



**AGENDA ITEM 08**

**JOINT AUDIT COMMITTEE  
25 MARCH 2021**

**ACCOUNTING POLICIES, CRITICAL  
ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY  
SOURCES OF ESTIMATION  
UNCERTAINTY**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To highlight the accounting policies to be used in the Group's 2020-21 Statement of Accounts and ask the Joint Audit Committee (the Committee) to review and accept the accounting policies detailed in **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 To provide detail on the critical judgements that have been made in applying the accounting policies and the assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty (**Appendix B**).
- 1.3 To set out any key technical accounting changes that have been adopted by the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21 (known as the Code) that have influenced the accounting policies and will affect what is presented and disclosed in the Statement of Accounts for 2020-21.
- 1.4 Changes from 2019-20 are highlighted grey.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The preparation of the Statement of Accounts is governed by the Account and Audit Regulations (2015), in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) known as the Code.
- 2.2 The Code is compliant with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) framework, which is a set of constantly evolving accounting rules used internationally to support the formation of financial statements in the private and public sector. This evolving state means that new accounting standards are formed on a regular basis along with re-interpretations of existing standards. Each year the Code is updated with additional technical requirements based on CIPFA's interpretation of these new and

amended standards and the dates that these should be introduced to local authority accounts. As a result the accounting policies are reviewed annually to ensure that they remain current and relevant.

- 2.3 Following the UK's withdrawal from the remit of the EU-endorsement framework, the Code will be based on standards adopted for UK application under the terms of the International Accounting Standards and European Public Limited-Liability Company (Amendment etc.) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.
- 2.4 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chief Finance Officer is charged with the proper administration of the Group's financial affairs and as such must select suitable accounting policies and make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. In recent years the requirement to close down the accounts earlier highlights that the Audit Committee should have an opportunity to consider these accounting policies, the critical judgements and the major sources of estimation uncertainty that are going to be applied to the accounts in advance of their publication with the draft accounts.

### **3. THE ACCOUNTING POLICIES FOR 2020-21**

- 3.1 The Group's accounting policies are the specific principles, conventions, rules and practices that are applied in preparing and presenting the annual Statement of Accounts. The policies have to be disclosed as a note within the annual accounts and are presented as the first note to the main accounting statements. The proposed accounting policies are included at **Appendix A** with any changes highlighted (grey).

### **4. CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY**

- 4.1 The PCC should disclose the judgements that management has made in the process of applying the accounting policies and those that have the most significant effect on the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are set out in **Appendix B**.
- 4.2 The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the PCC 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 different from the assumptions and estimates. The items to be presented in the Group Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the following financial year are set out at **Appendix B**. The valuer opinion of the Land and Building valuations has not yet been received for the Balance Sheet date, however given the continuing impact of the COVID19 pandemic it is expected that a material uncertainty will remain.

### **5. THE MAIN TECHNICAL CHANGES FOR 2020-21**

- 5.1 No new Accounting Standards have required adoption in the 2020-21 Accounts.
- 5.2 IFRS 16 Leases was due to replace IAS 17 from 1 April 2020. Under the new standard the current distinction between operating and finance leases is removed for lessees and, subject to certain exceptions, lessees will recognise all leases on their balance sheet as a right of use asset and a liability to make the lease payments (known as moving from 'off balance sheet' to 'on balance sheet'). However, due to the workload, reprioritisation and resource issues facing finance staff nationally, CIPFA have made the decision to

delay implementing IFRS 16 until the 2022/23 financial year. This year we will continue to understand and work through the impact of this change and the disclosures required.

- 5.3 IAS1 and IAS8 have been amended to clarify the definition of Material. The revised standards state: Information is material if omitting, misstating or obscuring it could reasonably be expected to influence decisions that the primary users of general purpose financial statements make on the basis of those financial statements, which provide financial information about a specific reporting entity.  
These amendments have not affected our Accounting policies.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report and accept the Accounting Policies to be used in the Group's 2020-21 Statement of Accounts.
- 6.2 The Committee is asked to review and accept the critical judgements used in applying the accounting policies and the assumptions about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty.

Mark Kenyon  
Chief Finance Officer

## STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

### General Principles

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Group and PCC's transactions for the 2020-21 financial year and its position at the year end of 31 March 2021. The Commissioner is required to prepare an Annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 which those regulations require to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21 published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and supported by International Financial reporting Standards. Guidance notes issued by CIPFA on the application of accounting standards to local authorities have in general been followed, and any exceptions to this are disclosed below. The policies below reflect the powers and responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner as designated by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Home Office Financial Management Code of Practice for the Police Service of England and Wales 2012.

### a. Property, Plant and Equipment

#### Recognition

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the supply of police 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. These Non-Current Assets are disclosed in the Balance Sheet at current value based on valuation or depreciated historic cost. The cost of an item of Property, Plant and Equipment is recognised where it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the asset will flow to the Group and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably.

Assets made up of a number of components with significantly different economic lives have been reviewed to identify if these components should be treated as separate assets and depreciated over their own useful economic lives per the requirements of the CIPFA code of practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020-21. It has been determined that such treatment does not make a material difference to the values of the Group's assets and component accounting of these assets has not been applied in 2020-21. This approach will be reviewed each year but is not expected to apply to buildings as replacement items are generally purchased from revenue budgets.

Items of capital expenditure with values below £10,000 which do not form part of a combined asset for a single purpose may be considered de minimis if there is limited benefit in classifying it as capital expenditure and will therefore not be recorded as a non-current asset if this is the case.

#### Measurement

All property, plant and equipment assets will be measured initially at cost, representing the costs directly attributable to acquiring or constructing the asset and bringing it to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management. Where assets are still under construction at the Balance Sheet date these will be held at Historical Cost and will not be subject to depreciation.

Assets will be reviewed for impairment at the end of each reporting period.

Property 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 value at the year-end, but as a minimum every five years. Revaluation gains will be recognised in the Revaluation Reserve unless they reverse a previous Revaluation loss. All Revaluation losses on revalued assets will be recognised in the Revaluation Reserve up to the amount in the Revaluation Reserve for each respective asset. Thereafter revaluation losses will be recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. No distinction will be made between losses due to the clear consumption of economic benefit and those due to a general fall in prices specific to the asset.

Where there is no active market because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost is used as an estimate of current value.

Any surplus assets held by the Group will be valued at fair value, estimated at highest and best use from a market participant's perspective.

### **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:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- Where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is 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.

### **Valuation**

Freehold properties which the Group includes in its property portfolio were valued in December 2018 by Savills (Property Agents) in accordance with the statements of asset valuation practice and guidance notes of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Property and the associated land will be revalued at intervals no greater than five years. Buildings are written down over their useful lives as provided at valuation. Revalued assets have been valued at current value based on Existing Use Value in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards or Depreciated Replacement cost for specialised assets.

Plant and machinery is included in the valuation of the building in which it is located. ICT and General Equipment is valued at depreciated historic cost as a proxy for fair value as the assets are written down to give a useful life of less than five years. Vehicles are also valued at depreciated historic cost and lives are set when purchased as between three and ten years to reflect the proposed use for the vehicle.

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets by the allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives with the exception of freehold land and assets under construction. Where land value is measured separately, it is deemed to have an indefinite life and is therefore not depreciated. Depreciation is calculated on a straight line allocation over the useful life of the property or equipment.

| Asset category           | Min Asset Life (years) | Max Asset life (years) |
|--------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Buildings                | 5                      | 75                     |
| Vehicles, IT & Equipment | 3                      | 10                     |
| Intangibles              | 2                      | 20                     |

## b. Intangible Assets

### Recognition

Intangible assets are non-monetary assets without physical substance which are capable of being sold separately from the rest of the Group's business or which arise from contractual or other legal rights where expenditure of at least £10,000 is incurred. They are recognised only where it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to, or service potential be provided to the Group and where the cost of the asset can be measured reliably.

#### *Internally generated intangible assets*

Internally generated goodwill, brands, publishing titles, mastheads and similar items are not capitalised as intangible assets.

Expenditure on development of an intangible asset will only be capitalised where all the following can be demonstrated:

- The project is technically feasible to the point of completion and will result in an intangible asset for sale or use;
- The Group intends to develop the asset and sell or use it;
- The Group has the ability to sell or use the asset;
- The asset will demonstrate probable future economic benefits or service benefits;
- Adequate financial, technical or other resources are available to the Group to complete the development and sell or use the asset; and
- The Group can reliably measure the expenses attributable to the asset during its development.

#### *Software*

Software which is integral to the operating system is capitalised as part of the relevant item of property, plant and equipment. Software which is not integral to the operation of hardware (e.g. application software) is capitalised as an intangible asset.

### Measurement

Intangible assets are recognised initially at cost, comprising all directly attributable costs needed to create, produce and prepare the asset to the point where it is capable of operating in the manner intended by management. If an active market arises for any internally generated intangible assets these would then be valued at fair value.

## **Amortisation**

Intangible assets are amortised over their expected useful economic life in a manner consistent with the consumption of economic or service benefits. The amortisation periods for intangible assets are, in general, three years for software licences and ten years for internally developed software.

### **c. Assets Held for Sale**

Non-current assets held for sale will be measured at the lower of their carrying value and fair value less costs to sell at initial reclassification and at 31 March each year. Assets held for sale from 1 April 2009 must satisfy strict criteria to be classified as held for sale. That is, the asset must be available for immediate sale in its present condition, the sale must be highly probable and the asset must be actively marketed for sale at a reasonable price in relation to its current fair value. Usually the sale should be expected to be completed within one year and the assets will be reclassified as Current Assets within the Balance Sheet.

### **d. Intra-group funding arrangements and cost recognition**

The Chief Constable recognises the costs of salaries of police officers, police community support officers and police staff with the exception of those staff working in the Office for Policing and Crime (OPCC). There is no transfer of real cash between the PCC and Chief Constable and the latter does not have a bank account into which monies can be received or paid from. Costs are recognised in the Chief Constable's Accounts to reflect the PCC's resources consumed in the direction and control of day-to-day policing at the request of the Chief Constable. The Accounts reflect the ownership of the assets by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Chief Constable recognises the employment and post-employment costs and liabilities of all staff under his direction and control in his Accounts. The PCC recognises the employment and post-employment costs of the staff under his direction and control in his accounts. To fund these costs and liabilities the Chief Constable's Accounts show as income a transfer of resources from the PCC to the Chief Constable for the cost of policing services. The Chief Constable will exercise sections 21 and 22 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Chief Constable will disclose the pension liability and a corresponding pension reserve for all staff under his direction and control in his Balance Sheet. The Chief Constable will also disclose the police pensions top-up grant in his accounts to reflect income received to offset the cost of pensions paid in year.

### **e. Redemption of Debt**

Under the Local Government Act 1985, outstanding loan debt relating to police services was transferred to the former West Midlands Police Authority (WMPA) from the West Midlands County Council on 1 April 1986. This debt is serviced by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council within a Metropolitan Debt Administration Fund, and loan charges are reimbursed by the PCCWM to that fund, and are unaffected by the minimum revenue provision applicable under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Loan debt incurred from 1 April 1986 is directly administered by PCCWM. Instalments of principal are charged to revenue in accordance with the statutory minimum revenue provision, calculated at 4% of this debt for historical debt and in line with depreciation for borrowing since 2008, net of reserves set aside for debt redemption.

### **f. Leasing**

Rental payments on operating leases are charged to the revenue account on a straight line basis over the term of the lease, generally meaning that rentals are charged when they

become payable. For finance leases where the Group is a lessee the Group recognises finance leases as assets and liabilities at the present value of the minimum lease payments. The Group's incremental borrowing rate on PWLB loans is used to determine the interest rate implicit in the lease. Any initial indirect costs of the lease are added to the value of the asset. In 2020-21 the PCCWM has not recognised any finance leases, however a review takes place each year to determine if any finance leases exist.

#### **g. Debtors and Creditors**

Debtors and creditors have been accrued when preparing the revenue accounts of the Group. Police and police staff overtime worked in March is accrued to align the overtime year with the financial year.

The outstanding debt owing to the PCCWM is analysed at the end of each year. This analysis has historically highlighted that there is a very low risk of non-payment of debts. Therefore, the PCC has historically not provided for expected credit losses on trade debtors but may do so should circumstance change. However, it does recognise a proportion of Billing Authority impairment allowance for expected credit losses for non-payment of council tax in its Balance Sheet. The overall position regarding collection fund balances is shown in the collection fund adjustment account.

Capital expenditure is included in the accounts on an accruals basis.

#### **h. Inventories and long-term contracts**

Inventories are maintained for such items as vehicle spares, vehicle fuel, uniforms, stationery and reprographics.

Inventories shown in the balance sheet are valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value.

Any long-term contracts where staged payments are not made will be accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

#### **i. Reserves**

The PCCWM 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 in that year to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then appropriated back into the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement so that there is no net charge against council tax for the expenditure.

The purpose and nature of reserves (split between useable and unusable reserves) maintained by the PCC are disclosed in the Movement in Reserves Statement with a detailed breakdown of useable and unusable reserves provided in the notes to the Movement in Reserves Statement and to the Balance Sheet.

#### **j. Provisions**

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the PCC/Group 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 obligation.

Provisions are charged as an expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the PCC/Group becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of 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. Any 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 is made) the provision is reversed and credited back to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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 if it is virtually certain that the reimbursement will be received if the PCC/Group settles the obligation.

The provision for expected credit losses (previously termed bad and doubtful debts) is likely to remain at nil on the basis of the very low risk of non-payment of debts. However, the group does acknowledge that it holds a portion of Billing Authority impairment allowances for bad debts for non-payment of council tax in its Balance Sheet.

#### **k. Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets**

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Group 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 Group. Contingent liabilities can also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either the outflow of economic resources is not probable or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but are disclosed as notes to the accounts.

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Group 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 Group.

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.

#### **l. Financial Liabilities**

Financial liabilities are recognised in the Balance Sheet when the Group becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to 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 payable. Interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year in the loan agreement.

Discounts and premiums on the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing will be credited and debited to Net Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year of repurchase/settlement should they arise. If repurchase takes place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio and involves the modification or exchange of instruments, the premium or discount will be deducted or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan. The writing down to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will then be spread over the life of the loan by adjusting the effective interest rate on the loan.

#### **m. Financial Assets**

The financial assets of the Group are classified by identifying the cash flow characteristics associated with the asset and the Business model reasoning for holding the asset. This will classify the value of the asset to be disclosed in the accounts which will be either Amortised cost, Fair value through Other Comprehensive Income or Fair value through Profit or Loss.

Investments with other Local Authority Bodies, Banks and Building Societies will be carried at their amortised cost. Annual credits to 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. This means that the amount of loans presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable plus accrued interest receivable. The interest credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Assets are assessed for impairment due to the likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the contract will not be made. If the value of the potential impairment is material to the investment, the asset is written down and a charge made 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. Otherwise the risk is disclosed within the Accounts, but the carrying amount is not adjusted.

Other Financial Assets held not solely for payment of principal and interest which don't achieve their Business model through collecting contractual cash flows will be classified as Fair Value through Profit or loss. For these assets, gains and losses in Fair value will be applied to the Surplus and Deficit on the Provision of Services in the year they arise. Where statutory regulations exist for Pooled Investment Funds, gains and losses on these assets are held in an unusable reserve for the duration of the regulation or until the asset is derecognised.

#### **n. Treatment of Grants**

Net revenue expenditure is expressed before deducting government grants in support of the overall expenditure of the PCC/Group i.e. police grant and revenue support grant. Other revenue grants are smaller and specific to particular aspects of the Group's functions and have been shown as income in arriving at net expenditure.

Where capital grants are received in 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 Account.

Since the Group accounts have been completed on an IFRS basis, revenue and capital grants and contributions will be accounted for on an accruals basis and recognised immediately as income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, except to the extent that

the grant or contribution has a condition attached which the Group has not yet satisfied. Such grants and contributions will be recognised initially in the relevant grants and contributions received in advance account. Capital grants that do not have any conditions imposed upon them and which are not spent at the year-end will be transferred to the Capital Grants Unapplied Account.

The police pensions top-up grant – although received by the PCC will be disclosed in the Chief Constable's accounts on the basis that all police pension related costs are disclosed in the Chief Constable's accounts. This grant offsets the difference between the cost of police pensions in the year and the funding for those pensions.

## **o. Employee Benefits**

### **Benefits payable during employment**

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees and these benefits are recognised as an expense in the year in which the employee renders service to the Group.

IAS 19 Employee Benefits requires the Group to account for short term compensating absences which include time owing and annual leave accrued by accruing for the benefits which have accumulated but are untaken by the Balance Sheet date. The amount will be recognised as a creditor in the general fund balance in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but reversed out to a short term accumulated compensated absences account in the Balance Sheet. The balance on this account will be adjusted at each Balance Sheet date to account for any increase or decrease in the balance of accumulating short term absences. The cost of annual leave entitlement and time off in lieu earned but not taken at the end of the period is recognised in the financial statements to the extent that employees are permitted to carry forward leave into the next period.

### **Termination Benefits**

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Group to terminate a member of staff's employment before their normal retirement date or their decision to accept voluntary redundancy. These are charged as an expense in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision or Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Group can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the Group recognises costs for restructuring.

### **Post-employment benefits**

The Police Pensions Scheme is unfunded and therefore net pension payments are charged against the year in which they are made, rather than being provided for by means of a pension fund. All receipts and payments relating to the 1987, 2006 and 2015 Police Pensions Regulations are generally receivable into and payable out of the pensions fund and specific provision is made for officers' contributions and inward transfer values to be paid into the fund and for awards payable and outward transfer values to be paid out of the fund. Transfers into and out of the fund are recognised as income to (or expenditure from) the Police Pension fund account in the year in which the transfer occurs.

Pension payments to former police staff are funded through an employer's contribution to the West Midlands Pension Fund (the LGPS), administered by Wolverhampton City Council. This is accounted for as a defined benefit scheme:

- The rate of contribution in 2020-21 was 18.8% on average.
- The liabilities of the scheme attributable to the Group 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 future earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using an appropriate discount rate set by the Actuary (usually based on the indicative rate of return on AA rated corporate bonds of appropriate duration).
- The assets of the fund attributable to the Group 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 pensions liability is analysed into the following components:
  - i. *Current service cost* – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year
  - ii. *Past service cost* – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme curtailment or amendment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – this is debited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs
  - iii. *Net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset)* – net interest expenses for the Group – 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.
  - iv. *Gains or losses on settlements and curtailments* – the result of actions to relieve the Group of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees. This is debited or credited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non-Distributed Costs.
  - v. *Re-measurements* – this comprises of (1) the return on plan assets excluding the amount included in net interest on the net defined pension liability (asset) charged to the Pension Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure and (2) actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions. These are charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
  - vi. *Contributions paid to the pension fund* - cash paid as employers' contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Group to the pension fund in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves

Statement this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and any amounts payable to the fund but unpaid at the year-end.

The PCC will recognise the cost of police staff pensions for those staff under his direction and control as these costs are provided separately by the actuary.

The PCC recognises the cost of police staff pensions only for those staff under his direction and control which are deemed to be the staffing of the Office for Policing and Crime. All other police and police staff pensions' costs are recognised in the accounting statements of the Chief Constable.

The PCC recognises actuarial gains and losses only to the extent that these relate to the staff of the Office for Policing and Crime.

An allowance for the McCloud adjustment is included within the pension liability. The McCloud adjustment came about as a result of the Government reformed public service pension schemes in 2014 and 2015 in which they introduced protections for older members. In December 2018, the Court of Appeal ruled that younger members have been discriminated against because the protections do not apply to them. The Government has confirmed that there will be changes to all main public sector schemes, including the LGPS, to remove this age discrimination.

#### **p. Interest**

The payment / receipt of external interest is debited / credited directly to Net Operating Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

#### **q. Council Tax Income**

The council tax precept income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the accrued income for the year. This income reflects the debtors for council tax due but not paid by council taxpayers and creditors for council taxpayers who have overpaid their council tax.

The difference between the council tax precept income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by regulation is included in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Collection Fund Adjustment Account is shown as part of the unusable reserves in the Balance Sheet.

The collection of council tax by the billing authorities is in substance an agency arrangement and the cash collected by the billing authorities from council tax debtors belongs proportionately to the billing authorities and the PCCWM. There will therefore be a debtor/creditor position between the billing authorities and the PCCWM since the net cash paid to the PCCWM in the year will not be its share of cash collected from council taxpayers. The PCCWM also recognises in its Balance Sheet, its share of council tax debtor and creditor balances and impairment allowances from each of its billing authorities collection funds.

#### **r. Cash and Cash Equivalents**

The PCC/Group is required to account for short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to insignificant risk of change in value as cash equivalents. The PCC/Group has determined that cash equivalents are best

determined as short term investments with one month or less to maturity from their date of acquisition. Therefore existing short term investments with one month or less to maturity will be reclassified as cash equivalents as at the Balance Sheet date.

#### **s. Revenue Recognition**

Revenue will be recognised to depict the transfer of promised goods or services to the service recipient in an amount that reflects the consideration to which the PCC/Group expects to be entitled in exchange for those goods or services. This will occur when a performance obligation is satisfied by transferring a promised good or service to a service recipient either at the time of transfer, for obligations satisfied at a point in time, or over time, using accruals where necessary to recognise revenue in the financial year the obligation has been met.

Revenue from interest, royalties' dividends and non-exchange transactions will be recognised when it is probable that the economic benefits of service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Group and this amount can be measured reliably.

#### **t. Value Added Tax**

All material Income and Expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT as all VAT collected is payable to HM Revenue and Customs and all VAT paid is recoverable from them.

VAT payable is included as an expense where it is not recoverable from HRMC, although this relates only to a very small proportion of the Group's overall expenditure.

#### **u. Events after the Balance Sheet date**

Events which occur between the end of the reporting period (31 March) and the date when the Statement of Accounts are authorised for issue are known as post-Balance Sheet events. Two types of events can be identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – these are known as adjusting events and the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect these events
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – these are known as non-adjusting events and the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events. However, where the event would have a material effect on the accounts, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events which appear after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

#### **v. Accruals of Income and Expenditure**

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

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised at the time of transfer to the purchaser and when it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Group
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Group can measure reliably the performance obligations of the transaction which are completed and it is

probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Group.

- 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 retrospectively 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.

#### **w. Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates and errors**

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for 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 Authority's financial position or financial performance.

Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively 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 comparable amounts for the prior period.

#### **x. Joint Operations**

Joint operations are arrangements where the parties have joint control of the arrangement have rights to the assets and obligations for the liabilities relating to the arrangement. The PCC has two joint operations. These are the Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU) and the Central Motorway Police Group (CMPG). The activities undertaken by the Group in conjunction with other joint operators involve the use of the assets and resources of the joint operators. In relation to its interest in a joint operation, the group recognises:

- Its assets, including its share of any assets held jointly
- Its liabilities, including its share of any liabilities incurred jointly
- Its revenue from the sale of its share of the output arising from the joint operation
- Its share of the revenue from the sale of the output by the joint operation
- Its expenses, including its share of any expenses incurred jointly

## Appendix B

### CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies set out in the Statement of Accounts in 2020-21 the PCC has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions which could significantly affect the amounts recognised in the financial statements. The critical judgements made in the statement of accounts are presented in the following paragraph:

- (i) A judgement has been made about the cost to be included in the financial statements in relation to the Chief Constable and the impacts of this on the PCC and Group accounts.

Following the Stage 2 transfer of resources, which was interpreted based on the Scheme of Consents and Delegation between the two corporation soles, the Chief Constable controls and directs police officers, PCSOs and the majority of police staff (excluding those staff directly employed by the PCC to manage his office), therefore all pay and pensions costs associated with these staff groups are presented in the Chief Constable's accounts.

The CFOs for the PCC and Chief Constable have determined that the non-pay costs attributable to the assets and liabilities of the PCC will also form part of the cost of the Chief Constable, since these are consumed under his direction. The carrying value of the assets and liabilities remain with the PCC as he has control of them.

### 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 Group 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 PCCWM and Group Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021 for which there are significant risks of material adjustment in the next financial year are detailed below:

#### Pensions' liability

- (i) Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex actuarial judgements related to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and the expected rate of return on the assets invested by the pension scheme. The PCC uses two firms of actuaries to provide the Group with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied to the Police Pension Schemes and the Local Government Pension Scheme.

#### Land and Building Valuations

- (i) The impact of COVID-19 has affected market valuations for areas including the real estate market. The valuers employed by the PCC have reported under material valuation uncertainty regulations and advised that there is a need for frequent review of the portfolio.