Significant accounting policies

General principles

Basis of preparation

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Council's transactions for the financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2018. The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations require the Council to produce an annual Statement of Accounts, prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounts are prepared on a going concern basis and the accounting convention adopted is principally historical cost modified for the valuation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

Events after the reporting period

Events may occur between the balance sheet date and the date the accounts are authorised for issue which might have a bearing upon the financial results of the past year.

Where an event occurring after the balance sheet date provides evidence of conditions that existed at the balance sheet date, the amounts recognised in the statement of accounts are adjusted.

Where an event that occurs after the balance sheet date is indicative of conditions that arose after the balance sheet date, the amounts recognised in the Statement of Accounts are not adjusted, but where this would have a material effect, it is disclosed in the notes to the accounts.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the statement of accounts.

Group accounts

The Council carries out its activities through a variety of undertakings, either under ultimate control or in partnership with other organisations. Those considered to be material are included in the group accounts. Profit and loss, net worth, and the value of assets and liabilities are considered individually for each organisation against a materiality limit set by the Council. An entity could be material but still not consolidated (if all of its business is with the Council and eliminated on consolidation) – i.e. the consolidation would mean that the group accounts are not materially different to the single entity accounts.

The Council has a material interest in an external entity and therefore group accounts have been prepared.

Pooled budgets

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

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

Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies, estimates and errors

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

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

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

Accounting policies for income

Accruals of income

The income of the Council is accounted for in the financial year in which the activity it relates to takes place, regardless of when cash payments are received. In particular:

- ~~Income from the sale of goods is recognised when the Council transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council;~~
- ~~Income from the provision of services is recognised when the Council can measure reliably the percentage completion of the transaction and it is probable that the economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Council;~~
- *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;*
- Interest receivable on investments is accounted for as income 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 income has been recognised but cash has not been received, a debtor for the relevant amount is recorded in the balance sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

Council tax and non-domestic rates income

Both council tax and non-domestic rates are collected by the 12 Lancashire district councils (billing authorities) on behalf of the County Council.
The council tax and non-domestic rates income is accounted for on an accruals basis and included in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement within taxation and non-specific grant income. Regulations determine the amount of council tax and non-domestic rates that must be included in the Council's general fund, therefore, the difference between the income included in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the general fund is charged to the collection fund adjustment account through the movement in reserves statement.

The year-end balance sheet includes the Council's share of debtors (arrears and collection fund surpluses), creditors (prepayments, overpayments and collection fund deficits) and provisions (non-domestic rates appeals).

Lancashire has a non-domestic rates pool which was established on 1 April 2016. It comprises the County Council and most but not all of the local authorities in Lancashire, with Ribble Valley Borough Council designated as lead authority. Lancashire County Council will receive 10% of the overall retained levy with each district within the pool retaining 90% of their levy.
In the Lancashire non-domestic rates pool each council bears its own risk and takes its own reward under the pool agreement.

The net retained levy for the Council is shown within non-domestic rates retention income in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

Government grants and other contributions

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

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

Amounts recognised as due to the Council are not credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied.

Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution, are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the balance sheet as creditors. When conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or taxation and non-specific grant income (non-ringfenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, they are reversed out of the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the capital grants unapplied reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the capital adjustment account. Amounts in the capital grants unapplied reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure.

Accounting policies for costs

Accruals of expenditure

The expenditure of the Council is accounted for in the financial year in which the activity it relates to takes place, regardless of when cash payments are made. In particular:

- 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 payable on borrowings is accounted for as 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 expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been paid, a creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the balance sheet.

Charges to revenue for non-current assets

Services are charged with the following amounts to record the cost of holding property, plant and equipment during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service;
- Revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service, where there are no accumulated gains in the revaluation reserve against which the losses can be written off;
- Amortisation of intangible assets attributable to the service.

The Council is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual charge to revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement which is calculated on a prudent basis determined in accordance with statutory guidance. This contribution is known as the minimum revenue provision (MRP). Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are, therefore, replaced by the MRP in the earmarked reserves balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the movement in reserves statement, for the difference between the two.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on property, plant and equipment assets, by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives.

Depreciation is calculated on the following bases:

Category	Period over which assets are depreciated
Land	Not depreciated
Buildings	Useful life as determined by the valuer
Vehicles, plant and equipment	10 years unless the life of the asset is considered to be less
IT equipment	7-10 years depending upon the nature of the asset
Roads and highways infrastructure	10-120 years depending upon the nature of the asset
Community assets	Not depreciated
Assets under construction	Not depreciated
Investment properties	Not depreciated
Assets held for sale	Not depreciated
Heritage assets	Not depreciated

Depreciation is charged from the month of acquisition until the month of disposal.

Depreciation is also calculated on revaluation gains and is represented by the difference between depreciation calculated at current cost and depreciation calculated at historic cost. The difference between the two values is transferred each year from the revaluation reserve to the capital adjustment account.

Employee benefits

Employee benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits including wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Council. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements 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 the surplus or deficit on the provision of services, but then reversed out through the movement in reserves statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

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. These are charged on an accruals basis in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, at the earlier of when the Council can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Council recognises costs for a restructuring.

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

Post-employment benefits

The Council recognises the cost of post-employment benefits in the cost of services when they are earned by employees rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, statutory provisions require that the charge made against council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment benefits is reversed out of the general fund via the movement in reserves statement.

There are three pension schemes for Council staff. They are all defined benefit schemes.

Defined benefit scheme - the scheme rules define the benefits independently of the contributions payable, and the benefits are not directly related to the investments of the scheme. The scheme may be funded or unfunded.

Pension scheme	Administered by
Teachers' pension scheme	Capita Teachers' pensions on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE)
Local government pension scheme	Lancashire County Council
NHS pension scheme	NHS Business Services Authority on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health

Teachers' pension scheme

The arrangements for the teachers' scheme mean that liabilities for these benefits cannot be identified to the Council. Therefore, the scheme is accounted for as if it were a defined contributions scheme: no liability for future payments of benefits is recognised in the balance sheet and the education service revenue account is charged with the employer's contributions payable to teachers' pensions in the year.

Lancashire County Pension Fund

The liabilities of the Lancashire County Pension Fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method. Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices using a discount rate.

Projected unit method - an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates etc. and projected earnings for current employees.

The assets of the local government pension fund attributable to the Council are included in the balance sheet at their fair value:

- Quoted securities – current bid price;
- Unquoted securities – professional estimate;
- Unitised securities – current bid price;
- Property – market value.

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

Component	Description	Treatment
Service costs		
Current service costs	Measures the future service cost to the employer estimated to have been generated in the year.	Charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement to the services for which employees worked.
Past service costs	The increase in liabilities as a result of a current year scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years.	Charged to comprehensive income and expenditure statement as part of non-distributed costs.
Interest costs	The expected increase in the present value of liabilities as members of the plan are one year closer to receiving their pension. The provisions made at present value in previous years for their retirement costs need to be uplifted by a year's discount to keep pace with current values.	Charged to the financing and investment income and expenditure line of the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.
Re-measurements		
Return on plan assets	This is a measure of the return on the investment assets held by the plan for the year.	Charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure.
Actuarial gains and losses	These arise where actual events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuations or the actuarial assumptions have been changed.	Charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure.
Contributions		
Contributions paid to the pension fund	Cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities.	These are not accounted for as an expense.

Discretionary benefits

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

Long term contracts

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the surplus or deficit on the provision of services, with the works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

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.

Private finance initiative (PFI)

PFI contracts are agreements to receive services, where responsibility for making available the property, plant and equipment needed to provide services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Council is deemed to control the services that are provided under the PFI schemes, and as ownership of the property, plant and equipment will pass to the Council at the end of the contracts for no additional charge, the Council carries the assets used under the contracts on the balance sheet as part of property, plant and equipment.

The original recognition of these assets at fair value (based on the cost to purchase the property, plant and equipment) was balanced by the recognition of a liability, for amounts due to the scheme operation to pay for the capital investment.

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

- Fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement;
- Finance cost – an interest charge on the outstanding balance sheet liability, debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement;
- Contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement;
- Payment towards liability – applied to write down the balance sheet liability towards the PFI operator (the profile of write-downs is calculated using the same principles as for a finance lease);
- Lifecycle replacement costs – proportion of the amounts payable is posted to the balance sheet as a prepayment and then recognised as additions to property, plant and equipment when the relevant works are eventually carried out.

Deductions from the unitary payment

The PFI contract provides for deductions from the unitary payment in the case of sub-standard performance or when the facilities are unavailable.

Deductions for sub-standard performance are accounted for as a reduction in the amount paid for the affected services. Deductions arising from unavailability of the property are apportioned pro rata to the proportions of the service and property elements of the unitary payment:

- A reduction for part or all of the property being unavailable for use – this will first be accounted for as an abatement of the contingent lease rentals, then as finance costs if contingent rents are insufficient and;
- A reduction in the price paid for services whilst services are not being provided, accounted for as a reduction in the amount paid for the affected services.

Deductions of either type are accounted for when the Council's entitlement has been established and it is probable that the Council will be able to make the deduction.

Provisions, contingent assets and contingent liabilities

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 the Council becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the balance sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes more likely than not, that a transfer of economic benefits will not now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service revenue account.

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

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.

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 the 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.

Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but 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 to the capital adjustment account reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax.

Value added tax (VAT)

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

Accounting policies for assets and liabilities

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature or are available for recall in 3 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. This category includes cash on call and 3 months or less term deposit and also instant access money market funds.

Financial instruments

Financial instruments arise when contracts create financial assets and liabilities, and these are recognised on the Council's balance sheet. Typical financial assets include bank deposits, investments and loans by the Council and amounts receivable, whilst financial liabilities include amounts borrowed by the Council and amounts payable.

Financial assets

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

- *Amortised cost;*
- *Fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI), and;*
- *Fair value through profit or loss (FVPL).*

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

Where the Council's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows, the financial assets are classified as amortised cost.

The contractual terms of the financial asset give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the balance sheet when the Council becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost.

Annual credits to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the balance sheet is the outstanding principal receivable plus accrued interest and interest credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

There is no recognition of gains or losses on fair value until reclassification or derecognition of the asset.

Financial assets measured at fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Council also holds investments with the objective of collecting contractual cash flows and selling assets in order to meet long term investments requirements while ensuring the Council is not subject to a high degree of credit risk. These assets are measured at FVOCI.

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 these financial assets held by the Council, this means that the amount presented in the balance sheet is the fair value of the financial instrument and the interest credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

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 Council 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;*
- *Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs for the asset.*

Any changes in the fair value of the assets are charged to other comprehensive income and expenditure in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement and balanced by an entry in the financial instruments revaluation reserve.

Any gains or losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, along with any accumulated gains or losses previously recognised in the financial instruments revaluation reserve.

Financial assets measured at fair value through profit of 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 in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services as they arise.

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 Council 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;*
- *Level 3 inputs – unobservable inputs for the asset.*

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of the asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

~~Loans and receivables~~

~~Assets that have fixed or determinable payments but are not quoted in an active market for example term deposits made with UK domiciled banks.~~

~~Loans and receivables are initially measured at fair value and are subsequently carried 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. The amount presented in the balance sheet is the outstanding principal receivable plus accrued interest and the interest credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.~~

~~Available for sale assets~~

~~Assets that have a quoted market price and include, for example, investment bonds such as UK local authority bonds and UK Treasury gilt edged securities.~~

~~Available for sale assets are initially recognised and carried at fair value.~~

~~Where the assets have fixed or determinable payments, 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 amortised cost of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. Where there are no fixed or determinable payments, income (e.g. dividends) is credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement when it becomes receivable by the Council.~~

~~Values are based on the following principles:~~

- ~~Instruments with quoted market prices – the sale or bid market price;~~
- ~~Other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis and;~~
- ~~Equity shares with no quoted market prices – independent appraisal of company valuations.~~

~~Changes in fair value (other than impairment losses) are balanced by an entry in the available for sale reserve and the gain/loss is recognised in the surplus or deficit on revaluation of available for sale financial assets. Where impairment losses have been incurred, these are debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income~~

~~and expenditure statement, along with any net gain or loss for the asset accumulated in the available for sale reserve.~~

~~If the asset has fixed or determinable payments, the impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the revised future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate. Otherwise, the impairment loss is measured against any shortfall of fair value against the acquisition cost of the instrument (net of any principal repayment and amortisation).~~

~~Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of the asset are credited/debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, along with any accumulated gains or losses previously recognised in the available for sale reserve.~~

~~Where fair value cannot be measured reliably, the instrument is carried at cost (less any impairment losses).~~

~~Fair value through profit and loss~~

~~Assets which are held primarily for trading or have a recent history of being traded.~~

~~Fair value through profit and loss assets are initially recognised on the balance sheet and subsequently measured and carried at fair value.~~
~~Any gains or losses that arise on the de-recognition of the assets are credited/debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. Any unrealised gains and losses are also credited/debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. Unrealised gains and losses are the amounts that arise through the change in market value of financial instruments before they mature or are sold.~~

~~Impairment of financial assets~~

~~If assets are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the relevant service or to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The impairment loss is measured as the difference between the carrying amount and the present value of the revised future cash flows discounted at the asset's original effective interest rate.~~

Expected credit loss model

The Council recognises expected credit losses on its financial assets held at amortised cost or FVOCI, (subject to materiality) either on a 12-month or lifetime basis.

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.*

Lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Council.

Financial liabilities

Financial liabilities are initially recognised on the balance sheet at fair value and 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.

The amount presented in the balance sheet is the outstanding principal repayable plus accrued interest. 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's policy is to spread the gain or loss over the term 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.

Gains and losses on the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing are credited and debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, in the year of repurchase or settlement. However, where the repurchase has taken place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio that involves the modification or exchange of existing instruments, the premium or discount is respectively deducted from, or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan and the write-down to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement is spread over the life of the loan.

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.

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 a revenue expense when it is incurred.

Componentisation

Where a 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.

Measurement

Assets are initially recognised at cost, comprising:

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

Assets that are being constructed by the Council will initially be recognised at cost. The Council does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred 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.

Assets are then carried in the balance sheet using the following measurement bases:

Category	Measurement basis
Infrastructure, community assets, assets under construction	Depreciated historical cost
Surplus assets and investment properties	Fair value – highest and best
All other assets	Existing use value

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

For non-property assets, principally furniture and equipment, that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for 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. Each year an estimate of the total current value of all operational land and building assets is calculated by applying local movement in valuation for similar assets and a range of indices to the carrying amounts of those assets. Indices are used to support market-based evidence that valuations are kept up to date rather than being used to calculate the carrying value of the assets. The revaluation programme is managed so that this estimate is not materially different to the carrying amount in the balance sheet.

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the revaluation reserve to recognise unrealised gains, unless the gain reverses a loss previously charged to a service. 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.

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

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the revaluation reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains).
- Where there is no balance in the revaluation reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

The revaluation reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the capital adjustment account.

Valuations are undertaken internally by Lancashire County Council's estates service.

The valuations for specialist operational properties are undertaken by external professional valuers.

Impairment

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

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for as follows:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the revaluation reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains).
- Where there is no balance in the revaluation reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

Disposals and non-current assets held for sale

Surplus assets are defined as assets that are not being used to deliver services, but which do not meet the criteria to be classified as either investment properties or non-current assets held for sale. Only when it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction within the coming year, is it reclassified as an asset held for sale.

Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as assets held for sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of:

- Their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale. In this case the carrying amount is adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as held for sale.
- 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 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. Disposal costs are shown in other operating expenditure in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. Receipts from disposal are credited to the same line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement, also as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the revaluation reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of property, plant and equipment is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. These are credited to the capital receipts reserve, and can traditionally only be used for new capital investment or, be set aside to reduce the Council's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement). However, the flexible use of capital receipts allows revenue expenditure to be funded from capital receipts where it generates ongoing revenue savings or transforms service delivery to reduce costs.

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.

The collection has an indeterminate life and is subject to appropriate conservation measures, therefore, depreciation is not charged on heritage assets.

The valuation of the Council's heritage assets has included a degree of estimation. With respect to the museum's collection, those assets considered to have a value of £50,000 or over have been identified and valued as separate items. The rest of the collection involves a large quantity of small value items for which is not considered to be economic to value each item separately. Therefore, a sample of items was valued by the museums staff. The resulting value was then used to give an estimated value of the whole collection. It is considered that the result provides a fair reflection of the value of the Council's holding.

The Council has a detailed acquisitions and disposal policy, further information on which can be obtained from the Council. Disposals will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. It is considered that the collection has a long term purpose and, therefore, there is a strong presumption against disposal. If any items are thought to be appropriate for rationalisation, the Museums Association Code of Practice for the review of collections is followed. This is a lengthy process that allows for efforts to find an alternative home/location for an item before any consideration of final disposal is made.

Investment property

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

Investment properties are measured initially at cost and subsequently at fair value, based on the highest and best use value of the asset. Investment properties are not depreciated and an annual valuation programme ensures that they are held at highest and best use value at the balance sheet date. Gains and losses on revaluation are charged to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the comprehensive income and expenditure statement. The same treatment is applied to gains and losses on disposal.

Rentals received in relation to investment properties are credited to the financing and investment income line and result in a gain for the general fund balance. However, revaluation and disposal gains and losses are not permitted by statutory arrangements to have an impact on the general fund balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement and charged to the capital adjustment account.

Leases

Leases are classed as finance leases, where the terms of the lease transfer the majority of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Finance lease debtors are recognised in the balance sheet on commencement, at an amount equal to the net investment in the lease. Finance income in respect of these debtors is recognised at a constant rate of return on the net investment outstanding in respect of that finance lease.

Reserves

The Council sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or, to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the general fund balance in the movement in reserves statement.

When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service revenue account in that year. The reserve is then appropriated back into the general fund in the movement in reserves statement, so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are held for technical accounting purposes in respect of non-current assets, financial instruments and retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Council. These reserves are explained in the relevant notes.

Schools

Schools' non-current assets (school buildings and playing fields) are recognised on the balance sheet where the Council directly owns the assets, where the Council holds the balance of control of the assets or, where the school or the school governing body own the assets or have had rights to use the assets transferred to them.

Capital expenditure on schools is added to the balances for those schools as reported in the property, plant and equipment note.

Some voluntary aided and controlled schools are owned by trustees. However, these schools are included within the Council's property, plant and equipment as the Council receives the benefit from using the properties in terms of delivery of services and also meets the costs of service provision.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is credited to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement based on amounts due from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

DSG is allocated to budgets delegated to individual schools and centrally retained Council budgets. Expenditure from delegated schools and centrally retained budgets is charged to the comprehensive income and expenditure statement under education and children's services.