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For the purposes of the Code of Practice the following definitions have been adopted:

### **ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

Those principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an entity that specify how the effects of transactions and other events are to be reflected in its financial statements through:

- (i) Recognising,
- (ii) Selecting measurement bases for, and
- (iii) Presenting assets, liabilities, gains, losses and changes to reserves.

Accounting policies do not include estimation techniques.

Accounting policies define the process whereby transactions and other events are reflected in financial statements. For example, an accounting policy for a particular type of expenditure may specify whether an asset or loss is to be recognised; the basis on which it is to be measured; and where in the revenue account or Balance Sheet it is to be presented.

### **ACQUIRED OPERATIONS**

Operations comprise services and divisions of service as defined in the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice. Acquired operations are those operations of the local authority that are acquired in the period.

### **ACTUARIAL GAINS AND LOSSES**

For a defined benefit pension scheme, the changes in actuarial deficits or surpluses that arise because:

- (a) events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation (experience gains and losses), or
- (b) the actuarial assumptions have changed.

### **ASSETS HELD FOR SALE**

Assets which are being marketed for sale for sale in their current condition.

### **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE**

Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset or expenditure which adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing fixed asset.

### **CLASS OF NON CURRENT ASSETS**

The classes of non current assets required to be included in the accounting statements are:

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### **Operational assets**

- Council dwellings
- Other land and buildings
- Vehicles, plant, furniture and equipment
- Community assets
- Intangible assets

### **Non-operational assets**

- Investment properties
- Heritage Assets
- Assets under construction
- Assets held for sale

Further analysis of any of these items should be given if it is necessary to ensure fair presentation.

### **COMMUNITY ASSETS**

Assets that the local authority intends to hold in perpetuity, that have no determinable useful life, and that may have restrictions on their disposal. Examples of community assets are parks, cemeteries and allotments.

### **CONSISTENCY**

The principle that the accounting treatment of like items within an accounting period and from one period to the next is the same.

### **CONSTRUCTIVE OBLIGATION**

An obligation that derives from an authority's actions where:

- (a) by an established pattern of past practice, published policies or a sufficiently specific current statement, the authority has indicated to other parties that it will accept certain responsibilities; and
- (b) as a result, the authority has created a valid expectation on the part of those other parties that it will discharge those responsibilities.

### **CONTINGENT ASSET**

A contingent asset is a possible asset arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the local authority's control.

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### **CONTINGENT LIABILITY**

A contingent liability is either:

- (a) a possible obligation arising from past events whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the authority's control; or
- (b) a present obligation arising from past events where it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

### **CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC CORE**

The corporate and democratic core comprises all activities which local authorities engage in specifically because they are elected, multi-purpose authorities. The cost of these activities are thus over and above those which would be incurred by a series of independent, single purpose, nominated bodies managing the same services. There is therefore no logical basis for apportioning these costs to services.

### **CURRENT SERVICE COST (PENSIONS)**

The increase in the present value of a defined benefit scheme's liabilities expected to arise from employee service in the current period.

### **CURTAILMENT**

For a defined benefit scheme, an event that reduces the expected years of future service of present employees or reduces for a number of employees the accrual of defined benefits for some or all of their future service. Curtailments include:

- (a) termination of employees' services earlier than expected, for example as a result of closing a factory or discontinuing a segment of a business, and
- (b) termination of, or amendment to the terms of, a defined benefit scheme so that some or all future service by current employees will no longer qualify for benefits or will qualify only for reduced benefits.

### **DEFINED BENEFIT SCHEME**

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme other than a defined contribution scheme. Usually, 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 (including notionally funded).

### **DEFINED CONTRIBUTION SCHEME**

A pension or other retirement benefit scheme into which an employer pays regular contributions fixed as an amount or as a percentage of pay and will have no legal or constructive obligation to pay further contributions if the scheme does not have

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sufficient assets to pay all employee benefits relating to employee service in the current and prior periods.

### **DEPRECIATION**

The measure of the cost or revalued amount of the benefits of the fixed asset that have been consumed during the period.

Consumption includes the wearing out, using up or other reduction in the useful life of a fixed asset whether arising from use, effluxion of time or obsolescence through either changes in technology or demand for the goods and services produced by the asset.

### **DISCONTINUED OPERATIONS**

Operations comprise services and divisions of service as defined in CIPFA's Standard Classification of Income and Expenditure. An operation should be classified as discontinued if all of the following conditions are met:

- (a) the termination of the operation is completed either in the period or before the earlier of three months after the commencement of the subsequent period and the date on which the financial statements are approved;
- (b) the activities related to the operation have ceased permanently;
- (c) the termination of the operation has a material effect on the nature and focus of the local authority's operations and represents a material reduction in its provision of services resulting either from its withdrawal from a particular activity (whether a service or division of service or its provision in a specific geographical area) or from a material reduction in net expenditure in the local authority's continuing operations;
- (d) the assets, liabilities, income and expenditure of operations and activities are clearly distinguishable physically, operationally and for financial reporting purposes.

Operations not satisfying all these conditions are classified as continuing.

### **DISCRETIONARY BENEFITS**

Retirement benefits which the employer has no legal, contractual or constructive obligation to award and are awarded under the authority's discretionary powers, such as The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations 1996, the Local Government (Discretionary Payments and Injury Benefits) (Scotland) Regulations 1998, or The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001.

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### **ESTIMATION TECHNIQUES**

The methods adopted by an entity to arrive at estimated monetary amounts, corresponding to the measurement bases selected, for assets, liabilities, gains, losses, and changes to reserves.

Estimation techniques implement the measurement aspects of accounting policies. An accounting policy will specify the basis on which an item is to be measured; where there is uncertainty over the monetary amount corresponding to that basis, the amount will be arrived at by using an estimation technique. Estimation techniques include, for example:

- (a) methods of depreciation, such as straight-line and reducing balance, applied in the context of a particular measurement basis, used to estimate the proportion of the economic benefits of a tangible fixed asset consumed in a period;
- (b) different methods used to estimate the proportion of debts that will not be recovered, particularly where such methods consider a population as a whole rather than individual balances.

### **EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE**

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the Balance Sheet date and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

### **EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS**

Material items which derive from events or transactions that fall within the ordinary activities of the authority and which need to be disclosed separately by virtue of their size or incidence to give fair presentation of the accounts.

### **EXPECTED RATE OF RETURN ON PENSIONS ASSETS**

For a funded defined benefit scheme, the average rate of return, including both income and changes in fair value but net of scheme expenses, expected over the remaining life of the related obligation on the actual assets held by the scheme.

### **EXTRAORDINARY ITEMS**

Material items, possessing a high degree of abnormality, which derive from events or transactions that fall outside the ordinary activities of the authority and which are not expected to recur. They do not include exceptional items nor do they include prior period items merely because they relate to a prior period.

### **FAIR VALUE**

The fair value of an asset is the price at which it could be exchanged in an arm's length transaction less, where applicable, any grants receivable towards the purchase or use of the asset.

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### **FINANCE LEASE**

A finance lease is a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of a fixed asset to the lessee. Whether a lease is a finance lease or an operating lease depends on the substance of the transaction rather than the form of the contract.

### **GENERAL FUND**

The main revenue account of the Council covering all services apart from housing landlord functions.

### **GOING CONCERN**

The concept that the authority will remain in operational existence for the foreseeable future, in particular that the revenue accounts and Balance Sheet assume no intention to curtail significantly the scale of operations.

### **GOVERNMENT GRANTS**

Assistance by government and inter-government agencies and similar bodies, whether local, national or international, in the form of cash or transfers of assets to an authority in return for past or future compliance with certain conditions relating to the activities of the authority.

### **HERITAGE ASSETS**

An asset with historical, artistic, scientific, technological, geophysical or environmental qualities that is held and maintained principally for its contribution to knowledge and culture. Examples of heritage assets are historical buildings, civic regalia, and antiques.

### **IMPAIRMENT**

A reduction in the fair value of a fixed asset below its carrying amount on the Balance Sheet. Destruction or damage to fixed assets will result in an impairment.

### **INTANGIBLE ASSETS**

Assets that have no physical substance, primarily intellectual property. The most common examples for local authority purposes are computer software licenses.

### **INTEREST COST (PENSIONS)**

For a defined benefit scheme, the expected increase during the period in the present value of the scheme liabilities because the benefits are one period closer to settlement.

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### **INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARDS**

Accounting Standards now applicable to local authorities from 2010/11 onwards, replacing the UK GAAP regime.

### **INVESTMENT PROPERTIES**

Interest in land and/or buildings:

- (a) in respect of which construction work and development have been completed; and
- (b) which is held for its investment potential, any rental income being negotiated at arm's length.

### **INVESTMENTS (PENSIONS FUND)**

The investment of the pensions fund will be accounted for in the statements of that fund. However authorities are also required to disclose, as part of the disclosures relating to retirement benefits, the attributable share of pension scheme assets associated with their underlying obligations.

### **LIQUID RESOURCES**

Current asset investments that are readily disposable by the authority without disrupting its business and are either; readily convertible to known amounts of cash at or close to the carrying amount, or traded in an active market.

### **LONG-TERM CONTRACTS**

A contract entered into for the design, manufacture or construction of a single substantial asset or the provision of a service (or a combination of assets or services which together constitute a single project), where the time taken substantially to complete the contract is such that the contract activity falls into different accounting periods. Some contracts with a shorter duration than one year should be accounted for as long-term contracts if they are sufficiently material to the activity of the period.

### **NET BOOK VALUE**

The amount at which fixed assets are included in the Balance Sheet, i.e. their historical cost or current value less the cumulative amounts provided for depreciation.

### **NET CURRENT REPLACEMENT COST**

The cost of replacing or recreating the particular asset in its existing condition and in its existing use, i.e. the cost of its replacement or of the nearest equivalent asset, adjusted to reflect the current condition of the existing asset.

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### **NET DEBT**

The authority's borrowings less cash and liquid resources. Where cash and liquid resources exceed borrowings, reference should be to net funds rather than net debt.

### **NET REALISABLE VALUE**

The open market value of the asset in its existing use (or market value in the case of non-operational assets), less the expenses to be incurred in realising the asset.

### **NON CURRENT ASSETS**

Non-current assets that yield benefits to the local authority and the service it provides for a period of more than one year.

### **NON-OPERATIONAL ASSETS**

Fixed assets held by a local authority but not used or consumed in the delivery of services or for the service or strategic objectives of the authority. Examples of non-operational assets include; investment properties and assets that are surplus to requirements, pending their sale. It should be noted that the incident of rental income does not necessarily mean that the asset is an investment property, it would be deemed an investment property only if the asset is held solely for investment purposes and does not support the service or strategic objectives of the authority and the rental income is negotiated at arms length.

### **OPERATING LEASES**

A lease other than a finance lease.

### **OPERATIONAL ASSETS**

Fixed assets held and occupied, used or consumed by the local authority in the direct delivery of those services for which it has either a statutory or discretionary responsibility or for the service or strategic objectives of the authority.

### **PAST SERVICE COST**

For a defined benefit scheme, the increase in the present value of the scheme liabilities related to employee service in the prior periods arising in the current period as a result of the introduction of, or improvement to, retirement benefits.

### **PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS**

Those material adjustments applicable to prior years arising from changes in accounting policies or from the correction of fundamental errors. A fundamental error is one that is of such significance as to destroy the validity of the financial statements. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.



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### PROJECTED UNIT METHOD

An accrued benefits valuation method in which the scheme liabilities make allowance for projected earnings. An accrued benefits valuation method is a valuation method in which the scheme liabilities at the valuation date relate to:

- (a) the benefits for pensioners and deferred pensioners (i.e. individuals who have ceased to be active members but are entitled to benefits payable at a later date) and their dependants, allowing where appropriate for future increases; and
- (b) the accrued benefits for members in service on the valuation date.

The accrued benefits are the benefits for service up to a given point in time, whether vested rights or not. Guidance on the projected unit method is given in the Guidance Note GN26 issued by the Faculty and Institute of Actuaries.

### RELATED PARTIES

Two or more parties are related parties when at any time during the financial period:

- (i) one party has direct or indirect control of the other party; or
- (ii) the parties are subject to common control from the same source; or
- (iii) one party has influence over the financial and operational policies of the other party to an extent that the other party might be inhibited from pursuing at all times its own separate interests; or
- (iv) the parties, in entering a transaction, are subject to influence from the same source to such an extent that one of the parties to the transaction has subordinated its own separate interests.

Examples of related parties of an authority include:

- (i) central government;
- (ii) local authorities and other bodies precepting or levying demands on the council tax;
- (iii) its subsidiary and associated companies;
- (iv) its joint ventures and joint venture partners;
- (v) its members;
- (vi) its chief officers; and
- (vii) its pension fund.

Examples of related parties of a pension fund include its:

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- (i) administering authority and its related parties;
- (ii) scheduled bodies and their related parties; and
- (iii) trustees and advisers.

These lists are not intended to be comprehensive.

For individuals identified as related parties, the following are also presumed to be related parties:

- (i) members of the close family, or the same household; and
- (ii) partnerships, companies, trusts or other entities in which the individual, or a member of their close family or the same household, has a controlling interest.

### RELATED PARTY TRANSACTION

A related party transaction is the transfer of assets or liabilities or the performance of services by, to or for a related party irrespective of whether a charge is made. Examples of related party transactions include:

- (i) the purchase, sale, lease, rental or hire of assets between related parties;
- (ii) the provision by a pension fund to a related party of assets of loans, irrespective of any direct economic benefit to the pension fund;
- (iii) the provision of a guarantee to a third party in relation to a liability or obligation of a related party;
- (iv) the provision of services to a related party, including the provision of pension fund administration services;
- (v) transactions with individuals who are related parties of an authority or a pension fund, except those applicable to other members of the community or the pension fund, such as council tax, rents and payments of benefits.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive

The materiality of related party transactions should be judged not only in terms of their significance to the authority, but also in relation to its related party.

### REMUNERATION

All sums paid to or receivable by employee and sums due by way of expenses allowances (as far as those sums are chargeable to UK income tax) and the money value of any other benefits received other than cash. Pension contributions payable by the employer are excluded.

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### RESIDUAL VALUE

The net realisable value of an asset at the end of its useful life. Residual values are based on prices prevailing at the date of the acquisition (or revaluation) of the asset and do not take account of expected future price changes.

### RETIREMENT BENEFITS

All forms of consideration given by an employer in exchange for services rendered by employees that are payable after the completion of employment. Retirement benefits do not include termination benefits payable as a result of either (i) an employer's decision to terminate an employee's employment before the normal retirement date or (ii) an employee's decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits, because these are not given in exchange for services rendered by employees.

### SCHEME LIABILITIES

The liabilities of a defined benefit scheme for outgoings due after the valuation date. Scheme liabilities measured using the projected unit method reflect the benefits that the employer is committed to provide for service up to the valuation date.

### SETTLEMENT

An irrevocable action that relieves the employer (or the defined benefit scheme) of the primary responsibility for a pension obligation and eliminates significant risks relating to the obligation and the assets used to effect the settlement. Settlements include:

- (a) a lump-sum cash payment to scheme members in exchange for their rights to receive specified pensions benefits
- (b) the purchase of an irrevocable annuity contract sufficient to cover vested benefits, and
- (c) the transfer of scheme assets and liabilities relating to a group of employees leaving the scheme

### STOCKS

The amount of unused or unconsumed stocks held in expectation of future use. When use will not arise until a later period, it is appropriate to carry forward the amount to be matched to the use or consumption when it arises. Stocks comprise the following categories:

- (a) goods or other assets purchased for resale;
- (b) consumable stores;
- (c) raw materials and components purchased for incorporation into products for sale;

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- (d) products and services in intermediate states of completion;
- (e) long-term contract balances; and
- (f) finished goods.

### **USEFUL LIFE**

The period over which the local authority will derive benefits from the use of fixed assets.

### **VESTED RIGHTS**

In relation to a defined benefit scheme, these are:

- (a) for active members, benefits to which they would unconditionally be entitled on leaving the scheme;
- (b) for deferred pensioners, their preserved benefits;
- (c) for pensioners, pensions to which they are entitled.

Vested rights include where appropriate the related benefits for spouses or other dependants.