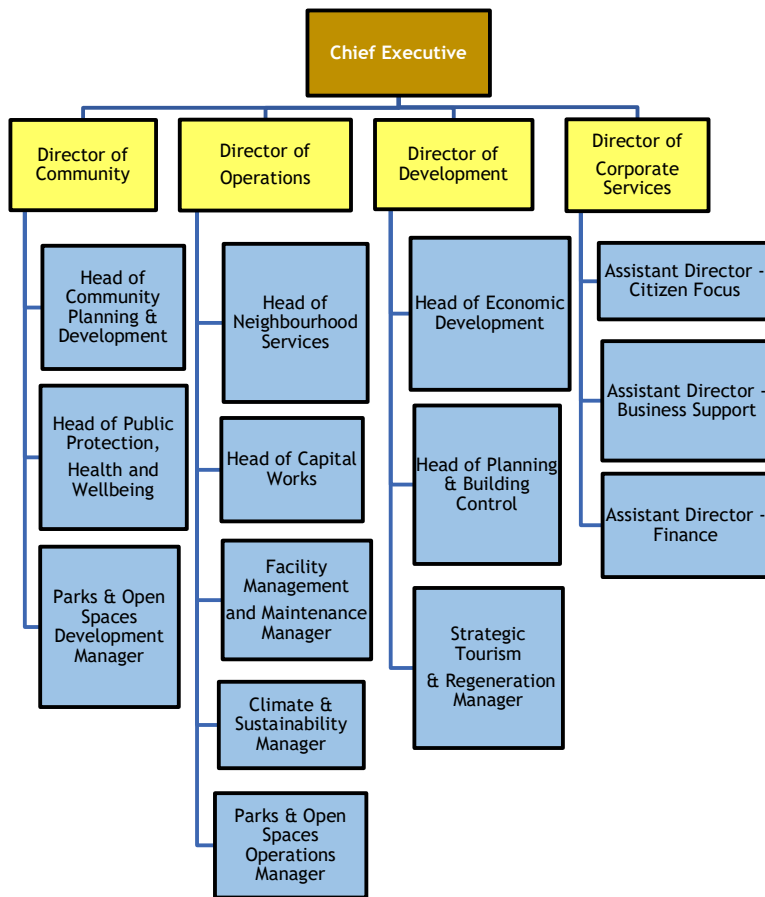
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has agreed a constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

The Council has appointed committees to enable it to discharge its functions which are supported by Ad Hoc Committees as required. These are the Corporate Resources, Policy and Governance Committee; the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the Planning Committee; the Environment and Economy Committee; the Neighbourhoods and Communities Committee; the Personnel Committee; and the newly created Standards Committee. A new Standards Committee was created in 2023/24 to improve our approach to the code of conduct. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's Committee governance structure is set out below:

Meeting	Members
Full Council	All 40 Elected Members
Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance	20 Elected Members
Audit & Scrutiny Committee	8 Elected Members and 1 Independent Member
Planning Committee	12 Elected Members
Environment and Economy	20 Elected Members
Neighbourhoods and Communities	20 Elected Members
Personnel Committee	5 Elected Members
Standards Committee	8 Elected Members and 1 Independent Member

All Committee Places were allocated to political parties at the Annual General Meeting on a proportional basis using the provisions contained within Schedule 2 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 (i.e. Quota Greatest Remainder).

The Management structure of the Organisation is as set out in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Constitution. During the year the leadership team across corporate and support services was redesigned with the appointment of three Assistant Director posts to replace the previous six Heads of Service. The Management structure in 2023/24 is summarised below:



Governance

A full report and analysis of the governance arrangements for the Council is contained within the attached Annual Governance Statement.

Risks and opportunities

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is committed to managing risk as an organisation, and promotes this for the good of all our stakeholders, the public, employees, Elected Members and partners.

Council has a Risk Management policy in place, which requires the identification of both Corporate and Service Risks, assessment of impact and likelihood of those risks and the mitigating controls in place. Council has a Corporate Risk Register in place, which is reviewed by the Senior Management Team on a regular basis and presented bi-annually to Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Council also has operational service risk registers in place. These registers capture all the key risks that have the potential to adversely impact on the delivery of core Council services and projects.

The Council continues to monitor the manufacturing and electricity production sectors within the local economy which face significant competition and structural change. The potential negative impact on the wider economy is material as is the loss of non-domestic rates to the Council. The Council is actively engaged with leading organisations in these sectors.

The Council has established clear priorities on economic development, jobs growth and tourism development and is working closely with public agencies and the private sector to develop manufacturing opportunities.

- Supporting local businesses and communities
- Participating in the Belfast Regional City Deal
- Working through the Amplify Integrated Development Strategy
- Developing the former St Patricks Barracks
- Progressing a spatial development framework for Glenarm
- Developing new tourism initiatives

Strategy and resource allocation

The Council's Corporate Plan is underpinned by a number of Council Strategies, including:

- The Medium Term Finance Strategy / Plan
- Treasury Management Strategy
- Performance Improvement Plan
- Asset Management Strategy
- Community Plan
- Integrated Economic Development Strategy

Outlook

In February 2024 the Council approved a £70m Capital Plan for the years 2023-2027, this included a £19.2m capital contribution to 3 projects within the Belfast Regional City Deal. As a key member of the 6 strong council group in the regional city deal, Mid and East Antrim have now obtained Outline Business Case approval for all three City Deal projects which will secure significant external investment through the funding package. These projects are the Carrickfergus Regeneration and Investment Programme, the next phase of the Gobbins Path visitor attraction and an Innovation Centre for Ballymena at Saint Patrick's Barracks. The investment programme is expected to last approximately 10 years and the total project costs will be £80.1m with £60.9m funded by Government.

It is also a concern to Council that, as one of seven Councils that receive a Rates Support Grant, the funding package for the Grant for all councils continues to be reduced. In June 2024, the Minister for the Department for Communities announced an additional funding cut for 2024/25, reducing the allocation from £4.924m to £3.1m. This results in a further decrease of £326k in Mid and East Antrim's portion of the Rate Support Grant. The risk is currently reduced due to the healthy usable reserves held by council but management would prefer not to rely on these as a source of funding.

Upon striking the 2024/25 Rate in February 2024, many efficiency measures were identified to enable the Council to strike the rate it did. This was necessary due to the significant increase in expenditure from inflationary pressures and the temporary loss of rate income from Kilroot Power Station. To ensure the Council operates at its most efficient and effective levels amid these budget challenges, a council wide Voluntary Severance scheme was launched on 28th May 2024. While this will help reduce workforce costs, it must be carefully balanced against the need to continue delivering essential and effective services.

The Council is also undertaking various transformation and improvement projects. One of these initiatives, following the appointment of three new Assistant Directors, involves restructuring the Corporate and Support Services Directorate which is needed to drive improvement, consistency, centralisation and efficiency. This redesign will underpin the rest of the council and ensure that it maintains a flexible and sustainable core business model. This will enable compliance with legislative requirements, support ambitions to improve residents' lives and adapt to changing demands in the upcoming years. This restructure is currently in a consultation phase with the Trade Unions, recognising that resistance to change remains a risk to the council.

The current challenge for the council is to implement all identified efficiencies and realise their full savings potential. If these efficiencies are not fully realised, Senior Management and Members will need to make further decisions during the year to mitigate the ongoing inflationary pressures challenging the council.

Basis of preparation

The financial statements are prepared on a going concern basis. There were no material events after the reporting date. There were no material or unusual changes or credits in the accounts in the year. There were no material disposals during the year. The Council has a number of funds in place to address specific contingencies. Management has determined that there are no events or uncertainties that create a material uncertainty that casts significant doubt upon the entity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Statement of the Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

The Council's Responsibilities

Under Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 a council shall make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs. A council shall designate an officer of the council as its chief financial officer and these arrangements shall be carried out under the supervision of its chief financial officer.

Under Regulation 7 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 the Council, or a Committee, is required by resolution, to approve the accounts.

These accounts were approved by the Chief Executive on 27th June 2024.

The Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities

Under Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's Statement of Accounts in the form directed by the Department for Communities.

The accounts must give a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year.

In preparing this Statement of Accounts, the Chief Financial officer is required to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department for Communities including compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom
- follow relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis, and
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Chief Financial Officer is also required to:

- keep proper accounting records that are up-to-date, and
- take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES'

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Scope of Responsibility

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council also has a duty under Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 to make arrangements for continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

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

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/ SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. A copy of the code can be obtained from CIPFA. Council refers to the CIPFA/ SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' as guidance containing 'proper practices' with regard to an effective system of internal control and governance. The Framework is recommended as best practice for developing and maintaining a local code of governance and for discharging accountability for the proper conduct of public business, through the publication of an annual governance statement that will make the adopted practice open and explicit. This statement explains how Council meets the requirements of Regulation 4 of the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in relation to the publication of a statement of internal control.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

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

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

The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 and up to the date of approval of the financial statements.

The governance framework

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements include the following:

- **Identifying and communicating the Council's vision of its purpose and intended outcomes for citizens and service users.**

One of the key mechanisms used by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council to communicate its vision, purpose and the intended outcomes for citizens and service users is through its Corporate Plan. This Plan is a statement of Council's intent, describing its strategic direction and shaping how it conducts business.

In September 2023, Council launched its third Corporate Plan, covering April 2023 to March 2024. The Plan was developed to align with the Borough's Community Plan for 2017-2032 'Putting People First', adopting the same vision:

"Mid and East Antrim will be a strong, vibrant, safe, and inclusive community where people work together to improve the quality of life for all."

The development process for the Plan began in February 2022 and included a variety of actions, including:

- Multiple workshops with Council's Senior and Operational Management team.
- Multiple workshops with Elected Members.
- Analysing feedback received from the Citizens Survey 2022.
- Analysing feedback from the public consultation.

Additionally, the ambitions and objectives laid out within the Corporate Plan were heavily influenced by a variety of internal and external factors, each of which could have a direct impact on Council's ability to achieve its vision. These included:

- The Programme for Government.
- The Community Plan 2017-2032.
- Regional Statistical data.
- Council's strategies and policies.
- Council's available resources.
- Council's statutory duties.

The draft Plan was presented to Full Council on 12 June 2023, during which newly Elected Members requested an opportunity to feed into the Plan. A further workshop was then held on 3 August 2023, during which, it was agreed to adopt the Plan for a period of one year (2023-2024) with the intention to develop a new Plan for the period 2024-2028. This decision was ratified during Full Council on 4 September 2023 and the interim Corporate Plan 2023-2024 was formally adopted.

Corporate Plan 2023-2024

A public consultation ran for a 12-week period, commencing 10 January and ending 4 April 2023 to gain feedback on the Council's proposed strategic Themes.

A total of 170 responses were received in relation to views on the Council's proposed Strategic Themes and 151 responses were received in relation to views on Council's proposed Strategic Objectives. All six themes and related objectives were strongly supported.

The Corporate Plan 2023-2024, was delivered under 6 strategic themes of:

- Jobs and Tourism
- Community Safety and Cohesion
- Learning for Life
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- High Performing and Sustainable Council
- Our Environment

Corporate Plan 2024-2028

Taking all that has previously been mentioned into consideration, and in an effort to make the Plan more concise and outcomes focused, the six originally agreed Strategic Themes were streamlined into four new pillars:

- People
- Place
- Planet
- Performance

The new pillars were agreed by Full Council on 8 January 2024.

An ambition has been stated for each pillar, each setting out where Council would like to be by 2028. These ambitions are underpinned by a set of objectives, which have been laid out as how Council will go about achieving the ambition. Each pillar is concluded by stating 'what you will see', effectively the outcomes, if we deliver on the objectives.

Following careful consideration, it was agreed that given that the fundamental elements of the Plan remained the same, that there was no requirement for the completion of another public consultation.

The new draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028 was approved by Elected Members in May 2024 and has been cascaded to all areas of the organisation, and ultimately to each employee's individual work plan.

- **Reviewing local authority's vision and its implications for Council's governance arrangements**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council monitor and review the Corporate Plan on a six-monthly basis, reporting on progress achieved in relation to delivery of its strategic themes and their associated objectives. Council's corporate risk register identifies factors which could prevent the achievement of objectives, with each risk assigned to a member of the Senior Management Team. The corporate risk register also clearly identifies the linkage between key risks and the Council Strategy, with strategic themes identified and linked directly to risks on the risk register. The Corporate Risk Register is a live document and is updated and reviewed by Senior Management Team regularly and presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Council present six-monthly progress reports to Elected Members at Full Council, having done so in July 23 and January 2024. These reports are also published on Council's website. As of 31 March 2024, 74% of measures were achieved, 11% were delayed but progressing, 13% were not achieved or stopped and 2% did not yet have available data to report against.

- **Measuring the quality of services for users through the Citizen Satisfaction Survey, for ensuring they are delivered in accordance with Council's objectives and for ensuring that they represent the best use of resources.**

Council is committed to providing quality services aligned to its strategic objectives, with one of the key strategic themes contained within the Council's Corporate Plan that of being a 'High Performing and Sustainable Council'. An objective under this theme is to 'increase customer satisfaction with our service through innovation and continuous improvement by proactively engaging with and listening to our citizens, customers and staff'.

A Citizen's Survey was conducted across the Borough in the summer of 2022, with a representative sample of residents completing face-to-face interviews which addressed resident satisfaction and established residents' priorities for Council.

The survey aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the views of our residents on their:

- Awareness and use of Council services, including satisfaction levels.
- Contact and communication with Council.
- Perspective of the borough as a place to live
- Perspectives on Council's priorities.
- Levels of health and wellbeing in the borough.

Council received 810 responses to the survey from across the borough. The top 5 priorities for making the borough a better place to live, as listed by respondents included:

- 1 Supporting and developing activities for children and young people.
- 2 Support to reduce poverty.
- 3 Developing skills and job prospects.
- 4 Delivering clean and attractive streets and towns.
- 5 Supporting our parks, green spaces and the natural and built environment.

Council's Elected Members and Senior and Operational Management Team were presented with a detailed analysis of the findings during two workshops conducted in October 2023. The findings from the survey were incorporated into the development of the Corporate Plan and departmental business plans and progress against both of these are monitored throughout the year.

A public consultation ran for a 12-week period, commencing 10 January and ending 4 April 2023 to gain feedback on the Council's proposed strategic Themes.

- **Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the executive, non-executive, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication.**

Council fulfils its function by way of Full Council meetings and seven standing Committees. Committee places are allocated proportionately to political parties using the quota greatest remainder method as prescribed by the Local Government Act (NI) 2014. Terms of references are available for all committees which are reviewed annually. All Council and Committee decisions are recorded, minuted and available for public inspection.

The roles, responsibilities, and order for the governance of Council is contained within the Council's Constitution, with Directors issued a copy of the Council's Standing Orders. Council have established a Scheme of Delegation, which details the decision-making powers delegated by Full Council to Committees and Senior Officers. Council also has a range of other procedures and protocols in place to ensure roles are adequately defined.

- **Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for members and staff.**

Codes of Conduct are in place for both employees and members and define the high ethical values and standards of behaviour expected, to make sure that the public business is conducted with fairness and integrity.

The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduced an ethical standards framework for local government. A key element of the ethical standards framework for local government was the introduction of a mandatory Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors, which imposes a requirement for Councillors to observe the Code and establishes mechanisms for the investigation and adjudication of written complaints that a Councillor has failed, or may have failed, to comply with the Code.

Upon taking up appointment Elected Members sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office affirming that they have read and will observe the Code of Conduct in the performance of their duties as a councillor. They are reminded of this commitment at the Annual General Meeting each year. Training on the Code of Conduct is also provided at Councillors' induction. Several policies and guidance documents have been established for Members to provide clarity on their roles alongside the Code of Conduct.

Council uses The Local Government Staff Commission's Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees which was updated in April 2021. The updated Code was circulated to all officers, and each was invited to a training session on the updated policy which outlined their role and responsibilities in complying with the Code of Conduct. Training on the Code of Conduct is provided at induction training for any new members of staff. Council has a wide range of policies and procedures, which are subject to on-going review which reference the standards of behaviour expected from all employees.

- **Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision making in partnerships and robustness of data quality**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has an agreed Constitution which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures followed to ensure that any decisions are efficient, transparent, and accountable to citizens.

In conjunction with the Constitution, Council operates a Scheme of Delegation. This provides the framework and guidance for the powers delegated by full Council to Committees of Council, and to senior officers within Council. Council has the power to delegate certain decision-making under Section 7 of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014, and these would be contained in the Scheme of Delegations which are reviewed annually.

Good data quality is required by the Council to plan, make its key decisions, and deploy its resources for smooth operational performance. Council continues to endeavour to ensure data is accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant, and complete and has identified a number of areas for improvement that will be addressed in 2024/25.

- **Reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and demonstrating clear accountability**

Council is committed to managing risk as an organisation and it is embedded across all the activities of the Council, however it is important to note that Risk Management is a continuous evolving process. A Risk Management Policy is in place which was reviewed in December 2022 and will be reviewed every 2 years. The policy sets out Council's approach to identification, management and embedding of risk across all aspects of Council Services. A new Risk Appetite Statement was approved by SMT in November 2022; this will help shape the risk tolerance of any new risks and will be reviewed by the SMT regularly. Council also has a corporate risk register focusing on the key strategic risks. The corporate risk register is reviewed by SMT and was presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in August 2023 and April 2024.

Council also has operational service risk registers in place. These registers capture all the key risks that have the potential to adversely impact on the delivery of core Council services and projects. Council uses its risk management system to manage project risk registers for key strategic projects such as City Deal, and those falling within the purview of the Capital Plan. This approach ensures that risk management application is consistently applied across Council at a strategic, operational and project level.

- **Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained**

The Council has developed a Fraud Policy which was last reviewed and approved in June 2024. The policy was circulated to staff and Elected Members. The Fraud Policy is also published on Council's website.

Any suspected or attempted fraudulent activities are investigated and reported to the NIAO and other appropriate channels. There was one alleged fraud in 2023-24 which is currently being reviewed.

The potential for fraud is considered during any internal audit work when reviewing the control environment. Each service area considers the potential for fraud and reflects this on their risk registers were deemed appropriate.

- **Ensuring effective management of change and transformation**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has been on an improvement and transformation journey for the past 12 months. A Good Governance review took place in April 2023 in order to make improvements to enable the Council to put in place the foundations needed to enable good decision making on priorities and use of resources. A review of the Good Governance approach took place via a series of meetings in April 2024 to seek views of elected members and senior officers on what they believe is working well and identify further areas for improvement. A report went to Council in May 2024, with recommendations and action plans for further improvements which are now being put in place.

The principles for transforming the Council are set out below. These apply to decision making and our ambition to improve the Council through improving governance as much as they do to the operating model and delivery of services to customers.

Description	Design Principles
An effective, modern organisation that adheres to the ambitions of RPA and performs well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing services to meet evidenced need of our customers • Seek to innovate, use digital solutions and simplify processes • Address issues on a single whole council basis
A sustainable organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver best outcomes at an affordable cost • Simplify processes, systems and functions where we can • Prioritise income generation and funding • Reduce our overheads through being as efficient and lean as possible
A customer focused organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-production with residents • Enable communities to do more for themselves • Shift to self-service where we can in both internal and customer facing roles • Be honest with customers about what they can expect from us with easier access
An employer of choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a workforce that is valued and empowered to make decisions as locally as possible • Work as one council with flexibility in job roles and career development

One of the areas that we have been developing is a transformation programme to redesign the core functions of the Council through the creation of a new Corporate and Support Services Directorate. This will take place during 2024/25 and is needed to ensure that employees are utilised to their full potential, skills and capacity gaps are addressed in corporate services and processes are improved to ensure we have quality management information. A high performing corporate core with strong leadership is vital to support the rest of the Council and ensure we deliver meaningful outcomes for our residents. Decisions in relation to the emerging Transformation Programme are being brought for our elected members to make through relevant committees and Council.

- **Ensuring the authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has an Interim Chief Executive. The Interim Chief Executive is also the Council's designated Chief Financial Officer, under the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. The Chief Financial Officer is charged with ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of decision-making, providing advice and guidance, and ensuring that expenditure incurred is lawful.

Principle 5 of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010) as set out in the application note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework states that 'The CFO in a local authority must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced'. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council do not comply with Principle 5 in this regard, as Council's designated Chief Financial Officer is not a professionally qualified accountant, and the role of the Chief Financial Officer and the Interim Chief Executive are not separate within the Council. The arrangements currently in place are not considered to compromise the Council's financial management arrangements in any way as the Chief Financial Officer is supported by Council's Finance Department which has fully qualified accountants, thus ensuring that the decisions made by the Chief Financial Officer are based on sound technical knowledge and understanding. This arrangement complies with the current legislation in Northern Ireland – section 1(2) of the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.

The Interim Chief Executive is supported by the Interim Director of Corporate Services, who has significant financial management experience of managing officers appointed under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The council has appointed a new Assistant Director of Finance on 1st March 2024 who is a qualified accountant who reports directly to the Interim Director of Corporate Services and will provide advice and support on all financial matters. Prior to that the Council has a number of other qualified accountants within the Council as well as a qualified accountant as an Independent Member of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee who provided support and advice to the Chief Financial Officer.

- **Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.**

The Legal Services Department in Mid and East Antrim Borough Council comprises three full time solicitor posts, with one vacant post about to be issued for recruitment, a Legal Executive, and an Admin Officer. Specialist external legal advice is engaged as required. A dedicated Council solicitor attends all Planning Committee meetings and reviews all Planning Reports.

Internal policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect legislative changes. These are amended in line with any recommendations from both internal and external audit and circulated to staff when reviewed. Internal policies and procedures are available on the staff intranet. The Council keeps up to date with key employment law changes and consults with our legal advisors as required on amendments that may be required to current policies (or the development of new policies). The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, requires that a Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. Council would therefore have to put in place arrangements to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Council has a Health and Safety Policy in place based on the Plan, Do, Check, Act Framework, with a specific Action Plan for implementation, to ensure continual improvement. In addition, Council has a Corporate Health & Safety Committee in place attended by both management, and local Trades Union representatives which oversees the implementation of the Action Plan and supports learning and awareness.

Human Resources policies, when being developed, go through rigorous consultation at the Policy Sub-Group of Council's Local Consultation and Negotiation Forum (LCNF) that comprise management and Trade Union representatives. Once an initial draft has been agreed by the Sub-Group, it is further scrutinised by SMT and Council's Management Team, before being agreed at LCNF as a final draft. The Policy is then submitted to Committee for approval, and then communicated to staff and made available on Council's intranet. Training is also delivered, both inhouse and externally, where appropriate. Policies will be reviewed to reflect changes in legislation and to consider any changes in practice.

The Council's internal audit function has a specific role in providing independent assurance to Management and the elected members on the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements of the Council.

All officers and elected members are required to act in compliance with their respective Codes of Conduct while carrying out their duties and to declare any conflicts of interest.

With regards to lawful expenditure, Business Cases and Economic Appraisals are scrutinised by SMT and Council, where appropriate, to ensure value for money and that financial decisions are taken in line with Council's Scheme of Delegation. Council also has in place a Fraud Policy, last reviewed in April 2023. The policy was circulated to staff and is made available both on the staff intranet and the Council's website.

- **Ensuring the Council's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact**

Council's internal audit function is outsourced and provides an independent opinion on internal control and compliance issues. Council's internal audit provider was appointed in April 2023 for a period of four years until March 2027. Council's internal audit arrangements complies with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of Head of Internal Audit (2010) and operates in compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

- **Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function**

Council's Corporate Solicitor provides support over some of the responsibilities contained in the role of Monitoring Officer which is not a statutory requirement in Northern Ireland.

- **Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the head of paid service function**

The Interim Chief Executive is also Council's Head of Paid Service. The role is responsible for the discharge of Council's different functions, as well as determining the staff required for the discharge of functions, and the appointment and proper management of Council's staff. The Human Resources Team advise and assist the Interim Chief Executive in the discharge of this role. A recent Good Governance Review saw amendments to the Scheme of Delegation in support of this function.

- **Undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council operates a committee system, with the Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting at least once a quarter. The Audit & Scrutiny Committee met eight times during 2023-24 in conjunction with key audit and financial reporting frameworks. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee has a Terms of Reference which was last reviewed in June 2024 and is reviewed annually post the AGM.

Internal audit findings and risk management information were reported to the Committee during the year, as well as the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee reviews its performance on an annual basis using the self-assessment checklist contained in the CIPFA Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities.

- **Raising concerns and receiving and investigating complaints from the public**

Council has a Raising Concerns Policy, a Fraud Policy, and a Fraud Response Plan. These policies are published on Council's website and are also available to staff on the intranet.

Council operates a corporate Complaints, Comments, and Compliments Policy, alongside a recording system which is coordinated centrally by the Policy Team. Until 31st December 2023 this policy and all complaint responses were centrally managed by the Policy Team. The Northern Ireland Public Service Ombudsman (NIPSO) published a new Model Complaints Handling Procedure for Public Authorities within Northern Ireland on 1st July 2023, which Council implemented with effect from 1st January 2024 as required by NIPSO. A new Council policy was developed to reflect the requirements of the NIPSO Complaint Handling Framework and was approved by the Corporate Resources, Policy & Governance Committee on 23rd October 2023. In line with the new policy, since 1st January 2024 complaint handling has been decentralised to operational teams across Council who are responsible for recording complaints and reporting data to the Policy Team for analysis and publication. The Complaints Policy ensures that all public complaints, both formal and informal, are appropriately registered, investigated and responded to. NIPSO requirements for publication of complaint data stipulate that KPI reporting on timescales, resolution, trends, and patterns and learning from complaints should be in place by the end of 2024. As a consequence of the introduction of the new policy within the financial year, data for 2023/2024 is split between the previous policy and the new policy as they differ in terms of how complaints are handled and reported. Under the previous policy data for Q1 – Q3 is as follows: 100 informal complaints, 40 formal (Stage 1) and 11 formal (Stage 2) complaints were received. Of the 151 complaints received, 3 were referred to the NIPSO. Under the new policy data for Q4 is as follows: 146 stage 1 complaints with 15 escalated to stage 2 and 1 referred to NIPSO.

There were no Raising Concerns registered in 2023-24. The ongoing concern raised in the previous year was resolved and closed.

- **Identifying the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training**

Work is set to recommence with the Councillor Development Charter Sub-Committee to achieve accreditation for the Councillor Development Charter for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council. This charter aims to support the professional development of Councillors, ensuring they possess the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively fulfil their roles. A report on this initiative will be presented at Full Council in due course.

Elected Members have engaged in a broad spectrum of training activities designed to enhance their capacity and capability. These training sessions have covered several critical areas including:

- Councillor Induction: Introductory training for new Councillors to familiarise them with their roles and responsibilities.
- Planning: Training on planning procedures and regulations.
- Governance, Audit, and Scrutiny: Ensuring Councillors understand their roles in overseeing and scrutinising council activities.
- Chairing Meetings and Application of Standing Orders: Providing skills for effective meeting management and adherence to procedural rules.
- Attendance at Local and Regional Conferences: Offering opportunities for knowledge sharing and networking.
- NILGA Councillors Development Programme and Committee Training: Enhancing competencies in specific council-related functions and committee roles.
- Standards training (APSE).

During the current mandate, Council will focus on several key development areas:

- Councillor Development Charter: Continued efforts to attain and maintain this accreditation.
- NILGA Regional Development Programme: Ongoing participation to ensure continuous professional growth.
- Ongoing Councillor Development: Regular training and development sessions to maintain high standards of governance and effectiveness.

The Senior Management Team continues to engage with review and transformation activities, identifying specific areas for growth and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The 2024/2025 Learning & Development activities will focus on:

- Compliance-Based Development: Ensuring adherence to legal, regulatory, and statutory requirements.
- Support for Line Managers: Providing training and resources to enhance managerial effectiveness.
- Skill Development Opportunities: Equipping staff with opportunities to enhance individual and organisational capabilities.

Looking forward, the Senior Management Team will participate in several key initiatives as part of the Local Government Staff Commission's Talent Management Strategy Task and Finish Group. Various development opportunities will be offered to address specific development and growth needs.

- **Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation**

Strong communications and engagement with Council's key stakeholders is critical to promoting, informing, and empowering citizens and delivering on the organisation's strategic objectives. Council continues to address public confidence issues and to rebuild its reputation as a high performing local government authority. This involves reconnecting with stakeholders and improving how it communicates with customers, visitors, investors, and partners.

Prior to launching the Performance Improvement Plan 2023-24, Council undertook a 12-week consultation from 10 January 2023 – 4 April 2023 to obtain feedback on the proposed improvement objectives contained in the Performance Improvement Plan. Council also undertook a 12-week consultation for the development of the new Corporate Plan 2024-2028, and the new Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25. All consultation was carried out using a mix of survey work and face to face engagement.

Critical insight data from ratepayers and employees was obtained through a citizen survey conducted by Council during 2022 as well as a staff survey which was managed by an independent third party. The feedback from staff formed the basis of an action plan through which Council committed to addressing several issues and concerns. Feedback from the public consultations and citizen survey directly influenced the formation of strategic priorities and projects which have been included in Council's Corporate Plan 2024-28 and Performance Improvement Plan 2024-25 both of which have been approved by Council.

All communications activity is planned and delivered to align to support and promote Council's strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate and Community Plans and promote Mid and East Antrim as an excellent place to live, work, visit and invest. The Communications Team is responsible for a wide range of functions, including but not limited to press and media, marketing, branding, and social media output. Council is committed to ensuring access to information for its citizens which includes ensuring online content is produced and made available in accessible formats, such as large print or audio cassette, as well as in minority languages as we continue to ensure equality and diversity is promoted within the Borough.

Council has a Community Panel, which is representative of the Third Sector in the Borough and puts community at the heart of Mid and East Antrim's Community Planning Partnership and it is central to the decision-making process. The panel provides the community with a formalised channel to feed in directly to the partnership, the needs, and concerns of the wider community. Members of the Community Panel agree representation to sit on other elements of the wider partnership including the Community Planning Strategic Alliance, which includes Council representatives and key decision makers from across the wider public sector and statutory agencies.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council undertook a comprehensive review of community planning in 2022-23. This involved a high level of consultation with all partners and the wider community. A wide range of approaches were used to ensure that the revised plan was reflective of changing and emerging needs. Following the agreement of the updated plan, a series of thematic workshops were held and subsequently a new Implementation Plan was agreed that will drive Council's actions for the next four years.

- **Enhancing the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers**

Council delivers a range of services, both directly and indirectly to the residents of the borough. The Council has a range of mechanisms and plans in place for delivering effective services which extend to the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, Performance Improvement Plans, Business Plans, and the Employee Development Plans all of which are managed and reported in accordance with our Performance Management Framework. The key strategic driver for Council is the Community Plan and as the lead partner for Community Planning, Council works with a range of statutory, voluntary and community partners to lever resources and to identify and deliver outcomes for our residents. The Strategic Alliance is the key overarching strategic partnership and decision-making body for Community Planning and assumes overall accountability for performance monitoring and reporting for all public bodies involved in the partnership.

There are effective governance and monitoring arrangements for service delivery and accountability identified within the Performance Management Framework for Council. In addition, a range of public service providers attend Council Committees on a regular basis to present their plans and reports providing opportunity for members engagement on behalf of communities and local businesses. Council actively responds to a large number of other public sector consultations in relation to matters that affect services and people in the Borough, ensuring our residents' interests are communicated to wider public sector bodies.

- **Incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working as identified by the Audit Commission's report on the governance of partnerships, and reflecting these in the authority's overall governance arrangements.**

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has a number of key partnership relationships and undertakes a significant amount of joint working to deliver services and make improvements for citizens. One example is the Labour Market Partnership which aims to develop annual action plans to improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions at a local level. Council continues to utilise the Northern Ireland Audit Office's publication 'Making Partnerships Work – a Good Practice Guide for Public Bodies' and applies any relevant governance best practice.

Council's work with partnerships and the governance around them is monitored through regularly reporting to relevant Committees and is aligned to key governance documents including Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

Review of Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of effectiveness of its system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the executive managers within Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Internal Auditors Annual Report, and also by comments made by the external auditors.

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee includes eight elected member representatives of the political membership of Council and one Independent Member. Under the terms of reference for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, they are charged with responsibility for overseeing the Council's risk and control environment including the internal audit provision and fraud. The Committee provides an independent scrutiny of the Council's financial and non-financial performance and oversees the financial reporting process. They are also tasked with carrying out scrutiny reviews so that learning and improvement can be enhanced through members involvement. They are committed to making the Council, its sub-committees, and departments more responsive to the audit function.

The Internal Auditor provides an independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control system. The Internal Auditor forwards draft reports to the relevant Director/ Head of Service for management comments and responses. The reports are co-ordinated by the Corporate Support Services Directorate and then issued in their final format by the Internal Auditor and presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The Interim Chief Executive leads the Council's SMT who are collectively responsible for the processes involved in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework. In producing this statement, full regard has been made to the Register of Interests for both employees and Councillors, reports of the internal and external auditor, and the corporate risk register.

The following process has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework:

- **The Authority**

Council meets every 6 weeks on a formal basis to set the strategic direction and monitor service delivery of the Council. A committee structure is in place within Council which provides Elected Members with a democratic decision-making process supported by Standing Orders and a Constitution. Positions of responsibility are appointed using the D'Hondt system. All Committee positions are appointed through the Quota Greatest Remainder method as set out in the Local Governance Act (NI) 2014. The Group Party Leaders Forum seeks to provide an informal sounding board on major strategic issues in advance of submission to Committee/Council, thereby facilitating and streamlining the conduct of the Council business.

- **The Executive**

The Interim Chief Executive leads the Council's Senior Management to collectively have involvement in, and oversight of the processes involved in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance framework. In doing so the Senior Management Team regularly review:

- Full Council and Committee Actions.
- Corporate Risk Register.
- Internal and External Audit Reports.
- New and revised Council policies.
- Performance Improvement Plan.
- Business Cases/ Economic Appraisals.
- Direct Award Contracts.
- Recruitment; and
- Financial Reporting

- **The Audit and Scrutiny Committee**

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee met 7 times during 2023-24. The internal and external auditors attended meetings as appropriate. The Audit and Scrutiny Committee approved a risk based internal audit plan for 2023-24 and considered the findings of internal audit reviews and external audit reports (Annual Audit Letter and Report to Those Charged with Governance). Meetings were attended by the Interim Director of Corporate Services, Independent Member, and relevant officers as required.

- **The Standards Committee**

A Standards Committee was established in 2023 to promote high standards of member and officer conduct and with a view to dealing with individual referrals from members. Training was held in November 2023 on the Member Code of Conduct. A new Terms of Reference was agreed in March 2024 to move the committee away with dealing with individual referrals and to take a more collegiate approach to raising awareness and understanding of individual standards-related issues for example sharing of confidential documents or social media / code of conduct. This aims to raise understanding of how to remain compliant with the member code of conduct.

- **Internal Audit**

Mid and East Antrim Borough's internal audit function is externally sourced and provides an independent opinion on Council's governance framework. In line with PSIAS, Internal Audit are required to provide an opinion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control environment. In giving this opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. Specifically, this opinion has been arrived at considering the following:

oThe outcome of audits completed in 2023-24 audit plan designed to focus on areas of risk identified by management which is summarised below:

Internal Audit Area	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Assurance Level
Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)	-	2	4	Satisfactory
Labour Market Partnership	-	-	1	Satisfactory
IT General Controls	4	1	1	Unacceptable
Information Governance	3	4	-	Unacceptable
Treasury Management	-	3	-	Limited
TOTAL	7	10	6	

oManagement responses to Internal Audit work, with particular attention to the acceptance of all recommendations and progress to address significant issues. During all internal audits completed during the year, recommendations have been agreed with management and action plans have been drawn up with defined timescales.

oWhether or not any limitations have been placed on the scope of the Internal Audit. There has been no limitations of scope placed on Internal Audit during the year.

oProgress made in relation to the outstanding audit recommendations from previous years. While some progress has been made in addressing recommendations highlighted by Internal Audit, several recommendations remain unaddressed. Due to the volume and age of these outstanding recommendations, Internal Audit has identified potential risks to the council.

Internal Audit could only provide a limited level of assurance regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management, and control environment. They have stated that the outstanding recommendations pose a risk to the effectiveness of the Council's control environment and recommend that Senior Management review and seek to close these issues as soon as possible.

- **Other explicit review/assurance mechanisms**

Throughout the year the Council was subject to a number of other external reviews which provide additional assurance in respect of the Councils' Governance arrangements:

-The Northern Ireland Audit Office provides a level of assurance through the provision of their annual audit and issuing of a management letter which includes an action plan to address issues identified and proposals of improvement in relation to the Council's performance duties. External Audit by the Northern Ireland Audit Office gave Mid and East Antrim Borough Council an unqualified audit opinion in relation to their accounts for 2022-23.

-Council also published a Performance Improvement Plan for 2023-24. The plan has been closely monitored for delivery during the year, with quarterly updates provided to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

-External funding throughout the year is subject to independent audits from relevant funders i.e. Europe and Government Departments.

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit Committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the systems is in place. Leadership and experience of improvement is critical to this and is delivered through the interim leadership roles at present, working towards stability and permanent leadership in the future.

Significant Governance Issues

Six governance issues were reported on in the 2022-23 Annual Governance Statement. Four of the significant governance issues reported upon in 2022-23 have also been identified in the 2023-24 financial year as part of similar issues. These include Investigations, progress in implementing prior year recommendations, significant priority 1 findings and Interim Governance Arrangements.

The following issues are no longer considered significant governance issues:

HR Policies and Procedures - Recruitment and Selection

In 2022-23 an internal audit review of HR policies and procedures resulted in a limited assurance rating. The council has since fully implemented 6 out of the 9 recommendations, with the remaining 3 currently in progress.

Priority 1 Findings - Direct Award Contracts

In 2022-23 the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) issued a priority 1 recommendation regarding the controls over the approval and monitoring of Direct Award Contracts. The council has since made significant efforts to enhance its procurement processes, aiming to minimise the use of Direct Award Contracts and ensure compliance with procurement regulations. As a result, there has been a notable reduction in the use of Direct Award Contracts during 2023-24.

The significant governance issues for 2023-24 have been identified through a review of the Corporate Risk Register, and internal audit's understanding of the wider control environment in Council. A further ten significant governance issues have been identified in 2023-24. More detail can be found below on each of the significant governance issues challenging Council:

1. Limited Assurance Audit Review of Treasury Management

Following an internal audit review of Treasury Management a Limited Assurance rating was assigned. The Audit Committee has noted the findings, and officers are currently prioritising efforts to address the recommendations in the report.

2. Unacceptable Assurance Audit Review of IT General Controls

At the request of Senior Management, an internal audit review of IT General controls was conducted, resulting in an unacceptable Assurance rating. The Audit Committee has noted the findings, and officers are currently prioritising efforts to address the recommendations in the report.

3. Unacceptable Assurance Audit Review of Information Governance

Following an internal audit review of Information Governance an unacceptable Assurance rating was assigned. The Audit Committee has noted the findings, and officers are currently prioritising efforts to address the recommendations in the report.

4. Findings and Recommendations Arising from Investigations

All internal investigations have been concluded though follow up procedures focusing on the recommendations are ongoing. External investigations remain ongoing with a number of external public bodies and this work is progressing though complex as many of the issues are intertwined.

5. Senior Management Gaps

Internal Audit noted previously that gaps across the senior management were a concern for Council. During 2023/24 any gaps at senior management were filled on an interim basis, with a view to fill these posts permanently in 2024/25.

6. Progress in implementing prior year recommendations

Internal Audit have noted that whilst some progress has been made in progressing prior year recommendations, further efforts are needed to enhance the tracking and visibility of full implementation for follow-up audits. Reporting and tracking of audit recommendations should be improved and communicated to the Senior Management team regularly throughout the year.

7. Significant Priority 1 Findings

Following a series of significant issues raised by the Northern Ireland Audit Office, regarding priority 1 recommendations, the Council has taken steps to address concerns related to the operation and ongoing use of the Tech1 Finance System, procurement and contract management practices. During 2023-24 the Council made progress in resolving some operational issues within Tech 1 and enhancing system functionality and reporting capabilities. A comprehensive change programme has been developed for the next 12 months, aiming to further improve the financial and procurement modules and explore untapped functionalities such as HR, payroll, and asset management. Efforts are ongoing to drive system improvements and maximise the system's benefits for the council.

Additionally, progress has been made in refining the end-to-end procurement process, with a particular focus on contract management. Efforts have included clarifying decision-making processes within the scheme of delegation and implementing alerts for contract end dates to ensure timely procurement. Further improvements to contract management processes will be made during 2024-25 focusing on Tech1 functionalities and the procurement policy will be reviewed.

8. Financial management

During 2022/23, the Senior Management Team acknowledged that the Council encountered challenges related to capacity and skills within financial management. To address these issues, the Council engaged PwC for their expertise. As a result of this work, a projected overspend of £7.2 million was identified. In response, the council took measures to enhance its financial operating model, which included implementing improved spending control processes and investment in the Corporate Services and Support Directorate. This investment is anticipated to bolster the Council's insight, control, and decision-making capabilities. This was also raised as a priority 1 recommendation by the NIAO.

9. Acceptance of Risks

The Council's Senior Management Team has committed to addressing the issues of acceptance of internal audit recommendations, as set out by the Internal Auditor in the Annual Assurance Statement.

10. Misrepresented Soil Analysis

In October 2022, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) became aware that misrepresented soil sample analysis results had been submitted in support of environmental authorisations and planning applications. By November 2022, relevant stakeholders, including the Council, were informed of the issue. In early 2023, the Council was notified of several planning applications within its jurisdiction that were potentially affected by the misrepresented data.

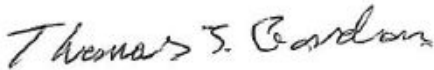
The Council has been actively working with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies and law enforcement, to address the issue and has continued to provide information on the affected cases. A detailed complaint has been submitted by the Council to the PSNI, and the Council remains actively engaged in the ongoing investigation.

In July 2024, the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) published a public report titled Public Bodies' Response to Misrepresented Soil Analysis. This report detailed key findings and made several recommendations to improve processes and oversight. A Task & Finish Working Group, of which the Council is a member, has been formed to bring together stakeholders from various sectors to collectively review the NIAO report's recommendations and ensure a coordinated response. The group is scheduled to hold its first meeting in September 2024.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements.

We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed



Chair

Date

26-Sep-24

Signed



Interim Chief Executive

Date

26-Sep-24

NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES'

REMUNERATION REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 require larger local government bodies to prepare a remuneration report as part of the statement of accounts.

ALLOWANCE AND REMUNERATION ARRANGEMENTS

COUNCILLORS

Allowances are payable by councils to councillors and committee members under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, which came into operation on 1 October 2020.

Guidance and determinations on Councillors' Allowances applicable from 1 April 2023 were issued by the Department for Communities on 28 November 2023 (Circular LG 23/2023). Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors are published on council websites.

Following local elections on 18 May 2023, 462 councillors were elected to the 11 new councils for a four year term. MEA Council had 40 councillors in 2023/24.

SENIOR EMPLOYEES

The remuneration of senior employees employed by the Council is determined by the Council in line with that determined by the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. Senior staff are those staff who are members of the Executive Management Team/Senior Management Team.

Council appointments of employees are made in accordance with the Local Government Staff Commissions' Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection, which requires appointment to be on merit and on the basis of fair and open competition.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended.

ALLOWANCES PAID TO COUNCILLORS

The total amount paid to Councillors by way of allowances, under Part 3 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 was:

Table 1: Total Allowances paid to councillors (audited information)

Allowance	2023/24		2022/23	
	Total Allowances £	Number of Councillors receiving the Allowance	Total Allowances £	Number of Councillors receiving the Allowance
Basic Allowance	681,760	55	639,025	42
Special Responsibility Allowance	59,382	25	53,047	19
Chairperson/Deputy Mayor Allowance	12,000	2	12,000	2
Vice Chairperson/ Deputy Mayor Allowance	7,800	2	7,800	2
Mileage Allowance	18,196	30	21,528	31
Public Transport and Other Travel Incidentals	3,258	15	3,276	6
Subsistence	2,450	2	1,319	3
Courses/Conferences Visits (registration & joining fees)	2,699	21	4,670	21
TOTAL ALLOWANCES	787,545		742,665	

Details of the allowances paid to individual councillors in 2023/24 are published on the council website at www.midandeanstrim.gov.uk/council/policies-and-documents/financial-reports

REMUNERATION OF SENIOR EMPLOYEES

The remuneration of senior employees covers the Executive Management Team/Senior Management Team. The following table provides details of the remuneration paid to senior employees:

Table 2: Remuneration (including salary)[audited information]

Officers	2023/24				2022/23			
	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100) £'000	Total £'000	Salary (Full year equivalent in brackets where applicable) £'000	Bonus Payments £'000	Benefits in kind (to nearest £100) £'000	Total £'000
Anne Donaghy, (Chief Executive) (a)	0	0	0	0	155-160 FYE (120-125)	0	0	155-160 FYE (120- 125)
Valerie Watts (Interim Chief Executive)	135-140 FYE (135-140)	0	0	135-140 FYE (135- 140)	95-100 FYE (115-120)	0	0	95-100 FYE (115- 120)
Philip Thompson (Director of Operations) *	95-100 FYE (95-100)	0	0	95-100 FYE (95-100)	95-100 FYE (90-95)	0	0	95-100 FYE (90-95)
Katrina Morgan (Director of Community) (b) *	75-80 FYE (95-100)	0	0	75-80 FYE (95-100)	95-100 FYE (90-95)	0	0	95-100 FYE (90-95)
Louise Kennedy (Director of Corporate Services) (c)	0	0	0	0	15-20 FYE (90-95)	0	0	15-20 FYE (90-95)
Nicola Rowles (Director of Development) (d) *	15-20 FYE (95-100)	0	0	15-20 FYE (95-100)	55-60 FYE (90-95)	0	0	55-60 FYE (90-95)
Paul Duffy (Acting Director of Development) (e)	90-95 FYE (90-95)	0	0	90-95 FYE (90-95)	85-90 FYE (80-85)	0	0	85-90 FYE (80-85)

- (a) A Donaghy ceased employment with the council on 11th January 2023 following a period of suspension. Valerie Watts joined as Interim Chief Executive on 13th June 2022.
 - (b) Katrina Morgan reduced payment is in response to absence during 2023/24.
 - (c) Louise Kennedy left on 11th May 2022 and her reduced payment is in response to absence before leaving.
 - (d) Nicola Rowles left on 30th April 2023 and her reduced payment is in response to absence before leaving.
 - (e) Paul Duffy has been acting Director of Development since 13th June 2022 and received acting up allowances.
- *During 2022-23 Philip Thompson, Katrina Morgan and Nicola Rowles received acting up allowances.

Positions covered by Interim Arrangements

HR Director was appointed to cover a vacancy, commenced May 2022 and ended in May 2023. Contracted through SOLACE in Business who were paid £25-30K (2022/23 £165-170k).

Interim Director of Corporate Services was appointed to cover a vacancy, commenced September 2022. Contracted through SOLACE in Business who were paid £255 -£260k (2022/23 £135-140k). The Interim Director also received £3,160 taxed payroll payment for her assistance and oversight of the Council's 2023 Local Council election process.

Councils are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Executive Management Team and the median remuneration of the Councils workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid member of the Executive Management Team/Senior Management Team in the financial year 2023/24 was £135k - £140k (FYE). This was 4.10 times the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £33,120.

Table 3: Relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid member of the Executive Management Team/Senior Management Team and the median remuneration of the Councils workforce (audited information)

	2023/24	2022/23
Salary Band of Highest Paid member of the Executive Management Team / Senior Management Team (£000) (Full Time Equivalent)	135-140 (FYE)	120-125 (FYE)
Median Total Remuneration (£000)	33.12	30.15
Ratio	4.10:1	4.10:1

In 2023/24, 0 employees received remuneration in excess of the highest paid member of the Executive Management Team/Senior Management Team.

Total remuneration includes salary, bonus payments and benefits in kind.

Salary

"Salary" includes gross salary, overtime, and any gratia payments.

Bonus Payments

Bonus payments are based on performance levels attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. Bonuses relate to the performance in the year in which they become payable to the individual. The bonuses reported in 2023/24 relate to performance in 2023/24.

Benefits in Kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Exit Packages for staff

The number of exit packages provided to all staff by the Council, together with total cost per band and total cost of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below:

Table 4: Exit Packages in 2023/24 (audited information)

Severance Package Cost Band	2023/24				2022/23			
	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other departures agreed	Total Number of Exit Packages in each Cost Band	Total Cost of Packages in each Cost Band £'000	Number of Compulsory Redundancies	Number of Other departures agreed	Total Number of Exit Packages in each Cost Band	Total Cost of Packages in each Cost Band £'000
£0 - £20,000	0	1	1	18	0	19	19	12
£20,001 - £40,000	0	2	2	60	0	2	2	53
£40,001 - £60,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£60,001 - £80,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£80,001 - £100,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£100,001 - £150,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
£150,001 - £200,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	3	3	78	0	21	21	65

Pension Benefits

The Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (the Scheme) which is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, which provides retirement benefits for council employees on a "career average revalued earnings" basis from 1 April 2015. Prior to that date benefits were built up on a "final salary" basis.

From 1 April 2015, a member builds up retirement pension at the rate of 1/49th pensionable pay for each year. Pension benefits in relation to membership between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2015 were built up at the rate of 1/60th pensionable pay for each year of membership. There is no automatic lump sum provided in respect of membership after 31 March 2009. Pension benefits in relation to any membership before 1 April 2009 were built up at the rate of 1/80th (pension) and 3/80ths (tax-free lump sum) of pensionable pay for each year of membership up to 31 March 2009. At retirement, members may give up some pension for additional lump sum, subject to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) limits. The conversion rate is £12 additional lump sum for every £1 of pension given up.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011. The Scheme application is modified to reflect the fact that councillors hold an elected office. Councillor members have always accrued pension on a career average basis. Prior to 1 April 2015 pension was accrued at a rate of 1/60th and thereafter at a rate of 1/49th.

The Scheme is funded by contributions made by both employees/councillors and employers. Prior to 1 April 2009, a member's contribution rates were fixed at 6% of their pensionable remuneration (except for those who were entitled to contribute to the Scheme at 5% before 1 February 2003 and have remained in continuous employment). Tiered member contribution rates, determined by the whole-time equivalent rate of pay, were introduced from 1 April 2009. From 1 April 2015, the member contribution rates are determined on the actual rate of pay.

The ranges for the bands for tiered contribution rates are revised by the Department for Communities in April each year in accordance with the increase applied to a pension in payment. The bands, effective from 1 April 2023, were as follows:

Table 5: Employee Contribution Rates

Band	Range	Employee Contribution Rate
1	£0 - £16,900	5.5%
2	£16,901 - £26,000	5.8%
3	£26,001 - £43,400	6.5%
4	£43,401 - £52,800	6.8%
5	£52,801 - £104,700	8.5%
6	More than £104,700	10.5%

Employers' contribution rates are determined by the fund's actuary every three years at the triennial valuation. A formal triennial actuarial valuation of the Fund as at 31 March 2022 was carried out in 2022/23 and set the employer contribution rates for the 3 years commencing 1 April 2023 as follows:

Table 6: Employer Contribution Rates

Year	Employer Contribution Rate
1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024	19.0%
1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025	19.0%
1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026	19.0%

The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 27 June 2014 and The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 were made on 30 June 2014. Both sets of regulations are effective from 1 April 2015.

Councillors have been able to join the Scheme since May 2011 and therefore have not accrued significant benefits thus far. However, the in-year pension contributions made by the Council for all councillors during 2023/24 was £133,000 (2022/23 £109,486)

The value of pension benefits of the most senior management of the Council accrued during the year was as follows:

Table 7: Pension Benefits of senior staff in 2023/24 (audited information)

Officers	Accrued Pension at pension age as at 31/03/2024 £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/03/2024 £'000	CETV at 31/03/2023 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Katrina Morgan (Director of Communities)	30-35	0-5	533	470	26
	20-25(LS)	(0-5)(LS)			
Nicola Rowles (Director of Development)	5-10	0-5	85	76	10
	0(LS)	0(LS)			
Philip Thompson (Director of Operations)	45-50	0-5	899	785	57
	55-60(LS)	0-5(LS)			

The Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV)

This is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. It is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the pension benefits they have accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. CETVs are calculated in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Please note that the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) have revised their FY 2022/23 comparative figures for the council's officers. "Due to changes to the non-club transfer factors, provided by the Government Actuary's Department during 2023/24 the CETV calculations for the 2022/23 year have been re-rerun and provided as the starting input CETV value for the start of the 2023/24 year."

The real increase in the value of the CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It takes account of the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.



Interim Chief Executive
26 September 2024

Certificate of the Chief Financial Officer

I certify that:

- (a) the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2024 on pages 41 to 92 has been prepared in the form directed by the Department for Communities and under the accounting policies set out on pages 45 to 58.

- (b) in my opinion the Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the income and expenditure and cash flows for the financial year and the financial position as at the end of the financial year ending 31st March 2024.

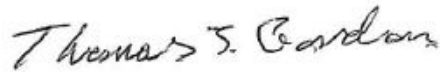


Chief Financial Officer

Date **26 September 2024**

Council Approval of Statement of Accounts

These accounts will be approved by resolution of the Council/Committee on 26 September 2024.



Chairman

Date **26 September 2024**

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. The financial statements comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Movement in Reserves Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, and the related notes including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by UK adopted international accounting standards.

I have also audited the information in the Remuneration Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view, in accordance with relevant legal and statutory requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24, of the financial position of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council as at 31 March 2024 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the Department for Communities' directions issued thereunder.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate. My staff and I are independent of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council'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.

The going concern basis of accounting for Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My 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 Statement of Accounts other than the financial statements, the parts of the Remuneration Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the other information included in the Statement of Accounts. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with the Department for Communities' directions made under the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015; and
- the information given in the Statement of Accounts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Statement of Accounts.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if:

- in my opinion:
 - the Annual Governance Statement:
 - does not reflect compliance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24;
 - does not comply with proper practices specified by the Department for Communities;
 - is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit; or
 - adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
 - the statement of accounts and the part of the Remuneration Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
 - I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit, or
- I issue a report in the public interest under Article 9 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005; or
- I designate under Article 12 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 any recommendation made to the Council; or
- I exercise the other special powers of the auditor under Article 19 to 21 of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005.

Responsibilities of the Chief Financial Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Council's and Chief Financial Officer's Responsibilities, the Chief Financial Officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls 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;
- assessing the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council'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 the Chief Financial Officer anticipates that the services provided by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

My 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 a certificate that includes my 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.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included governing legislation and any other relevant laws and regulations identified;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;

- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate;
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business; and

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

This report is made solely to the Members of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in accordance with the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and for no other purpose, as specified in the Statement of Responsibilities of the Local Government Auditor and Local Government Bodies.

Certificate

I certify that I have completed the audit of accounts of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and the Local Government Code of Audit Practice.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Colette Kane".

Colette Kane
Local Government Auditor
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

30th September 2024

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

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

Service Expenditure	Notes	2023/24			2022/23		
		Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £	Gross Expenditure £	Gross Income £	Net Expenditure £
Chief Executive	2	4,939,412	(431,495)	4,507,917	3,623,907	(996,500)	2,627,407
Community	2	16,391,296	(7,117,017)	9,274,279	17,751,576	(7,205,422)	10,546,154
Operations	2	43,336,931	(4,840,378)	38,496,553	37,682,009	(4,552,741)	33,129,268
Development	2	11,841,866	(4,049,487)	7,792,379	12,621,868	(4,383,021)	8,238,847
Corporate Services	2	7,879,975	(60,383)	7,819,592	10,512,597	(398,130)	10,114,467
Cost of Services on Continuing Operations		84,389,480	(16,498,760)	67,890,720	82,191,957	(17,535,814)	64,656,143
Other Operating Expenditure/Income	8	668,643	(1,436,974)	(768,331)	333,849	(348,990)	(15,141)
Extraordinary Item	8	-	(4,676,643)	(4,676,643)			
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	9	2,519,097	(789,772)	1,729,325	3,482,685	(282,096)	3,200,589
Net Operating Expenditure		87,577,220	(23,402,149)	64,175,071	86,008,491	(18,166,900)	67,841,591
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income	10	-	(63,260,306)	(63,260,306)	-	(59,396,164)	(59,396,164)
(Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		87,577,220	(86,662,455)	914,765	86,008,491	(77,563,064)	8,445,427
(Surplus)/Deficit on revaluation of non-current assets	11			8,330,535			13,287,149
Remeasurements of the Net Defined Benefit Liability (Asset)	21			(2,635,000)			51,804,000
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				5,695,535			65,091,149
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure				4,780,770			56,645,722

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Movement in Reserves Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

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

	General Fund Summary	Other Fund Balances and Reserves	Capital Receipts Reserve	Total Usable Reserves	Total Unusable Reserves	Total Council Reserves
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2022	4,431,327	24,046,066	-	28,477,393	111,808,118	140,285,511
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/(Deficit) on the provision of services	(8,445,427)	-	-	(8,445,427)	-	(8,445,427)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	65,091,149	65,091,149
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(8,445,427)	-	-	(8,445,427)	65,091,149	56,645,722
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	8,714,811	(2,598,394)	-	6,116,417	(6,116,417)	-
Net increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	269,384	(2,598,394)	-	(2,329,010)	58,974,732	56,645,722
Transfers to/from Statutory and Other Reserves	(255,117)	255,117	-	-	-	-
Increase/Decrease in year	14,267	(2,343,277)	-	(2,329,010)	58,974,732	56,645,722
Balance as at 31 March 2023	4,445,594	21,702,789	-	26,148,383	170,782,850	196,931,233
Movement in reserves during the year						
Surplus/(Deficit) on the provision of services	(914,765)	-	-	(914,765)	-	(914,765)
Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	-	-	-	-	5,695,535	5,695,535
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(914,765)	-	-	(914,765)	5,695,535	4,780,770
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding under regulations	6,995,905	(742,186)	367,974	6,621,693	(6,621,693)	-
Net increase before transfers to Statutory and Other Reserves	6,081,140	(742,186)	367,974	5,706,928	(926,158)	4,780,770
Transfers to/from Statutory and Other Reserves	(6,081,140)	6,081,140	-	-	-	-
Increase in year	-	5,338,954	367,974	5,706,928	(926,158)	4,780,770
Balance as at 31 March 2024	4,445,594	27,041,743	367,974	31,855,311	169,856,692	201,712,003

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

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

	Note	31st March 2024	31st March 2023
		£	£
Fixed Assets	11	234,883,631	231,198,012
Long Term Debtors	15	1,041,992	1,043,075
LONG TERM ASSETS		235,925,623	232,241,087
Short Term Investments	16	14,517,791	5,649,908
Inventories	14	485,625	452,821
Short Term Debtors	15	12,585,285	13,347,368
Cash and Cash Equivalents	25	3,510,818	1,774,040
Assets Held for Sale	11	411,750	1,040,550
CURRENT ASSETS		31,511,269	22,264,687
Short Term Borrowing	17	3,687,177	7,151,697
Short Term Creditors	18	8,909,791	6,222,264
Provisions	19	268,064	297,840
CURRENT LIABILITIES		12,865,032	13,671,801
Provisions	19	1,985,810	2,208,894
Long Term Borrowing	17	49,562,047	43,452,564
Other Long Term Liabilities	21	612,000	(2,501,000)
Donated Assets Account	22	600,000	600,000
Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	23	100,000	142,282
LONG TERM LIABILITIES		52,859,857	43,902,740
NET ASSETS		201,712,003	196,931,233
USABLE RESERVES			
Capital Receipts Reserve	26	367,974	-
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	26	863,060	554,000
Capital Fund	26	4,694,655	4,831,390
Renewal and Repairs Fund	26	2,725,617	2,725,617
Other Balances and Reserves	26	18,758,411	13,591,782
General Fund	26	4,445,594	4,445,594
		31,855,311	26,148,383
UNUSABLE RESERVES			
Capital Adjustment Account	27	73,374,511	76,265,210
Revaluation Reserve	27	97,797,032	92,464,110
Pensions Reserve	27	(612,000)	2,501,000
Accumulated Absences Account	27	(702,851)	(447,470)
		169,856,692	170,782,850
NET WORTH		201,712,003	196,931,233

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Cash Flow Statement at 31 March 2024

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Council during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Council generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Council are funded by way of taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Council. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Council's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Council.

	Note	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
Net Deficit on the provision of services		(914,765)	(8,445,427)
Adjustment for non-cash movements	25	16,323,728	5,553,882
Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	25	(10,761,341)	4,436,378
Net cash flows from operating activities	25	4,647,622	1,544,833
Cash flows from Investing Activities	25	(5,555,807)	(5,077,732)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities	25	2,644,963	(4,137,860)
Net increase or decrease in cash and cash equivalents		1,736,778	(7,670,759)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		1,774,040	9,444,799
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		3,510,818	1,774,040

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

1 **Accounting Policies**

a **General Principles**

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2024. The Council is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts in a form directed by the Department for Communities in accordance with regulations 3 (7) and (8) in the Local Government (Accounts and Audit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 in accordance with proper accounting practices.

These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 also requires disclosure in respect of:

Summary of Material Accounting Policy Information

i) **Accruals of Income and Expenditure**

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

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.

- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption, they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.

- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.

- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.

- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

ii) **Acquisitions and Discontinued Operations**

The Council has not acquired operations or transferred operations under machinery of government arrangements during the financial year.

The Council has not discontinued operations or transferred operations under machinery of government arrangements during the financial year.

iii) **Provision for Single Status, Job Evaluation and Pay and Grading Reviews**

The Council has not made a provision for the costs of settling claims for back pay arising from discriminatory payments incurred before the Council implemented its Single Status Policy. Local government reform resulted in the assets and liabilities of the former Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne legacy councils being transferred to Mid and East Antrim Borough Council on 1 April 2015.

As the staff of the former legacy councils and those transferring in from the Department of Environment's Planning Service are protected by the Transfer of Protected Undertakings Act (Northern Ireland) 2006 (TUPE), Council agreed Terms and Conditions with all Trade Unions in October 2021.

iv) **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 highly liquid investments that mature in no more than 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.

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

v) **Contingent Assets**

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

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

vi) **Contingent Liabilities**

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

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

vii) **Employee Benefits**

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

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Council to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits and are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service segment or, where applicable, to a corporate service segment at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

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

Post Employment Benefits

Employees of the Council are members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees working for the Council.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

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

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the Aon Hewitt GBP Select AA Curve over the duration of the Employer's liabilities.

The assets of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price
- unquoted securities – professional estimate
- property – market value
- unitised securities – current bid price

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

Service cost comprising:

Current Service Cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year - allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.

Past Service Cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years - debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statements. The treatment of past service costs will depend on the decisions of the Council about how they are allocated to service segments.

Within Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:

Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/(asset), – i.e. net interest expense for the Council, the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability/(asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability/(asset) at the beginning of the period - taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability/(asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Within Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure (Remeasurements):

The Return on Plan Assets – excluding amounts recognised in the Net Interest on the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. This includes interest, dividends and other income derived from the plan assets, together with realised and unrealised gains or losses on the plan assets, less any costs of managing plan assets, and any tax payable by the plan itself other than tax included in the actuarial assumptions used to measure the present value of the defined benefit obligation.

Actuarial Gains and Losses – changes in the net pensions liability/(asset) that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions, charged to the Pensions Reserves as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.

Within the Movement in Reserves Statement Appropriations:

Contributions by Scheme Participants – the increase in scheme liabilities and assets due to payments into the scheme by employees (where increased contribution increases pension due to the employee in the future).

Contributions by the Employer - the increase in scheme assets due to payments into the scheme by the employer.

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

Discretionary Benefits

The Council also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies that are applied to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' pension fund.

As a result of Local Government Reform on 1 April 2015, staff that transferred from Central Government to the Council retained membership of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Pension Scheme. The scheme provides defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions). However, the arrangements for the NICS Pension Scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot ordinarily be identified specifically to the Council. The scheme is therefore accounted for as if it were a defined contribution scheme and no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the Balance Sheet.

viii) **Events After the Balance Sheet Date**

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

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

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

The Statement of Accounts may subsequently be adjusted up to the date when they are authorised for issue. This date will be recorded on the Statement of Accounts and is usually the date the Local Government Auditor issues the certificate and opinion. Where material adjustments are made in this period they will be disclosed.

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

ix) **Exceptional and Extraordinary Items**

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

x) **Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors**

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

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

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

xi) **Financial Instruments**

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

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

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

Financial Assets

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

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

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

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

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

Interest is credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at a marginally higher effective rate of interest than the rate receivable from the voluntary organisations, with the difference serving to increase the amortised cost of the loan in the Balance Sheet. Statutory provisions require that the impact of soft loans on the General Fund Balance is the interest receivable for the financial year - the reconciliation of amounts debited and credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net gain required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

Expected Credit Loss Model

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

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

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

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

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

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

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

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

Instruments entered into before 1 April 2006

The Council entered into a number of financial guarantees that are not required to be accounted for as financial instruments. These guarantees are reflected in the Statement of Accounts to the extent that provisions might be required or a contingent liability note is needed under the policies set out in the section on Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.

xii) Foreign Currency Translation

Where the Council has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts in foreign currency are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March. Resulting gains or losses are recognised in the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

xiii) Government Grants and Contributions

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

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

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

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

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

xiv) **Intangible Assets**

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

Internally generated assets are capitalised where it is demonstrable that the project is technically feasible and is intended to be completed (with adequate resources being available) and the Council will be able to generate future economic benefits or deliver service potential by being able to sell or use the asset. Expenditure is capitalised where it can be measured reliably as attributable to the asset and restricted to that incurred during the development phase (research expenditure is not capitalised).

Expenditure on the development of websites is not capitalised if the website is solely or primarily intended to promote or advertise the Council's goods or services.

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

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund Balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the Capital Adjustment Account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the Capital Receipts Reserve.

xv) **Inventories & Long Term Contracts**

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the First In First Out [FIFO] costing formula.

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

xvi) **Investment Property**

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, being the price that would be received to sell such an asset in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurable date. As a non-financial asset, investment properties are measured at highest and best use. Properties are not depreciated but are revalued annually according to market conditions at the year-end. Gains and losses on revaluation are posted to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

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

xvii) **Landfill Allowance Scheme**

The Landfill Allowances Scheme operates under the Landfill Allowances Scheme (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2005. Local Authorities are allocated annual target figures for the maximum amount of biodegradable municipal waste that can be sent to landfill but there are no tradable allowances. It is not a 'cap and trade' scheme since landfill allowances are not tradable. For this reason, landfill allowances are not recognised as assets on the Balance Sheet.

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

Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

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

The Council as Lessee - lease

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

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a) a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- b) a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement)

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

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

Operating Leases:

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

The Council as Lessor - lease

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

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

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

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

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

The Council as Lessor - Operating Lease

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

xix) Disposals and Non-Current Assets Held for Sale

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

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

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of, or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal are categorised as capital receipts and credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve. Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

xx) Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to service segments in accordance with the Council's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

xxi) **Property, Plant and Equipment**

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

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Council and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred. The de minimus threshold is £5,000. Capital expenditure below this threshold is treated as revenue expenditure.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

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

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

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

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- surplus assets - the current value measurement base is fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective
- all other assets – fair value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV)

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

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

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2008 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

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

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

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

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

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land and certain Community Assets) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

- buildings - straight-line allocation over the useful life of the property as estimated by the valuer
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment - a percentage of the value of each class of assets in the Balance Sheet, as advised by a suitably qualified officer
- infrastructure - straight line allocation over 18 - 42 years.

A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of acquisition and none in the year of disposal.

Componentisation

Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Revaluations

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

Dredging

Dredging expenditure is categorised into capital dredging and major maintenance dredging. Capital dredging is expenditure which includes creation of a new harbour or marina, deepening or extension of a harbour or marina basin in order to allow access to larger vessels and which will result in future economic benefits for the Council. This expenditure is capitalised and depreciated over the economic life of the asset. Major maintenance dredging is expenditure incurred to restore a channel or marina basin to its previous condition and depth. On average the Council incurs such expenditure every 8 years. At the completion of major maintenance dredging the channel or basin has an average service potential of 8 years. Major maintenance dredging is regarded as a separate component of the asset and is capitalised and depreciated evenly over the 8 years subject to the findings of hydro-graphic reports carried out over the period.

xxii) **Heritage Assets**

Heritage Assets are assets with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that are held and maintained principally for their contribution to knowledge and culture.

Heritage Assets are those assets that are intended to be preserved in trust for future generations because of their cultural, environmental or historic associations. They would be held by this authority in pursuit of our overall objectives in relation to the maintenance of heritage.

The carrying amounts of heritage assets are reviewed where there is evidence of impairment for heritage assets, e.g. where an item has suffered physical deterioration or breakage or where doubts arise as to its authenticity. Any impairment is recognised and measured in accordance with the Council's general policy on impairment.

At the end of this reporting period the Council holds £1,771,114 in Heritage Assets. These were mainly museum collections, paintings, books, sculptures and other artefacts. The value was determined by the services of an external valuer. Further information is shown in Note 11(g).

xxiii) **Provisions**

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

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

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

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

xxiv) **Reserves**

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

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

xxv) **Charges to Revenue for Non-Current Assets**

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

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

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

xxvi) **Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute**

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

xxvii) **Value Added Tax**

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

xxviii) **Fair Value Measurement**

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

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

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

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

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

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

* Level 1 – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date

* Level 2 – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly

* Level 3 – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability.

b Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued but Have Not Yet Been Adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) requires an authority to disclose information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. The Code also requires that changes in accounting policy are to be applied retrospectively unless transitional arrangements are specified, this would result in an impact on disclosures spanning two financial years.

At the balance sheet date, the following new standards and amendments to existing standards have been published but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice of Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom:

IFRS 16 Leases (unless adopted voluntarily)

CIPFA/LASAAC has deferred the implementation of IFRS 16 Leases in the public sector until the 2024/25 financial year, with an effective date of 1 April 2024. This will require lessees to recognise assets subject to leases as right-of-use assets on their balance sheet, along with corresponding lease liabilities (there are exceptions for low-value and short-term leases).

c Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying accounting policies set out from 1a above, the Council has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

- There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government. However, the Council has determined that this uncertainty is not yet sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Council might be impaired as a result of a need to close facilities and reduce levels of service provision.

d Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Council about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Council's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

i) Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets are depreciated over useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Council will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.

If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation increases and the carrying amount of the assets falls.

ii) Pension Liability

Estimation of the net liability/(asset) to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide the Council with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.

iii) Third Party Investments

The Council administers investments for third parties outside the organisation. These investments are not included in the accounts of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (See Note 16 for further details).

2

a Expenditure and Funding Analysis

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

	2023/24			2022/23		
	Net Expenditure Chargable to the General Fund	Adjustments	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	Net Expenditure Chargable to the General Fund	Adjustments	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	9,388,314	4,880,397	4,507,917	7,678,550	5,051,143	2,627,407
Community	6,584,083	(2,690,196)	9,274,279	6,845,374	(3,700,780)	10,546,154
Operations	30,151,374	(8,345,179)	38,496,553	27,482,200	(5,647,068)	33,129,268
Development	5,678,971	(2,113,408)	7,792,379	6,071,160	(2,167,687)	8,238,847
Corporate Services	7,649,258	(170,334)	7,819,592	8,949,061	(1,165,406)	10,114,467
Net Cost of Services	59,452,000	(8,438,720)	67,890,720	57,026,345	(7,629,798)	64,656,143
Other Income and Expenditure	(65,533,140)	(1,442,815)	(66,975,955)	(57,295,729)	(1,085,013)	(56,210,716)
Surplus or Deficit	(6,081,140)	(9,881,535)	914,765	(269,384)	(8,714,811)	8,445,427
Opening General Fund			4,445,594			4,431,327
Surplus/(Deficit) on General Fund Balance in Year			-			14,267
Closing General Fund			4,445,594			4,445,594

2

b

Note to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

This note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis
2023/24

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Other non-statutory Adjustments	Total adjustments
	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	-	(64,681)	4,962,927	(17,849)	4,880,397
Community	(2,457,649)	(168,443)	-	(64,104)	(2,690,196)
Operations	(8,036,544)	(197,569)	-	(111,066)	(8,345,179)
Development	(1,931,138)	(139,557)	-	(42,713)	(2,113,408)
Corporate Services	(24,934)	(125,750)	-	(19,650)	(170,334)
Net Cost of Services	(12,450,265)	(696,000)	4,962,927	(255,382)	(8,438,720)
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	1,224,815	218,000	-	-	1,442,815
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(11,225,450)	(478,000)	4,962,927	(255,382)	(6,995,905)

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis
2022/23

Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments	Other Statutory Adjustments	Other non-statutory Adjustments	Total adjustments
	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	(4,316)	(240,414)	5,298,893	(3,020)	5,051,143
Community	(2,523,120)	(1,177,660)	-	-	(3,700,780)
Operations	(3,602,758)	(2,569,238)	-	524,928	(5,647,068)
Development	(1,330,337)	(837,350)	-	-	(2,167,687)
Corporate Services	(461,068)	(704,338)	-	-	(1,165,406)
Net Cost of Services	(7,921,599)	(5,529,000)	5,298,893	521,908	(7,629,798)
Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	11,987	(1,097,000)	-	-	(1,085,013)
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(7,909,612)	(6,626,000)	5,298,893	521,908	(8,714,811)

3 a Expenditure and Income Analysed by Nature

Expenditure	Notes	2023/24		2022/23	
		£	£	£	£
Employee Benefits Expenses	7a		31,074,512		29,588,537
Other Services Expenditure			44,302,554		45,347,258
Depreciation, Amortisation, Impairment	11a,11c		9,092,891		8,353,162
Interest Payments	9a		2,438,620		2,385,685
Other Operating Income - Disposal of assets	8a		668,643		333,849
Total Expenditure			87,577,220		86,008,491

Income	Notes	2023/24		2022/23	
		£	£	£	£
Fees, Charges and Other Service Income			(17,107,408)		(17,535,814)
Interest and Investment Income	9b		(517,184)		(282,096)
District Rate Income	10e		(57,385,006)		(53,596,208)
Government Grants and Contributions	10a, 10b		(5,539,240)		(5,799,956)
Other Operating Income - Disposal of assets			(1,436,974)		(348,990)
Other Income - Extraordinary Item	8b		(4,676,643)		-
Total Income			(86,662,455)		(77,563,064)
(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services			914,765		8,445,427

b Revenue from contracts with service recipients

The Council does not receive material monies from contracts with service recipients.

4 Adjustments between an Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations

a Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:

	Notes	2023/24		2022/23	
		£	£	£	£
Amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be excluded when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:					
Derecognition (other than disposal) of non-current assets	11a	143,893		306,288	
Revaluation increases/decreases taken to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	11	2,817,554		(714,188)	
Depreciation charged in the year on non-current assets	11a, 11c	9,092,891	12,054,338	8,353,162	7,945,262
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	12		579,534		(23,662)
Carrying amount of non current assets sold	8a	668,643		333,849	
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets	25a	(1,436,974)	(768,331)	(348,990)	(15,141)
Net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19	21b		4,784,000		10,791,000
Employers contributions payable to the NILGOSC and retirement benefits payable direct to pensioners	21b		(4,306,000)		(4,165,000)
Capital Grants and Donated Assets Receivable and Applied in year	10c		(120,424)		3,154
Capital Grants Receivable and Unapplied in year	10d		(336,060)		-
Adjustments in relation to short-term compensated absences	27g		255,381		3,020
Provisions Discount Rate Reserve Adjustment	27h		-		(524,928)
Amounts not included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but required by statute to be included when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year					
Statutory Provision for the financing of Capital Investment	12, 26		(4,962,927)		(5,298,894)
Direct revenue financing of Capital Expenditure	12, 26		(183,606)		-
			6,995,905		8,714,811

b Net transfers (to)/from statutory and other earmarked reserves:		2023/24	2023/24	2022/23	2022/23
Notes		£	£	£	£
Capital Fund					
Other Funds and earmarked reserves					
Other	26f	(6,081,140)	(6,081,140)	(255,117)	(255,117)
Unusable reserves					
Capital Adjustment Account		-	-	-	-
			(6,081,140)		(255,117)

5 Cost of Services on Continuing Operations

a General power of competence

Prior to Local Government Reform on 1st April 2015, expenditure for special purposes was limited under Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. This section was repealed by Schedule 10 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014.

Under Section 79 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, the Council has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do. Councils have the power to do this with or without charge. The power of competence is not limited to benefitting the area or its residents nor is it limited by existing powers.

The actual expenditure under the power of competence amounted to £0 during 2023/24 (£0 in 2022/23).

b External Audit Fees

The Council has incurred the following costs relating to the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts, certification of grant claims and other services provided by the Councils external auditors.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
External Audit Fees	110,000	115,000
Other Fees	15,000	25,814
	125,000	140,814

The other fees of £15,000 (2022/23 £25,814) were incurred in respect of performance audit services provided by the appointed auditor. The £15,000 includes £22,000 for the 2023/24 performance audit and an overaccrual of £7,000 for the 2022/23 performance audit fee.

6 Operating and leases

Council as Lessor

a Leases (Council as lessor)

The Council has a number of leases, the present value of the lease payments receivable under these arrangements are not material.

b Operating Leases (Council as lessor)

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

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

Rental income recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the current year amounts to £461,266 (2022/23 £578,276).

No contingent rents were recognised.

The lease contracts are all non-cancellable and do not include an extension option. The lease terms are between 0 and 125 years. Future lease income is set out below.

	31st March 2024	31st March 2023
	£	£
Not later than 1 year	281,868	325,207
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	548,222	623,378
Later than 5 years	2,269,216	2,266,194
	3,099,306	3,214,779

Council as Lessee

c Leases (Council as lessee)

Council has now repaid all vehicles held under leases, these vehicles are included within Vehicles, Plant and Equipment.

d Operating Leases (Council as lessee)

The Council has acquired its photocopiers, printers and motor vehicles entering into operating leases, with typical lives of 3/5 years.

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

	31st March 2024	31st March 2023
	£	£
Not later than 1 year	402,971	346,587
Later than 1 year and no later than 5 years	887,775	768,328
Later than 5 years	4,370,440	3,585,639
	5,661,186	4,700,554

Where assets acquired under operating leases are sub-let, disclosures is required of the future minimum sublease payments expected to be received by the Council, per paragraph 4.2.4.2(7) of the Code.

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

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Minimum lease payments	452,016	416,439
Total	452,016	416,439

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will adopt IFRS 16 Accounting for Leases in 2024/25.

7 Employee Costs and Member Allowances

a Staff Costs	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Salaries and Wages	23,996,110	22,694,817
Employers NIC	2,498,019	2,441,275
Employers Superannuation	4,580,383	4,452,445
Total staff costs	31,074,512	29,588,537

In addition, agency costs during the year amounted to £9,030,726 (2022/23 £8,032,354) and short term compensated absences during the year amounted to £702,851 (2022/23 £447,470).

The Council's current contribution rate to NILGOSC scheme is 19% .

At the last actuarial valuation dated 31st March 2022 the funds assets meet 111% of liabilities at that date (31 March 2019 112%).

Average Number of Employees - where FTE represents fulltime equivalent employees

b Average Number of Employees including Casual Workers	2023/24	2022/23
	FTE	FTE
Chief Executive	48	45
Community	151	141
Operations	268	256
Development	146	135
Corporate Services	46	54
Total Number	659	631

	2023/24	2022/23
	Actual Numbers	Actual Numbers
Full-Time numbers employed	589	536
Part-Time & Casual Worker numbers employed	102	172
Total Number	691	708

c Senior Employees' Remuneration	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
£50,001 to £60,000	48	29
£60,001 to £70,000	9	12
£70,001 to £80,000	8	-
£80,001 to £90,000	1	1
£90,001 to £100,000	2	2
£110,001 to £120,000	1	2
Total Number	69	46

d Members' Allowances

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Basic Allowance	681,760	639,025
Mayor's & Deputy Mayor's Allowance	19,800	19,800
Special Responsibility Allowances	59,382	53,047
Employer Costs	194,487	163,001
Mileage	18,196	21,528
Conferences and Courses	2,699	4,670
Travel & Subsistence Costs	5,708	4,595
Total	982,032	905,666

e Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

As a result of Reform on 1st April 2015, staff transferred from Central Government to the Council are members of the Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Scheme.

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Department for Communities is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2022. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DOF Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2024.

For 2023/24, employers' contributions of £351,767 (2022/23 £336,839) were payable to the NICS pension arrangements at one of three rates in the range 28.7% to 34.2% of pensionable pay, based on salary bands.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution.

None of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council employees have opted to open a partnership pension account.

No persons retired early on ill-health grounds as such the actuarial cost for employees for the early payment of retirement benefits was £Nil.

8 Other Operating Income & Expenditure

a Surplus/Deficit on Non-Current Assets (exc.I.Investment Properties)

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Proceeds from sale	(1,436,974)	(348,990)
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold (excl. Investment Properties)	668,643	333,849
	(768,331)	(15,141)

b Other Operating Income/Expenditure - Extraordinary Item

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Income	(4,676,643)	-
	(4,676,643)	-

Other Operating Expenditure	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
(Surplus)/Deficit on Non Current Assets	(768,331)	(15,141)
Other Operating (Income)/Expenditure	(4,676,643)	-
	(5,444,974)	(15,141)

Reported within CIES as:

Other Operating Expenditure/Income	(768,331)	(15,141)
Extraordinary Item	(4,676,643)	-
	(5,444,974)	(15,141)

Extraordinary Item

This extraordinary item has arisen because the Council, together with the other 10 district councils in NI, is participating in a legal action against HMRC to recover previously overdeclared output VAT in respect of leisure and recreational income, which arose because HMRC did not accept that the Council provides leisure and recreational activities pursuant to a special legal regime without causing any significant distortion of competition.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council has been able to obtain reimbursement for the VAT paid on those sporting activities that met HMRC guidance and as a result are recognising this compensation of £4,676,643 as both income within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and as an asset within debtors within the balance sheet at year end.

9 **Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure**

a Interest Payable and Similar Charges

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Government Loan Interest	2,411,943	2,322,321
Other interest	26,677	63,364
	<u>2,438,620</u>	<u>2,385,685</u>

b Interest and Investment Income

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
NIHE Loan Interest Receivable	52,708	55,222
Investment income on Fund Balances		
Other Investment income	464,476	152,301
	<u>517,184</u>	<u>207,523</u>

c Pensions interest costs and expected return on pensions assets

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)	(218,000)	1,097,000
	<u>(218,000)</u>	<u>1,097,000</u>

d Income, Expenditure and changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Income/Expenditure from Investment Properties:		
Income including rental income	(54,588)	(53,308)
Net income from investment properties	(54,588)	(53,308)
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	80,477	(21,265)
	<u>25,889</u>	<u>(74,573)</u>

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	2023/24			2022/23		
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Interest Payable and Similar Charges	2,438,620	-	2,438,620	2,385,685	-	2,385,685
Interest and Investment Income	-	(517,184)	(517,184)	-	(207,523)	(207,523)
Pensions interest cost		(218,000)	(218,000)	1,097,000	-	1,097,000
Other investment income	-	(54,588)	(54,588)	-	(53,308)	(53,308)
Changes in Fair Value of Investment Properties	80,477	-	80,477	-	(21,265)	(21,265)
	<u>2,519,097</u>	<u>(789,772)</u>	<u>1,729,325</u>	<u>3,482,685</u>	<u>(282,096)</u>	<u>3,200,589</u>

10 Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

a Revenue Grants

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
General	(5,418,816)	(5,803,110)
	(5,418,816)	(5,803,110)

b Capital Grants and Donated Assets - Applied

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and applied in year	(110,216)	3,154
Government & Other Grants - Transfer from receipts in advance	(10,208)	-
	(120,424)	3,154

c Capital Grants - Unapplied

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Government & Other Grants - Conditions met and not applied in year	(203,986)	-
Government & Other Grants - Transfer from receipts in advance	(132,074)	-
	(336,060)	-

d District Rates

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Current year	(57,385,006)	(53,596,208)
	(57,385,006)	(53,596,208)

Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
District Rate Income	(57,385,006)	(53,596,208)
Revenue Grants	(5,418,816)	(5,803,110)
Capital Grants and Contributions	(456,484)	3,154
	(63,260,306)	(59,396,164)

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
Notes to the Financial Statements
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

11 a Long - Term Assets - Current Year

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Coastal Paths	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Non Operational Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2023	36,578,803	174,921,028	4,496,254	6,193,868	16,463,522	360,487	3,450,253	22,000	242,486,215	1,771,114	933,300	1,040,550	246,231,179
Balance as at 1 April 2023	36,578,803	174,921,028	4,496,254	6,193,868	16,463,522	360,487	3,450,253	22,000	242,486,215	1,771,114	933,300	1,040,550	246,231,179
Additions	286,747	1,106,490	-	(41,764)	1,851,038	-	4,117,263	-	7,319,774	-	-	-	7,319,774
Revaluation increases/(decreases) to Revaluation Reserve	211,450	1,612,515	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,823,965	-	-	(414,276)	1,409,689
Revaluation increases/(decreases) to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(343,322)	(2,870,361)	-	94,553	-	-	-	-	(3,119,130)	-	-	-	(3,119,130)
Derecognition - Disposals	(14,000)	(1,079,362)	-	-	(594,749)	-	-	-	(1,688,111)	-	-	(614,524)	(2,302,635)
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	(143,893)	-	(143,893)	-	-	-	(143,893)
Reclassifications & Transfers	300,625	1,095,006	12,012	-	-	-	(1,407,643)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reclassified to(-)/from(+) Held for Sale	(200,000)	(200,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(400,000)	-	-	400,000	-
Balance as at 31 March 2024	36,820,303	174,585,316	4,508,266	6,246,657	17,719,811	360,487	6,015,980	22,000	246,278,820	1,771,114	933,300	411,750	249,394,984
Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Coastal Paths	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Non Operational Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2023	-	1,079,355	3,051,006	-	11,714,220	-	-	-	15,844,581	-	-	-	15,844,581
Balance as at 1 April 2023	-	1,079,355	3,051,006	-	11,714,220	-	-	-	15,844,581	-	-	-	15,844,581
Depreciation Charge	-	7,374,579	162,496	141,962	1,351,104	-	-	-	9,030,141	-	-	-	9,030,141
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(6,920,846)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(6,920,846)	-	-	-	(6,920,846)
Depreciation written out on Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(240,091)	-	(141,962)	-	-	-	-	(382,053)	-	-	-	(382,053)
Derecognition - Disposals	-	(1,079,362)	-	-	(554,630)	-	-	-	(1,633,992)	-	-	-	(1,633,992)
Balance as at 31 March 2024	-	213,635	3,213,502	-	12,510,694	-	-	-	15,937,831	-	-	-	15,937,831
Balance as at 31 March 2024	36,820,303	174,371,681	1,294,764	6,246,657	5,209,117	360,487	6,015,980	22,000	230,340,989	1,771,114	933,300	411,750	233,457,153

11 b Long - Term Assets - Comparative Year

Cost or Valuation	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Coastal Paths	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Non Operational Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2022	36,628,803	163,047,520	4,382,157	5,835,431	15,572,814	360,487	7,289,107	22,000	233,138,319	1,181,473	1,333,300	260,843	235,913,935
Balance as at 1 April 2022	36,628,803	163,047,520	4,382,157	5,835,431	15,572,814	360,487	7,289,107	22,000	233,138,319	1,181,473	1,333,300	260,843	235,913,935
Additions	-	1,767,187	3,829	-	1,879,322	-	1,536,791	-	5,187,129	-	-	-	5,187,129
Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation Reserve	3,500	6,141,644	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,145,144	589,641	-	106,726	6,841,511
Revaluation increases/decreases to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(11,268)	-	358,437	-	-	-	-	347,169	-	-	-	347,169
Derecognition - Disposals	(3,500)	-	-	-	(1,096,870)	-	-	-	(1,100,370)	-	-	(260,843)	(1,361,213)
Derecognition - Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	(306,288)	-	(306,288)	-	-	-	(306,288)
Reclassifications & Transfers	-	4,459,769	110,268	-	108,256	-	(5,069,357)	-	(391,064)	-	-	-	(391,064)
Reclassified to(-)/from(+) Held for Sale	(50,000)	(483,824)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(533,824)	-	(400,000)	933,824	-
Balance as at 31 March 2023	36,578,803	174,921,028	4,496,254	6,193,868	16,463,522	360,487	3,450,253	22,000	242,486,215	1,771,114	933,300	1,040,550	246,231,179
Depreciation and Impairment	Land	Buildings	Infrastructure Assets	Coastal Paths	Vehicles, Plant & Equipment	Community Assets	PP&E Under Construction	Surplus Assets	Total PP&E	Heritage Assets	Non Operational Assets	Assets Held for Resale	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance as at 1 April 2022	-	976,704	2,888,990	-	11,507,232	-	-	-	15,372,926	-	-	-	15,372,926
Balance as at 1 April 2022	-	976,704	2,888,990	-	11,507,232	-	-	-	15,372,926	-	-	-	15,372,926
Depreciation Charge	-	6,759,356	162,016	134,687	1,234,352	-	-	-	8,290,411	-	-	-	8,290,411
Depreciation written out on Revaluation Reserve	-	(6,445,638)	-	-	-	-	-	-	(6,445,638)	-	-	-	(6,445,638)
Depreciation written out on Revaluation taken to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(211,067)	-	(134,687)	-	-	-	-	(345,754)	-	-	-	(345,754)
Derecognition - Disposals	-	-	-	-	(1,027,364)	-	-	-	(1,027,364)	-	-	-	(1,027,364)
Balance as at 31 March 2023	-	1,079,355	3,051,006	-	11,714,220	-	-	-	15,844,581	-	-	-	15,844,581
Net Book Values													
Balance as at 31 March 2023	36,578,803	173,841,673	1,445,248	6,193,868	4,749,302	360,487	3,450,253	22,000	226,641,634	1,771,114	933,300	1,040,550	230,386,598
Balance as at 31 March 2024	36,820,303	174,371,681	1,294,764	6,246,657	5,209,117	360,487	6,015,980	22,000	230,340,989	1,771,114	933,300	411,750	233,457,153

11 c Property, plant and equipment

Depreciation

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

- buildings - 30-50 years
- vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment - 3-7 years
- infrastructure - 18-42 years

Effects of Changes in Estimates

There were no material changes in the accounting estimates for property, plant and equipment during the period.

Revaluations

A full revaluation exercise of Council's freehold properties was carried out at 31 March 2017 by an independent valuer, LPS.

In accordance with the statements of asset valuation practice and guidance notes of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors from 1 April 2017 the Council has operated a rolling programme for its revaluation of freehold and leasehold properties with approximately 20% of these assets being revalued by physical inspection and the remainder being revalued by desktop exercise. This revaluation was also carried out by an independent valuer, LPS.

The LPS valuations for 31 March 2024 are fully reflected in the closing carrying values of Land, Buildings, Investment Properties and Surplus Assets.

d Intangible Assets

The Council are one of the ten Northern Ireland Councils who now use the Department of Infrastructure's Cloud based planning portal. The value of this intangible asset reflects the amount Council have contributed towards the development of this portal. The portal went live on the 5 December 2022 with an expected 10 year life. Council will amortise this intangible asset through the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement over the next 10 years.

Intangible Assets	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Balance at start of year:		
Gross carrying amounts	627,502	-
Accumulated amortisation	(62,751)	-
Net carrying amount at start of year	564,751	-
Additions	-	236,439
Amortisation for the period	(62,750)	(62,751)
Other Changes	-	391,063
Net carrying amount at end of year	502,001	564,751
Comprising:		
Gross carrying amounts	627,502	627,502
Accumulated amortisation	(125,501)	(62,751)
Net carrying amount at end of year	502,001	564,751

e Non Operational Assets

Non Operational Assets	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Balance at start of year:		
Gross carrying amounts	933,300	1,333,300
Assets reclassified as held for sale	-	(400,000)
Net carrying amount at end of year	933,300	933,300
Comprising:		
Gross carrying amounts	933,300	933,300
Net carrying amount at end of year	933,300	933,300

f Investment Properties

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

Investment Properties	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
	£	£
Rental Income from Investment Activities	54,588	53,308
Net gain/(loss)	54,588	53,308

Gains or losses arising from changes in the fair value of the investment property are recognised in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services – Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line.

The following table summaries the movement in the fair value of investment properties over the year:

Investment Properties	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Balance at start of the year	1,287,213	1,265,948
Additions	129,491	-
Net gains/losses from fair value adjustments	(80,477)	21,265
Balance at end of the year	1,336,227	1,287,213

Fair Value Hierarchy

2023/24 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2024
	£	£	£	£
Residential (market rental) properties	1,336,227	-	-	1,336,227
Total	1,336,227	-	-	1,336,227

2022/23 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2023
	£	£	£	£
Residential (market rental) properties	1,287,213	-	-	1,287,213
Total	1,287,213	-	-	1,287,213

Transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy

There were no transfers between Levels 1 and 2 during the year.

Valuation Techniques

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for Investment Properties.

g Heritage Assets

Heritage Assets for Mid and East Antrim consist of the following for each legacy Council:

Ballymena Legacy Council - Civic Regalia £65,000, Mace £5,000, Paintings & Books £49,530, Sculptures £4,300 and Other Artefacts £159,890.

Carrickfergus Legacy Council - Paintings & Books £304,229, Sculptures £141,599 and other Artefacts £719,556.

Larne Legacy Council - Painting & Books £123,160, Sculptures £18,800, and all other Artefacts £180,050.

The Heritage Assets considered to have the most significant values were valued in 2022/23 for each legacy Council register by a fine art consultant this valuation did not include a revaluation of Regalia or Robes.

h Assets Held for Sale

Assets Held for Sale	Current	Non Current	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
Balance as at 1 April 2023	1,040,550	-	1,040,550
Assets Held for Sale Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation Reserve	(414,276)	-	(414,276)
Derecognition - Disposals	(614,524)	-	(614,524)
Transferred from Property, Plant & Equipment during year	400,000	-	400,000
Balance as at 31 March 2024	411,750	-	411,750
Net Book Value			
Balance as at 31 March 2024	411,750	-	411,750
Balance as at 31 March 2023	1,040,550	-	1,040,550

Assets Held for Sale	Current	Non Current	Total
	£	£	£
Cost or Valuation			
Balance as at 1 April 2022	260,843	-	260,843
Assets Held for Sale Revaluation increases/decreases to Revaluation Reserve	106,726	-	106,726
Derecognition - Disposals	(260,843)	-	(260,843)
Transferred from Property, Plant & Equipment during year	933,824	-	933,824
Balance as at 31 March 2023	1,040,550	-	1,040,550

The Council intends to dispose of Smiley Building Offices Larne and a piece of land at Crankill Road. These sales are expected to take place within the next 3 - 6 months.

The gain/loss on assets classified as held for sale and sold during the year was £359,461 (2022/23 £155,157).

i Fair Value Hierarchy for Surplus Assets

Details of the Council's surplus assets and information about the fair value hierarchy as at 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2023 are as follows:

2023/24 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2024
	£	£	£	£
Type 1	22,000	-	-	22,000
Total	22,000	-	-	22,000

2022/23 Recurring fair value measurements using:	Quoted Prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Fair value as at 31st March 2023
	£	£	£	£
Type 1	22,000	-	-	22,000
Total	22,000	-	-	22,000

Transfers between levels of the fair value hierarchy

There were no transfers between Levels 1 and 2 during the year.

Highest and best use of surplus assets

In estimating the fair value of the Council's surplus assets, the highest and best use of the assets is their current use.

Valuation Techniques

There has been no change in the valuation techniques used during the year for surplus assets.

Valuation Process for Surplus Assets

Land and Property services have valued Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's surplus assets using the highest and best use basis of valuation.

Valuations of Land and Buildings are carried out externally by Land and Property Services (LPS), in accordance with the methodologies and bases for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

12 Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

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

Capital Expenditure		2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
Opening Capital Financing Requirement		63,509,243	66,352,461
Capital Investment			
Property, Plant and Equipment	11	7,319,774	5,187,129
Investment Properties		129,491	-
Intangible Assets		-	236,439
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute		579,534	(23,662)
Sources of Finance			
Capital Receipts		(1,069,000)	(348,990)
Government Grants and Other Contributions	10, 27a	(147,424)	(900,459)
Transfers from Earmarked Reserves		(1,051,246)	(1,694,781)
Sums set aside from Revenue			
Direct Revenue Contributions	26	(183,606)	-
Minimum Revenue Provision		(4,962,927)	(5,298,894)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement		64,123,839	63,509,243
Explanation of Movements in Year		2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
Increase in underlying need to borrow		614,596	(2,843,218)
Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement		614,596	(2,843,218)

13 Future Capital Commitments

The Council has an ongoing programme of capital works and the estimated cost of the schemes is as follows:

Of the capital expenditure disclosed below, £824k (2022/23 £300k) relates to REFCUS expenditure. These projects include projected expenditure on Bracknamuckley Forest Park, Football stadia funding for Junior/Intermediate leagues, Forest Site Improvements and the Cullybackey - Galgorm Greenway.

	Gross Cost	Grant Aid	Net Cost
	£	£	£
Schemes underway	11,492,730	(5,152,943)	6,339,787
Other Commitments	5,591,171	(874,518)	4,716,653
Total	17,083,901	(6,027,461)	11,056,440

14 Inventories

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Other	154,460	162,348
Bins	284,285	208,685
Trading Outlets	32,923	38,057
Stationery	13,957	43,731
Total	485,625	452,821

The above figures are stated net of an obsolete provision of £25,559 (2022/23 £23,833).

15	Debtors		
a	Long Term Debtors	2023/24	2022/23
	NIHE Loans	661,742	784,821
	Landfill asset	380,250	258,254
	Total Long-Term Debtors	1,041,992	1,043,075
b	Short Term Debtors	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
	Government Departments	944,165	1,703,396
	Other Councils	-	31,038
	Bodies external to general government	1,667	27,699
	NIHE loans	123,079	115,551
	Revenue Grants	1,326,934	1,427,921
	Capital Grants	366,185	30,354
	Interest Receivable	45,729	26,923
	Value Added Tax	7,440,541	8,083,808
	Prepayments	1,260,687	616,978
	Landfill asset	200,148	157,256
	Other	523,778	425,582
	Trade receivables	554,989	799,325
	Impairment loss - Trade receivables	(202,617)	(98,463)
	Total Short-Term Debtors	12,585,285	13,347,368
	Total Debtors	13,627,277	14,390,443

16	Investments		Restated
a	Long Term Investments	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
	Total Long-term Investments	-	-

The Council does not hold any long term investments.

b	Short-Term Investments	2023/24	Restated
		£	2022/23
		£	£
	Investments - Landfill	1,692,751	1,870,671
	Investments - other	12,825,040	3,779,237
	Total Short-term Investments	14,517,791	5,649,908
	Analysed over:	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
	Other deposits	14,517,791	5,649,908
	Total Short-term Investments	14,517,791	5,649,908
	Total Long-Term and Short-term Investments	14,517,791	5,649,908

The Council administers third party investments totalling £328,930 (2022/23: £317,084), these values are not included in the accounts of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

The legacy Larne Borough Council received a donation from Fort James Paper Mill to be used for the benefit of the people of Larne, at 31 March 2024, the balance on deposit was £2,198 (2022/23 £2,198). It also had investments in the Northern Ireland Central Investment Fund for Charities of £43,231 (2022/23 £40,436) and a Charities Account of £19,730 (2022/23 £18,515). The legacy Carrickfergus Borough Council had an investment, Legg Trust Fund, with a balance of £262,996 at 31 March 2024 (2022/23 £255,102).

Third Party Investments include the following: legacy Larne council bank deposits for various community groups of £774 (2022/23 £834).

17	Borrowings		
a	Short Term Borrowing	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
	Loans re-payable within one year	3,687,177	7,151,697
	Total Short Term Borrowing	3,687,177	7,151,697
b	Long Term Borrowing	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
	Between 1 and 2 years	3,892,993	3,071,548
	Between 2 and 5 years	11,963,132	9,248,470
	Between 5 and 10 years	19,556,994	14,620,809
	In more than 10 years	14,148,928	16,511,737
	Government Loans Fund	49,562,047	43,452,564
	Total Borrowing	53,249,224	50,604,261

18 Creditors				
a Short Term Creditors				
	2023/24		2022/23	
	£		£	
Government Departments		376,480		-
Other Councils		1,766		-
Bodies external to general government		-		444,326
Accumulated Absences		702,851		447,470
Loan Interest Payable		404,794		423,623
Capital Creditors		328,218		228,218
Receipts in advance		348,427		3,650
Trade creditors		6,117,004		4,482,147
Other		630,251		192,830
Total Short Term Creditors		8,909,791		6,222,264
b Long Term Creditors				
Other creditors falling due after more than one year				
	2023/24		2022/23	
	£		£	
Government Departments		-		-
Other Councils		-		-
Public corporations and trading funds		-		-
Bodies external to general government		-		-
Rates clawback		-		-
Remuneration due to employees		-		-
Accumulated Absences		-		-
Receipts in advance		-		-
Trade creditors		-		-
Other		-		-
Contract Payables		-		-
Total Long Term Creditors		-		-
Total Creditors		8,909,791		6,222,264

c Payment of Invoices

The council has a target, where no other terms are agreed, of paying supplier invoices within 30 calendar days. During the year the Council paid 26,150 invoices totalling £54m.

The number of disputed invoices were nil.

The Council paid:

21,253 (81.27%) invoices with 30 calendar days target;
 17,093 (65.37%) invoices within 10 working days target; and
 4,897 invoices outside of the 30 day target.

The average number of days taken to pay suppliers during the year was 15 days.

19 Provisions						
	Balance as at 1 April 2023	Increase in provision during year	Utilised during year	Unused amounts reversed	Interest cost and/or discount rate changes	Balance as at 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Landfill Closure	1,870,671	39,738	(83,428)	(134,230)	-	1,692,751
Insurance	527,063	140,216	(118,183)	(93,973)	-	455,123
Single status	36,000	-	-	(3,000)	-	33,000
Other	73,000	-	-	-	-	73,000
Total	2,506,734	179,954	(201,611)	(231,203)	-	2,253,874
Current Provisions	297,840	67,781	(107,065)	9,508	-	268,064
Long Term Provisions	2,208,894	112,173	(94,546)	(240,711)	-	1,985,810
Total	2,506,734	179,954	(201,611)	(231,203)	-	2,253,874

Comparative Year

Provisions	Balance as at 1 April 2022	Increase in provision during year	Utilised during year	Unused amounts reversed	Interest cost and/or discount rate changes	Restated Balance as at 31 March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Landfill Closure	2,830,673	12,387	(175,593)	-	(796,796)	1,870,671
Injury and Damage Compensation claims	522,214	117,478	(71,174)	(41,455)	-	527,063
Single status	36,000	-	-	-	-	36,000
Other	73,000	-	-	-	-	73,000
Total	3,461,887	129,865	(246,767)	(41,455)	(796,796)	2,506,734

Current Provisions	284,483	35,883	(85,276)	(8,291)	71,041	297,840
Long Term Provisions	3,177,404	93,982	(161,491)	(33,164)	(867,837)	2,208,894
Total	3,461,887	129,865	(246,767)	(41,455)	(796,796)	2,506,734

Landfill Closure

The landfill closure provision relates to the subsequent closure costs for the closed Ballymacvea landfill site for the next 44 years. A full revaluation of the provision was carried out during the year ended 31 March 2022 by Consulting Engineers Taggart and the valuation has been discounted in line with real discount rates at 31 March 2024 i.e. the discount rates are based on the National Loans fund borrowing rates.

Insurance

The insurance provision relates to the Council's estimated self insurance liability re employers and public liability claims lodged against Council. It would be expected that the majority of this expenditure will be incurred within the next three to five years.

Single status

This provision relates to the estimated cost of Council's obligations to its employees under the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service ("The Green Book") which the Council expects to be finalised within the coming year. The majority of these obligations under the Green Book have been determined and agreed.

Other

This provision relates to the estimated costs of pending Judicial Reviews, High Court actions and other legal cases.

20 Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet:

The Council has no material exposure to any of the risk types identified below in its dealings with Financial instruments.

Material soft loans made by the Council**Soft Loans**

The Council has made no material soft loans during the year.

Employee Car loans

The Council has made no employee car loans during the year.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Customers are assessed, taking into account their financial position, past experience and other factors, with individual credit limits being set in accordance with internal ratings in accordance with parameters set by the Council. The provision for bad and doubtful debts reflects the Council's assessment of the risk of non-payment by trade debtors and, as such, there is no further additional estimated exposure to default and inability to collect.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Trade Debtors inclusive of Vat can be analysed as follows:		
Less than three months	388,322	636,196
Three to six months	7,020	104,699
Six months to one year	82,297	17,687
More than one year	78,461	41,358
Total	556,100	799,940

There is no historical experience of default in relation to deposits with banks and other financial institutions. Therefore there is no estimated exposure to risk of default.

The Trade Receivables figure at Note 15b reports an amount of £554,989 (22/23 £799,325). This includes (£1,111) (22/23 (£615)) of unregistered income which is not included in the above table.

Liquidity Risk

As the Council has ready access to borrowings from the Department of Finance's Consolidated Fund, there is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial liabilities included in notes 17 to 19. All trade and other payables are due for payment within one year.

Market Risk

Interest Rate Risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its investments. The Council is in receipt of loans from the Department of Finance, these loans are at fixed concessionary rates that differ from the prevailing market rates.

Foreign Exchange Risk

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

Fair Value of Soft Loans and Government Loans

The Council draws down loans from The Department of Finance at concessionary rates and other local authorities at rates of interest that differ from prevailing market rates. The fair value of these loans is £52,134,126 (2022/23 £52,736,789) broken down as follows:-

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Government Loans Fund	52,134,126	48,698,346
Local Authorities	-	4,038,443
Total	52,134,126	52,736,789

21 Retirement Benefits

a Participation in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund.

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers and other employees, the Council offers retirement benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Council has a commitment to make the payments that need to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Council participates in the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund administered by the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee. This is a funded scheme, meaning that the Council and employees pay contributions into a fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension's liabilities with investment assets.

b Transactions relating to retirement benefits - Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Charges:

The Council recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the Cost of Services on Continuing Operations when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge the Council is required to make against district rates is based on the cash payable in the year, and the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out in the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement.

The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations line, in the Movement on Reserves Statement during the year:

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Net cost of services:		
Current service cost	5,002,000	9,694,000
Net Interest on net defined benefit Liability (asset)	(218,000)	1,097,000
Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	4,784,000	10,791,000
Movement in Reserves Statement:		
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS 19 and the Code	(4,784,000)	(10,791,000)
Employers' contributions payable to scheme	4,306,000	4,165,000
Net adjustment to General Fund	(478,000)	(6,626,000)

The service cost figures include an allowance for administration expenses of £112,000 (2022/23 £105,000)

Remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Liability experience gains/(losses) arising in the year	(2,225,000)	92,257,000
Liability gains/(losses) due to due to demographic changes	2,687,000	(1,071,000)
Liability gains/(losses) due to change in assumptions	6,113,000	(14,398,000)
Actuarial gains/(losses) on plan assets	(9,210,000)	(24,984,000)
Total gains/(losses) recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(2,635,000)	51,804,000

c Assets and liabilities in relation to retirement benefits		
Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities:		
	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Balance as at 1 April	171,072,000	235,760,000
Current service cost	5,002,000	9,694,000
Interest cost	7,937,000	6,315,000
Contributions by members	1,430,000	1,357,000
Remeasurement (gains) and losses:		
Actuarial gains/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	2,225,000	(92,257,000)
Actuarial gains/losses arising from demographic changes	(2,687,000)	1,071,000
Actuarial gains/losses arising on liabilities from experience	(6,113,000)	14,398,000
Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(60,000)	(54,000)
Estimated benefits paid	(5,906,000)	(5,212,000)
Balance as at 31 March	172,900,000	171,072,000

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme assets:		
	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Balance as at 1 April	173,573,000	193,083,000
Interest Income	8,155,000	5,218,000
Contributions by members	1,430,000	1,357,000
Contributions by employer	4,306,000	4,165,000
Remeasurement gain/(loss)	(9,210,000)	(24,984,000)
Unfunded benefits paid	(60,000)	(54,000)
Benefits paid	(5,906,000)	(5,212,000)
Balance as at 31 March	172,288,000	173,573,000

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

The actual return on scheme assets in the year was a gain of £18,030,000 (2022/23 loss of £19,766,000).

The movement in the "Remeasurement gains and losses above has been largely attributed to the changes in financial assumptions over the period. The discount rate has increased by 0.1%, the CPI inflation assumption has reduced by 0.1% and the salary increase assumption has reduced by 0.1%.

This has resulted in a significant positive increase in the Balance Sheet however under IAS 19 paragraph 64 Employee Benefits "when an entity has a net asset/surplus in a defined benefit plan the surplus is restricted to the lower of :

- the total current surplus;
- the surrender value of the scheme which is not applicable to Local Government and is therefore nil; or
- the discounted value of the total reduction in future contributions.

The Council are restricting the in year surplus to nil however, the Council has an unfunded pension liability of £612k - the amount included in the year end balance sheet.

Fair Value of Plan Assets		
	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Equity investments	75,289,856	69,429,200
Bonds	37,214,208	40,963,228
Property	16,711,936	19,440,176
Cash	9,648,128	11,282,245
Other	33,423,872	32,458,151
	172,288,000	173,573,000

The above asset values are at bid value as required by IAS 19.

Details of estimates made by the Fund Manager when assessing the fair values of plan assets.

The amounts included in the fair value of plan assets for property occupied by the Council was £0.

The Council's share of the Net Pension Asset/(Liability) (included in the Balance Sheet):

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Fair Value of Employer Assets	172,288,000	173,573,000
Present value of funded defined benefit obligation	(172,900,000)	(170,417,000)
Pension asset/(liability) of Funded Scheme	(612,000)	3,156,000
Present Value of unfunded defined benefit obligation	-	(655,000)
Net asset/(liability) arising from the defined benefit obligation	(612,000)	2,501,000
Amount in the Balance sheet:		
Liabilities	(612,000)	-
Assets	-	2,501,000
Net Asset/(Liability)	(612,000)	2,501,000

d Scheme History

Analysis of scheme assets and liabilities	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Fair Value of Assets in pension scheme	172,288,000	173,573,000
Present Value of Defined Benefit Obligation	(172,900,000)	(171,072,000)

Surplus/(deficit) in the Scheme	(612,000)	2,501,000
--	------------------	------------------

Amount recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure:	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Actuarial gains/(losses)	6,575,000	76,788,000
Expected Return on Plan Assets	(9,210,000)	(24,984,000)
Remeasurements recognised in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(2,635,000)	51,804,000
Cumulative actuarial gains and losses	64,649,000	67,284,000
History of experience gains and losses:		
Experience gains and (losses) on liabilities	(6,113,000)	14,398,000

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the authority has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £612,000 (2022/23 £2,501,000 asset) has an impact on the net worth of the Council as recorded in the Balance Sheet.

Analysis of projected amount to be charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year to 31 March 2025

	31/03/2025 £	31/03/2025 %
Projected current cost	4,818,000	102.0%
Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)	(106,000)	-2.0%
	4,712,000	100.0%

The total contributions expected to be made to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund by the council in the year to 31 March 2025 is £4,712,000 (2023/24 £4,693,000).

History of experience gains and losses

The actuarial gains/losses identified as movements on the Pensions Reserve 2023/24 can be analysed into the following categories, measured as a percentage of assets or liabilities at 31 March 2024.

	2023/24 %	2022/23 %
Experience gains and (losses) on Assets	0.00%	0.00%
Experience gains and (losses) on Liabilities	3.54%	-8.42%

e Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in the future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Council's Fund liabilities have been assessed by Aon Hewitt Limited, an independent firm of actuaries, estimates for the Council Fund being based on data pertaining to the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 31 March 2024.

Pension scheme assumptions:	2023/24 %	2022/23 %
Equity investments	43.7%	40.0%
Bonds	21.6%	23.6%
Property	9.7%	11.2%
Cash	5.6%	6.5%
Other	19.4%	18.7%
Mortality assumptions:		
<i>Longevity at 65 current pensioners:</i>	Years	Years
Men	21.7	22.2
Women	24.6	25.0
<i>Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:</i>		
Men	22.7	23.2
Women	25.6	26.0
Inflation/Pension Increase Rate	2.60%	2.70%
Salary Increase Rate	4.10%	4.20%
Discount Rate	4.80%	4.70%
Pension accounts revaluation rate	2.60%	2.70%

Pension Assumptions Sensitivity Analysis

The pension figures disclosed in these financial statements are sensitive to the assumptions used.

The approximate impact of changing key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation as at 31 March 2024 is set out below.

In each case, only the assumption noted below is altered; all other assumptions remain the same and are summarised in the disclosure

Funded Pension Scheme Benefits

Discount Rate Assumption		
	+0.1%p.a.	-0.1%p.a.
Adjustment to discount rate		
Present value of the total obligation	169,359,000	175,217,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	-1.70%	1.70%
Projected service cost	4,618,000	4,967,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	-3.60%	3.70%
Rate of General Increase in Salaries		
	+0.1%p.a.	-0.1%p.a.
Adjustment to salary increase rate		
Present value of the total obligation	172,805,000	171,771,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	0.30%	-0.30%
Projected service cost	4,790,000	4,790,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	0.00%	0.00%
Rate of Increase to Pensions in Payment and Deferred Pension Assumption		
	+0.1%p.a.	-0.1%p.a.
Adjustment to pension increase rate		
Present value of the total obligation	174,700,000	169,876,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	1.40%	-1.40%
Projected service cost	4,967,000	4,618,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.70%	-3.60%
Post Retirement Mortality Assumption		
	- 1 Year	+1 Year
Adjustment to mortality age rating assumption*		
Present value of the total obligation	176,767,000	167,809,000
% change in the present value of the total obligation	2.60%	-2.60%
Projected service cost	4,958,000	4,622,000
Approximate % change in projected service cost	3.50%	-3.50%

* A rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table above for an individual that is 1 year older than that.

f Major categories of plan assets as percentage of total plan assets

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund's assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of the total

	31/03/2024 %	31/03/2023 %
Equity investments	43.70%	40.00%
Government Bonds	17.40%	20.60%
Corporate Bonds	4.20%	3.00%
Property	9.70%	11.20%
Cash	5.60%	6.50%
Other	19.40%	18.70%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

g Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension Arrangements

The Northern Ireland Civil Service Pension arrangements are unfunded multi-employer defined benefit schemes but the Council is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31/03/24. This valuation is then reviewed by the Scheme Actuary and updated to reflect current conditions and rolled forward to the reporting date of the DoF Superannuation and Other Allowances Resource Accounts as at 31 March 2024.

Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) is a portion of pension that was accrued by individuals who were contracted out of the state pension prior to 6 April 1997. At present there is an inequality of benefits between male and female members who have GMP. Although the Government intends that GMP should be equalised, at present it is not clear how this equalisation will be implemented. In July 2014 the Government stated an intention to develop fully considered proposals and to publish guidance when this work is completed, but no target date was given. The impact of any liabilities relating to the Council is therefore uncertain and no provision has been made in these financial statements.

22 Donated Assets Account	Note	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Opening balance		600,000	600,000
		600,000	600,000

Analysis of Donated Assets Account

The balance of the Donated Assets Account represents donations received that have yet to be recognised as income, as they have conditions attached to them, which will require the donated assets to be returned, if conditions are not met.

23 Capital Grants Received in Advance	Note	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Opening balance		142,282	-
Add: new capital grants received in advance (condition of use not met)		100,000	142,282
Less: amounts released to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	10b	(10,208)	-
Less Unapplied Capital Grants released from Capital Grant in advance	10c	(132,074)	-
		100,000	142,282

Analysis of Capital Grants Receipts in Advance Balance

The balance of Capital Grants Receipts in Advance represents grants received that have yet to be recognised as income, as they have conditions attached to them, which will require the grant to be repaid, if conditions are not met. The balances at the year end are included within Long Term Liabilities.

24 Contingencies

In accordance with the Code (and IAS 37), Councils should disclose by way of note if there is a possible obligation arising from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence or non-occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the authority, or a present obligation that arises from past events but is not recognised because:

- a) it is not probable that an outflow of resources embodying economic benefits or service potential will be required to settle the obligation, or
- b) the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent Liabilities

- a) Waste and Landfill

The ARC 21 Joint Committee has with the approval of the Participant Councils, entered into an undertaking with the bidding consortium in the procurement for the Residual Waste treatment Project. Payments made, if any in accordance with this undertaking will be funded by the Participant Councils. This is currently considered a contingent liability. No further information on this agreement can be disclosed due to the commercial sensitivity of the procurement process.

Council owns a landfill site and although this site is closed it is required to make financial provision for aftercare costs of its landfill site. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency reviews the adequacy of the Council's provision for landfill capping and aftercare costs and as a consequence the current landfill closure provision included at note 19 may change. In addition Council may incur further costs in respect of their landfill site's gas management system.

b) Legal

The Council has a number of ongoing legal claims in which the council is a defendant, the outcomes of which are unclear at this point in time and are difficult to predict and therefore no provision has been provided within the financial statements.

c) Landfill Allowance and Other Trading Schemes

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 placed a duty on waste disposal authorities (WDAs) in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste (BMW) disposed of to landfill. It also provides the legal framework for the Landfill Allowances Scheme (Northern Ireland) Regulations, which came into force on 1 April 2005.

The landfill allowance schemes that operate in Wales and Northern Ireland are not 'cap and trade' schemes and therefore authorities shall not recognise an asset for landfill allowances, grant income in respect of the allowances or liabilities for actual BMW landfill usage.

WDAs in Wales and district councils in Northern Ireland are required to meet annual target figures for the maximum amount of BMW that can be sent to landfill. For each tonne of BMW sent to landfill in excess of the target, an authority may be liable to a penalty (different values apply in Wales and Northern Ireland). However, current guidance indicates the penalty will be exercised with discretion rather than as an automatic consequence of exceeding the target. An authority shall recognise a provision for penalties payable to the Welsh Government or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland. Where a possible landfill allowance liability exists but the authority has concluded that it does not need to make a provision, the authority shall disclose a separate class of contingent liability in relation to the possible penalty. No provision has been made for any penalties.

Contingent Asset

The Council, together with the other 10 district councils in NI, is participating in a legal action against HMRC to recover previously overdeclared output VAT in respect of leisure and recreational income, which arose because HMRC did not accept that the Council provides leisure and recreational activities pursuant to a special legal regime without causing any significant distortion of competition.

Although Mid Ulster District Council (as lead council in the litigation) succeeded in its claim to the First Tier Tax Tribunal, HMRC subsequently, pursuant to Rule 39 of the Tribunal Procedure (First Tier Tribunal) (Tax Chamber) Rules 2009, lodged an application to appeal to the Upper Tier Tax Tribunal. The application to lodge an appeal was successful and the appeal was heard by the Upper Tier Tribunal in May 2022. The Upper Tier Tax Tribunal released its decision on 19 July 2022; the decision was to allow the appeal and remit the matter back to the First Tier Tax Tribunal for consideration.

Mid Ulster District Council subsequently sought and received permission to appeal the Upper Tier Tax Tribunal decision to the Court of Appeal and a Hearing was scheduled to take place in May 2023. On 26 January 2023, HMRC notified Mid Ulster District Council that it decided to pay all of the Local Authority Leisure Service claims and proceeded to publish an associated Revenue and Customs Brief on 3 March 2023. Mid Ulster District Council's appeal to the Court of Appeal is currently stayed until 6 September 2024.

Mid and East Antrim Council has been able to obtain reimbursement for the VAT paid on those sporting activities that met HMRC guidance and as a result an asset has been recognised. However Mid Ulster District Council, in consultation with the other 11 councils are considering whether further legal action should be explored to extend VAT reclaims to services beyond sports and leisure activities, specifically those under Article 10 of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. At this stage it is too early to assess any further financial impact in terms of activities beyond Sports and Leisure activities and therefore an asset has not been recognised in respect of services beyond sports and leisure.

25 Other cash flow disclosures

a Analysis of Adjustments to Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services

Adjustment to surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	Notes	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Depreciation	11	9,092,891	8,353,162
Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)	11	2,737,077	(692,923)
(Increase)/Decrease in inventories	14	(32,804)	(59,609)
(Increase)/Decrease in Debtors	15	659,011	(4,908,946)
Increase/(Decrease) in impairment provision for bad debts	15	104,154	(4,784)
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	18	2,645,246	(3,422,737)
Payments to NILGOSC	21	478,000	6,626,000
Carrying amount of non-current assets sold	8	668,643	333,849
AIC/WIP written off to Net Cost of Services	11	143,893	306,288
Contributions to Other Reserves/Provisions		(252,860)	(955,153)
Movement in value of investment properties-included above in Impairment & downward revaluations (& non-sale derecognitions)	11	80,477	(21,265)
		16,323,728	5,553,882

Adjust for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities	Notes	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Purchase of short-term (not considered to be cash equivalents) and long-term investments (includes investments in associates, joint ventures and subsidiaries)	16	(8,867,883)	4,782,214
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets	26	(1,436,974)	(348,990)
Capital grants included in "Taxation & non-specific grant income"	10	(456,484)	3,154
		(10,761,341)	4,436,378

b Cash and Cash Equivalents

For the purposes of the cash flow statement, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand and in bank and short term deposits and investments (considered to be cash equivalents), net of outstanding bank overdrafts. Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period as shown in the statement of cash flows can be reconciled to the related items in the Balance Sheet as follows:

	2023/24 £	2022/23 £	2021/22 £
Cash and Bank balances	3,510,818	1,774,040	9,444,799
	3,510,818	1,774,040	9,444,799

c Cash Flow Statement: Operating Activities

The cash flows from operating activities include:	Notes	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Interest received	9b	517,184	207,523
Interest paid	9a	(2,438,620)	(2,385,685)
		(1,921,436)	(2,178,162)

d Cash flows from Investing Activities		Notes	2023/24	2022/23
			£	£
Purchase of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets		11	7,449,265	5,423,568
Proceeds from the sale of PP&E, investment property and intangible assets			(1,436,974)	(348,990)
Capital Grants and Contributions Received		10e	(456,484)	3,154
Net Cash flows from Investing Activities			5,555,807	5,077,732

e Cash flows from Financing Activities			2023/24	2022/23
			£	£
Cash Receipts from Short and Long Term Borrowing			6,000,000	-
Repayment of Short and Long Term Borrowing			(3,355,037)	(4,137,860)
Net Cash flows from Financing Activities			2,644,963	(4,137,860)

26 Usable Reserves

a Capital Receipts Reserve

These are capital receipts which have originated primarily from the sale of assets which have not yet been used to finance capital expenditure.

The Capital Receipts Reserve is credited with the proceeds from fixed asset sales and other monies defined by statute as capital receipts. These are originally credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain/loss on disposal and posted out via the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Receipts Reserve. The reserve is written down when resources are applied to finance new capital expenditure or set aside to reduce an authority's capital financing requirement (or used for other purposes permitted by statute).

Capital Receipts Reserve		Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
			£	£
At 1 April			-	-
Movement				
Disposal of Non Current Assets/Capital Sales			1,436,974	348,990
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure		3, 11	(1,069,000)	(348,990)
At 31 March			367,974	-

b Capital Grants Unapplied Account

Where a capital grant or contribution (or part thereof) has been recognised as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, but the expenditure to be financed from that grant or contribution has not been incurred at the Balance Sheet date, the grant or contribution shall be transferred to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account (within the usable reserves section of the balance sheet), reflecting its status as a capital resource available to finance expenditure. This transfer is reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

When, at a future date, the expenditure to be financed from the grant or contribution is incurred, the grant or contribution (or part thereof) shall be transferred from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account to the Capital Adjustment Account, reflecting the application of capital resources to finance expenditure. This transfer is also reported in the Movement in Reserves Statement or in the notes to the accounts.

Capital Grants Unapplied account		Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
			£	£
At 1 April			554,000	1,457,613
Movement				
Unapplied Capital Grants received in year		10c	203,986	-
Unapplied Capital Grants released from Capital Grant in advance		10c	132,074	-
Unapplied Capital Grants transferred to CAA in year			(27,000)	(903,613)
At 31 March			863,060	554,000

c Capital Fund

This fund was established under section 56 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, however this section of the act was repealed under the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Councils should disclose details where any of these reserves are earmarked for specific purposes.

Capital Fund	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		4,831,390	5,700,253
Transfers between Capital Fund & CAA to finance Capital Expenditure		(136,735)	(868,863)
At 31 March		4,694,655	4,831,390

	£
Legacy Ballymena Borough Council Fund	1,918,872
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council Fund	2,775,783
Total	4,694,655

d Renewal and Repairs Fund

This fund was established under section 56 of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972, however this section of the act was repealed under the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Councils should disclose details where any of these reserves are earmarked for specific purposes.

Renewal and Repairs Fund	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		2,725,617	2,725,617
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund		-	-
Transfers between Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance Capital Expenditure		-	-
At 31 March		2,725,617	2,725,617

e Other Balances & Reserves

Other Balances & Reserves	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		13,591,782	14,162,583
Transfers between statutory & other reserves & the General Fund	26f	6,081,140	255,117
Transfers between Capital Fund/Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance capital expenditure		(914,511)	(825,918)
At 31 March		18,758,411	13,591,782

f General Fund

This reserve shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from District Rates. Councils raise rates to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

General Fund	Notes	31/03/2024 £	31/03/2023 £
At 1 April		4,445,594	4,431,327
Applied Capital Grants	10, 12	(120,424)	3,154
Unapplied Capital Grants received in year		(336,060)	-
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 12	(183,606)	-
Depreciation and Impairment adjustment	4	12,054,338	7,945,262
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4	(4,962,927)	(5,298,894)
Net Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	4, 12	579,534	(23,662)
Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services	CIES	(914,765)	(8,445,427)
Transfers between Statutory and Other Reserves and the General Fund		(6,081,140)	(255,117)
Net movements on Pension Reserve	21b	478,000	6,626,000
Disposal of Fixed Assets/Capital Sales	3, 4, 8, 11, 23	(768,331)	(15,141)
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements		255,381	3,020
Other Movements		-	(524,928)
At 31 March		4,445,594	4,445,594

27 Unuseable Reserves

a 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 the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to an historic cost basis.

The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Council as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and subsequent costs.

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

The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2008, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

Capital Adjustment Account	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		76,265,210	73,156,807
Applied Capital Grants	10	120,424	(3,154)
Unapplied Capital Grants transferred to CAA in year		27,000	903,613
Direct Revenue Financing	4, 12	183,606	-
Depreciation & Impairment adjustment	11	(12,054,338)	(7,945,262)
Statutory Provision for financing Capital Investment	4, 12	4,962,927	5,298,894
Net Revenue expenditure funded from Capital under statute	4, 12	(579,534)	23,662
Disposal of Fixed Assets/Capital Sales	4, 11	(668,643)	(333,849)
Capital Receipts used to finance capital expenditure	4, 12	1,069,000	348,990
Other Movements		2,997,613	3,120,728
Transfers between Capital Fund/Renewal & Repair Fund & CAA to finance capital expenditure	12	1,051,246	1,694,781
At 31 March		73,374,511	76,265,210

b Financial Instruments Adjustment Account

The Council has no transactions that would require use of this account.

c Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Council arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment and Intangible Assets. The reserve is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

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

The reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2008, the date the reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

The purpose of this account is to build up a balance based on the revaluation (upwards or downwards) of individual assets. All such revaluations (excluding impairment losses that have been debited to Surplus/(Deficit) on the Provision of Services are mirrored in Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. It is a fundamental principle of this account that it never becomes negative. If an asset was held at current value when derecognised, the balance held on the Revaluation Reserve is written off to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Revaluation Reserve	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		92,464,110	82,297,689
Revaluation & Impairment	11	8,330,535	13,287,149
Other Movements		(2,997,613)	(3,120,728)
At 31 March		97,797,032	92,464,110

d Available for Sale Financial Instruments Adjustment Reserve and Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve

The Council has no transactions that would require use of this account.

e Pension Reserve

Pension Reserve	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		2,501,000	(42,677,000)
Net Movements on Pension Reserve	4, 21	(478,000)	(6,626,000)
Revaluation & Impairment	21	(2,635,000)	51,804,000
At 31 March		(612,000)	2,501,000

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Council accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs

However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Council makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Council has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

f Deferred Capital Receipts Account

The Council has no transactions that would require use of this account.

g Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year e.g. staff annual leave entitlement carried forward at the end of the financial year. Statutory arrangements are expected to require that the impact on the General Fund is neutralised by transfers to or from this Accumulated Absences Account

Accumulated Absences Account	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		(447,470)	(444,450)
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	4	(255,381)	(3,020)
At 31 March		(702,851)	(447,470)

h Provisions Discount Rate Reserve

The Provisions Discount Rate Reserve covers the arrangement, put in place by the Department under its amendment to the 2018/19 accounts direction (see DfC circular 18/19), to allow for mitigation of the costs not allowed for by Councils who had adopted the HM Treasury Central Government discount rate for long-term provisions such as Landfill costs.

Subject to agreement with the Department, this arrangement allows a council to spread the cost of the impact of discount rate changes over a period of not more than 6 years.

Provisions Discount Rate Reserve	Notes	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
		£	£
At 1 April		-	524,928
Difference between finance and other costs and income calculated on an accounting basis and finance costs calculated in accordance with statutory requirements	4	-	(524,928)
At 31 March		-	-

i Landfill Regulations Reserve

The Council has no transactions that would require use of this account.

28 Significant Trading Operations

The Council does not have any significant trading operations.

29 Agency Services

The Council does not provide any Agency Services.

30 Joint Arrangements

The Council does not have any joint arrangements in place.

31 Related Party Transactions

A Related Party Transaction is a transfer of resource or obligations between related parties, regardless of whether a price is charged. Related Party Transactions exclude transactions with any other entity that is a related party solely because of its economic dependence on Council or the Government of which it forms a part. A related party is one that has the ability to control the other party in making financial and operating decisions. This includes cases where the related party entity and another entity are subject to common control but excludes providers of finance in the course of their normal business with the Council and Trade Unions in the course of their normal dealings with the Council.

The Council paid amounts of over £3,000 to the following bodies in which Councillors or Council Senior Management had an interest. Councillors were voted on to Management Committees in relation to some of the organisations listed. Any payments were made with proper consideration of declaration of interest.

The origins of Arc21 can be traced back to June 1999, when a small number of Council representatives agreed that a joint approach was the best way to deliver an effective waste management strategy for the region. By 2000, 11 Councils had joined together from the eastern Region Waste Management Group, which was eventually renamed Arc21. At present Arc21 has successfully been awarded and is managing waste management contracts on behalf of Councils with a value in the region of £200m.

Related Party Transactions

a Other Organisations

	Councillors/SMT 2023/24	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Ascert	1	48,950	27,000
Association For Public Service Excellence	4	17,163	12,648
Ballymena Bid Limited	2	198,682	283,314
Ballymena Retailers Against Crime	1	8,202	11,332
Ballymena Chamber Of Commerce & Industry	2	6,000	6,000
Carrickfergus Enterprise	1	21,014	14,238
Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	1	5,895	-
County Antrim Agricultural Association	1	3,000	5,000
Education Authority	1	13,526	60,721
Galgorm Manor Hotel	1	10,387	15,170
Good Morning Ballymena	1	3,946	5,180
The Law Society Of Northern Ireland	1	4,980	7,084
Lough Neagh Partnership	3	3,500	3,500
National Association Of Councillors (NI Region)	11	3,200	3,200
National Association Of Councillors	11	2,616	3,702
Ni Local Government Association	15	69,622	61,894
Onus Ni Ltd	1	20,590	22,360
Orange Institution	11	28,360	22,142
Royal Scottish Pipe Band Assoc N Ireland	1	30,000	30,000
Solace In Business	1	384,987	602,486
Society Of St Vincent De Paul	1	19,690	21,600
The Carson Project	1	3,820	-
Translink	1	4,050	-
Ulster Supported Employment Ltd	1	145,625	71,509
		1,057,806	1,290,081

b Payments to Community Groups

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council made payments to the following Community Groups that have Councillors as part of their committee structure.

	Councillors/SMT 2023/24	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Ballee & Harryville Community Enterprises (Updated) 2022	3	20,108	36,244
Ballymena North Partnership Ltd	4	74,017	105,257
Mid & East Antrim Community Advice Services	5	306,685	482,188
Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership	7	139,370	110,007
Millbrook Community Development Association	1	5,446	8,688
Whitehead Community Association Ltd	1	20,935	43,370
		566,561	785,755

c Joint Committees

	Councillors/SMT 2023/24	2023/24 £	2022/23 £
Arc 21		7,291,257	6,667,126
		7,291,257	6,667,126

Joint Committees

Arc21

The Council is a member of the Arc 21 Joint Committee which was established for the purposes of managing waste. During the year the Council made a contribution of £124k (2022/23 £120k) towards the running costs of Arc 21. The Council also made payments to Arc 21 of £7.3m (2022/23 £6.7m) for those waste management contracts specifically procured and managed by Arc 21 on behalf of the Council.

The Joint Committee is a partnership of Antrim and Newtownabbey, Mid and East Antrim, Ards and North Down, Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Newry, Mourne and Down Councils established to collaborate in implementing the Waste Management Plan to develop an integrated network of regional waste management facilities which would be cost effective to the public.

The Joint Committee accounts for its funding by the provision of a statement of accounts which is prepared under the Local Government (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 and are subject to statutory audit by the Local Government Auditor.

Ballymena Business Improvement District

The Council administers the debt collection and a Ballymena Bid Bank Account for Ballymena BID Ltd. At 31st March 2024, the balance on this bank account was £56,441 (2022/23 £49,194). All transactions relating to this company are not included in the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council financial statements.

Date of Authorisation

The Interim Chief Financial Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 30th September 2024.

The table below reflects the detailed Income and Expenditure Analysis

	2023/24			2022/23		
	Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure	Restated Gross Expenditure	Restated Gross Income	Restated Net Expenditure
Directorate Expenditure	£	£	£	£	£	£
Head of Capital Projects	743,447	(358,943)	384,504	290,020	-	290,020
Chief Executive	418,901	(49,598)	369,303	451,110	(46,620)	404,490
Finance	2,190,059	(13,794)	2,176,265	1,776,916	(989,039)	787,877
HR and OD	1,587,005	(9,160)	1,577,845	1,556,971	(7,461)	1,549,510
Chief Executive	4,939,412	(431,495)	4,507,917	4,075,017	(1,043,120)	3,031,897
Director of Community	1,583,322	(432,850)	1,150,472	1,868,244	(538,086)	1,330,158
Community Planning and Development	4,470,471	(1,512,673)	2,957,798	4,395,113	(1,950,313)	2,444,800
Public Protection, Health and Wellbeing	10,337,503	(5,171,494)	5,166,009	12,287,006	(4,780,113)	7,506,893
Community	16,391,296	(7,117,017)	9,274,279	18,550,363	(7,268,512)	11,281,851
Head of Capital Works	2,593,745	(656,016)	1,937,729	1,403,740	(683,557)	720,183
Climate	131,033	(850)	130,183	171,439	145	171,584
Parks and Open Spaces	16,129,840	(2,969,384)	13,160,456	16,347,162	(2,480,476)	13,866,686
Waste	24,482,313	(1,214,128)	23,268,185	19,759,667	(1,388,854)	18,370,813
Operations	43,336,931	(4,840,378)	38,496,553	37,682,008	(4,552,742)	33,129,266
Economic Development	3,442,243	(1,033,697)	2,408,546	3,992,876	(1,253,153)	2,739,723
Planning and Building Control	3,893,132	(2,029,019)	1,864,113	4,854,266	(1,990,491)	2,863,775
Tourism	4,506,491	(986,771)	3,519,720	3,774,726	(1,139,377)	2,635,349
Development	11,841,866	(4,049,487)	7,792,379	12,621,868	(4,383,021)	8,238,847
Communication	1,291,581	(27,182)	1,264,399	1,391,900	(7,909)	1,383,991
Digital Transformation and Procurement	3,277,784	(16,382)	3,261,402	4,550,218	(141,209)	4,409,009
Corporate Performance & Improvement	3,310,610	(16,819)	3,293,791	3,320,582	(139,300)	3,181,282
Corporate Services	7,879,975	(60,383)	7,819,592	9,262,700	(288,418)	8,974,282
Interest payable	2,519,097	(735,184)	1,783,913	3,482,685	(228,788)	3,253,897
Investment Income	-	(54,588)	(54,588)	-	(53,308)	(53,308)
Financing and Investment Income	2,519,097	(789,772)	1,729,325	3,482,685	(282,096)	3,200,589
District Rate Income	-	(57,385,006)	(57,385,006)	-	(53,596,208)	(53,596,208)
General Grant	-	(5,418,816)	(5,418,816)	-	(5,803,110)	(5,803,110)
Capital Grants	-	(456,484)	(456,484)	-	3,154	3,154
Extraordinary Item	-	(4,676,643)	(4,676,643)	-	-	-
Other Income & Expenditure	-	(67,936,949)	(67,936,949)	-	(59,396,164)	(59,396,164)

During 2023/24 there was some internal reorganisation of Operations within Directorates. The Interim Chief Executive and Town Clerks Department costs are now reported within the Chief Executive Directorate rather than Corporate Services. Whilst Mayors allowance and Mayors travel is now within Corporate Performance and the small grants scheme is within the Community Directorate all of these costs were the responsibility of the Head of Digital Transformation and Performance previously.

Although the 2022/23 comparative figures differ from the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement breakdown on page 41 everything agrees in totality.