

SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY



STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

2022/2023

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NARRATIVE REPORT

The purpose of this narrative is to explain the structure of the accounts, briefly describe the activity and structure of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) and consider the overall financial position of the Authority in the current economic context.

The Authority's Statement of Accounts is a publication required by law; the prime purpose of which is to provide clear information about the financial position, performance and accountability of resources for the Authority for the financial year.

The Authority's accounts for 2022/2023 consist of the following;

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

This sets out the respective responsibilities of the Authority and its officers for the preparation and approval of the Statement of Accounts.

Annual Governance Statement

This statement provides a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Authority's governance framework including the system of internal control and risk management systems, so as to give assurance on their effectiveness and to produce a management action plan to address identified weaknesses.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) – This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation. Local Authorities raise taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations which may be different from the accounting cost. Even though this Authority does not raise income related to tax, local authority accounting regulations stipulate these accounts are prepared accordingly.

Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS) – This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure) and other, non-usable reserves. The Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement line shows the true economic cost of providing the Authority's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. This is different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund and the Increase/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund before any discretionary transfers are undertaken.

Balance Sheet – The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Authority. The net assets of the Authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Authority. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Authority may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (e.g. Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would

only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the MiRS line, 'adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

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

Fire Fighters Pension Fund Account – This shows the financial position of the Fire Fighters pension fund account, indicating whether the Pension Fund owes, or is owed money by the Welsh Government in order to balance the account, together with details of its net assets. The Account consolidates the 1992, 2006, 2015 and Retained Modified Firefighter Pension Schemes.

Notes to the accounting statements - The notes present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used. They disclose information not presented elsewhere in the financial statements that are relevant to an understanding of them.

Reporting, Audit and Materiality

These accounts are produced in draft to meet the initial 31 May financial reporting deadline for the year ending 31 March each year. From 1 June the accounts undergo a process of audit to determine whether or not they provide a true and fair view of the financial performance and position of the Authority. The deadline for reporting and approving the audited accounts by the Fire & Rescue Authority is 31 July.

The audit process is important in providing an objective and expert opinion on the state of the accounts and in doing so, auditors employ the concept of materiality in reporting any departures from accepted accounting principles and regulation. The concept of materiality means that financial information is material to the financial statements if it would change the opinion or view of the reader.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is responsible for providing an efficient and effective fire and rescue service to the communities of South Wales. The Authority covers 10 unitary authority areas and is made up of 24 elected members drawn from those authorities in proportion to the number of registered electors.

The Authority incurs revenue spending on items, which are generally consumed within the year, and this is largely financed by contributions from the 10 constituent local authorities. For 2022/23, the proportions were as follows:

| | Values £000 | % |
|---|------------------------|------------|
| Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council | 3,548 | 4 |
| Bridgend County Borough Council | 7,544 | 9 |
| Caerphilly County Borough Council | 9,287 | 12 |
| Cardiff County Council | 18,776 | 24 |
| Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council | 3,107 | 4 |
| Monmouthshire County Council | 4,871 | 6 |
| Newport County Borough Council | 8,067 | 10 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council | 12,385 | 16 |
| Torfaen County Borough Council | 4,801 | 6 |
| The Vale of Glamorgan Council | 6,918 | 9 |
| Total (note 29) | 79,304 | 100 |

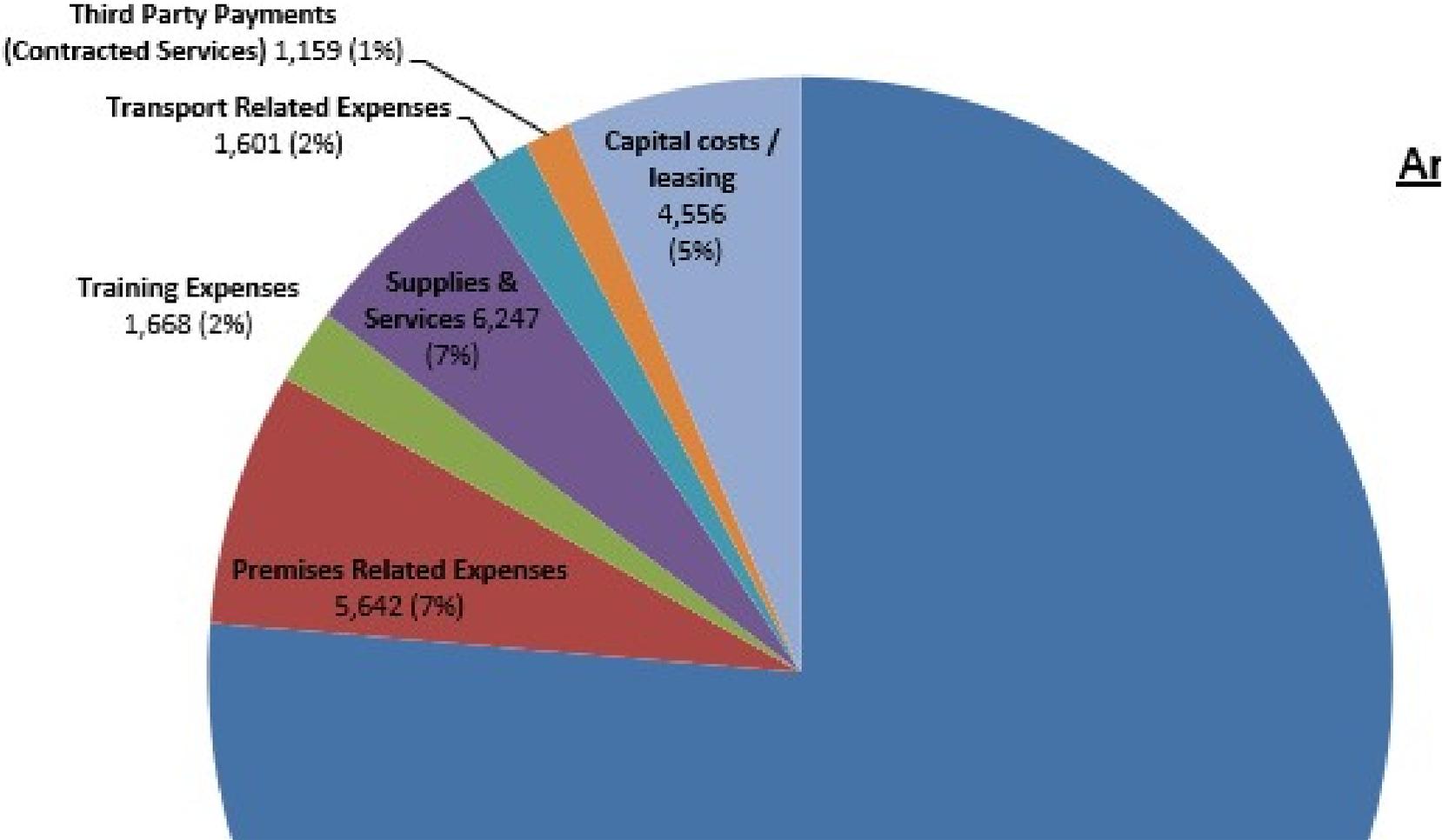
Financial Performance in 2022/23

The Authority restricted the 2022/23 budget uplift to 2.29% which was a challenging settlement in light of the UK inflation crisis that transpired between budget setting and the beginning of financial year. Several factors allowed us to maintain this settlement i.e. income from rate rebates, financial resilience and effective budget management.

The financial performance is presented below. Both the revenue and capital positions have been scrutinised by the Finance, Audit and Performance Management (FAPM) Committee and the Finance and Asset Management Scrutiny Group throughout the year.

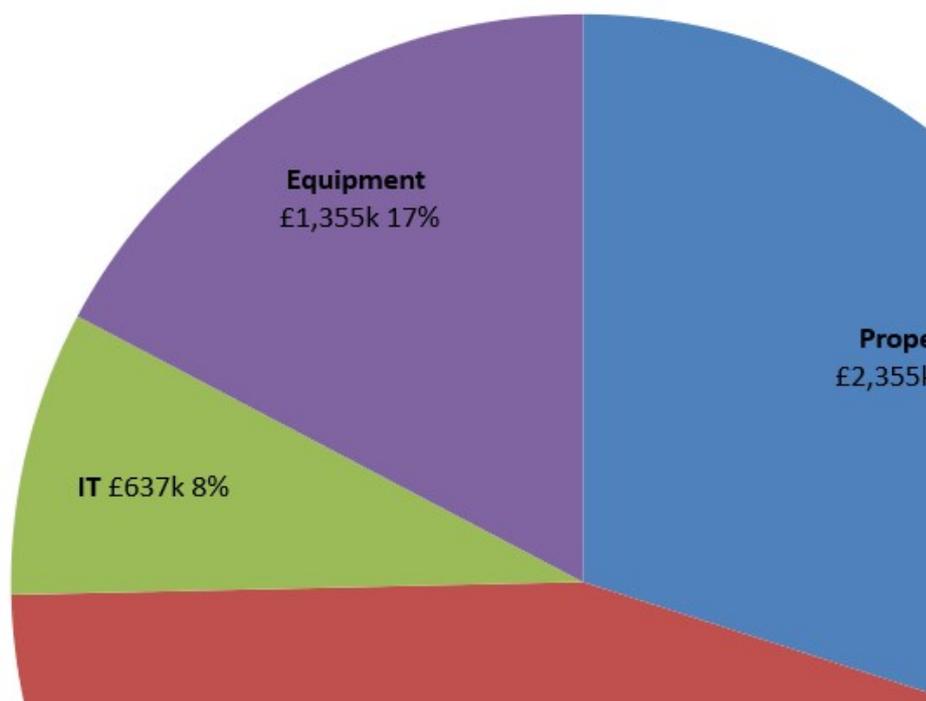
| Budget Outturn | Budget £000 | Actual £000 | Variance £000 |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Revenue | | | |
| Expenditure (note 5) | 83,537 | 87,856 | 4,319 |
| Income (note 5) | (4,233) | (8,657) | (4,424) |
| Net Expenditure (note 5) | 79,304 | 79,199 | (105) |
| Unitary Authority (note 29) | 79,304 | 79,304 | 0 |
| (Surplus) /Deficit | 0 | (105) | (105) |
| Capital (inc slippage) | | | |
| Capital Spending (note 30) | 12,021 | 7,857 | (4,164) |

Expenditure by type 2022/23



Capital expenditure in the year amounted to £7.9 million

Analysis of Capital Expenditure for 2022/23
(£000's)



Borrowing

The Prudential Code allows the Authority to determine its own borrowing limits subject to the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) deeming it to be prudent, sustainable and affordable. Loans outstanding relate to finance secured with the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). In accordance with its Treasury Management Strategy the Authority has continued to utilise cash balances to fund the capital programme therefore no PWLB loans were taken out this year.

Charges for Consumption of Capital Assets

The charge made to the service revenue account to reflect the cost of fixed assets used in the provision of services was £5.6 million. This is a notional charge for depreciation and impairments, an adjustment is made to nullify the effect on the general fund balance.

Non Financial Performance in 2022/23

In 2022/23 the Authority successfully delivered a balance of prevention, protection and emergency response services, with the improvement objectives for the year continuing to be aimed at reducing deliberate fire setting and improving and ensuring the future sustainability of the Service.

The Finance Audit and Performance Management Committee regularly received reports on service performance and indicators as well as scrutinising the progress report cards against each of the strategic objectives.

The following link highlights some of the activity in making South Wales safer in the past twelve months - [Performance Statistics - South Wales Fire and Rescue Service](#)

More qualitative service information is available in the Annual Governance Statement contained within this statement.

Future Financial Plans

The approach to budget uplifts of 2022/23 could not be replicated due to the continued inflation crisis and the cessation of various funding streams, i.e. Superannuation Contributions Adjusted for Past Experience (SCAPE) and Firelink. Consequently the 2023/24 revenue budget approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority gave an average increase of 12.70% taking the annual budget to £89.4 million.

The medium term financial strategy assumes further funding pressures making the challenge of producing a balanced budget increasingly difficult when faced with inflationary pressures and the investment required to maintain operational effectiveness.

The capital programme continues to invest in our asset portfolio, in particular refurbishment of stations, vehicle replacement and investment in large operational equipment projects, PPE and ICT. Our continued investment is critical in ensuring our personnel have the best equipment available and are effective in serving our communities.

Pension liability

In 2022/23, there were 47 whole-time duty system (WDS) and 11 retained staff retirements and 11 deferrals.

Under International Accounting Standard (IAS) 19 (Employee Benefits) the Authority is required to provide details of assets and future liabilities for pensions payable to employees, both past and present. This is outlined in greater detail in the disclosures to the accounts (note 34).

Provisions, Contingencies and Write offs

The provision remains for the outstanding payments to on-call fire fighters as a result of the part time workers' conditions settlement.

Reserve Accounting

At the end of the financial year, the Statement of Accounts shows financial reserves carried forward into 2022/23. This is consistent with the accounting treatment of previous years, with the maintenance and utilisation of reserves forming a cornerstone of corporate financial stability and operational service planning in the short and medium term.

Impact of the Current Economic Climate

Various supply chains continue to challenge the Service and have not recovered to pre-pandemic and pre-brexit levels of stability. We are feeling the effects of the war in Ukraine and inflation crisis in the economy and our ability to attract competitive suppliers in our procurement processes in addition to experiencing more difficulties in contract management. We have adopted flexible pre-contracting approaches in addition to adopting a collaborative approach to contract management with internal Service departments and external partners. Regular supply chain impact analysis is continuing and links with our National Fire Chief Council (NFCC) network are vital in sharing information nationally to gain understanding.

The Service is continuing its support of national charities, i.e. Fire Aid, who in turn provide support to our firefighting counterparts in Ukraine with donations of end of life personal protective equipment (PPE), operational and communications equipment. Preparations are underway to support a donation convoy in the new financial year.

Additional Information

Additional information about these accounts is available from the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property. Interested members of the public also have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed. Availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised on the website for the Authority (www.southwales-fire.gov.uk).

Acknowledgements

Finally, I wish to thank all Finance staff and their colleagues throughout the Authority, who have worked on the preparation of these statements. I also wish to thank the Chief Fire Officer and Corporate Directors for their assistance and co-operation throughout this process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Barton', written in a cursive style.

Chris Barton
Treasurer

Dated:31/05/2023

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The Authority's Responsibilities

The Authority is required:

- to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Treasurer.
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.
- to approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Treasurer's Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts, including the Pension Fund Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 ("the Code").

In preparing this statement of accounts, the Treasurer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Local Authority Code.

The Treasurer has also:

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

CERTIFICATE OF THE TREASURER & FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY CHAIR

I certify that the accounts provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at the 31 March 2023 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Signature: Treasurer

Date:

I confirm that these accounts were approved by the Fire Authority;

**Signature: Finance, Audit & Performance Management
Chair – South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority**

Date:

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT YEAR ENDING MARCH 2023

This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) - the “Delivering Good Governance Framework.” This Annual Governance Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the framework and its seven core principles of good governance to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and agreed priorities (See Fig.1).

Relationships between the Seven Principles for Good Governance in the Public Sector - Achieving the intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all times.

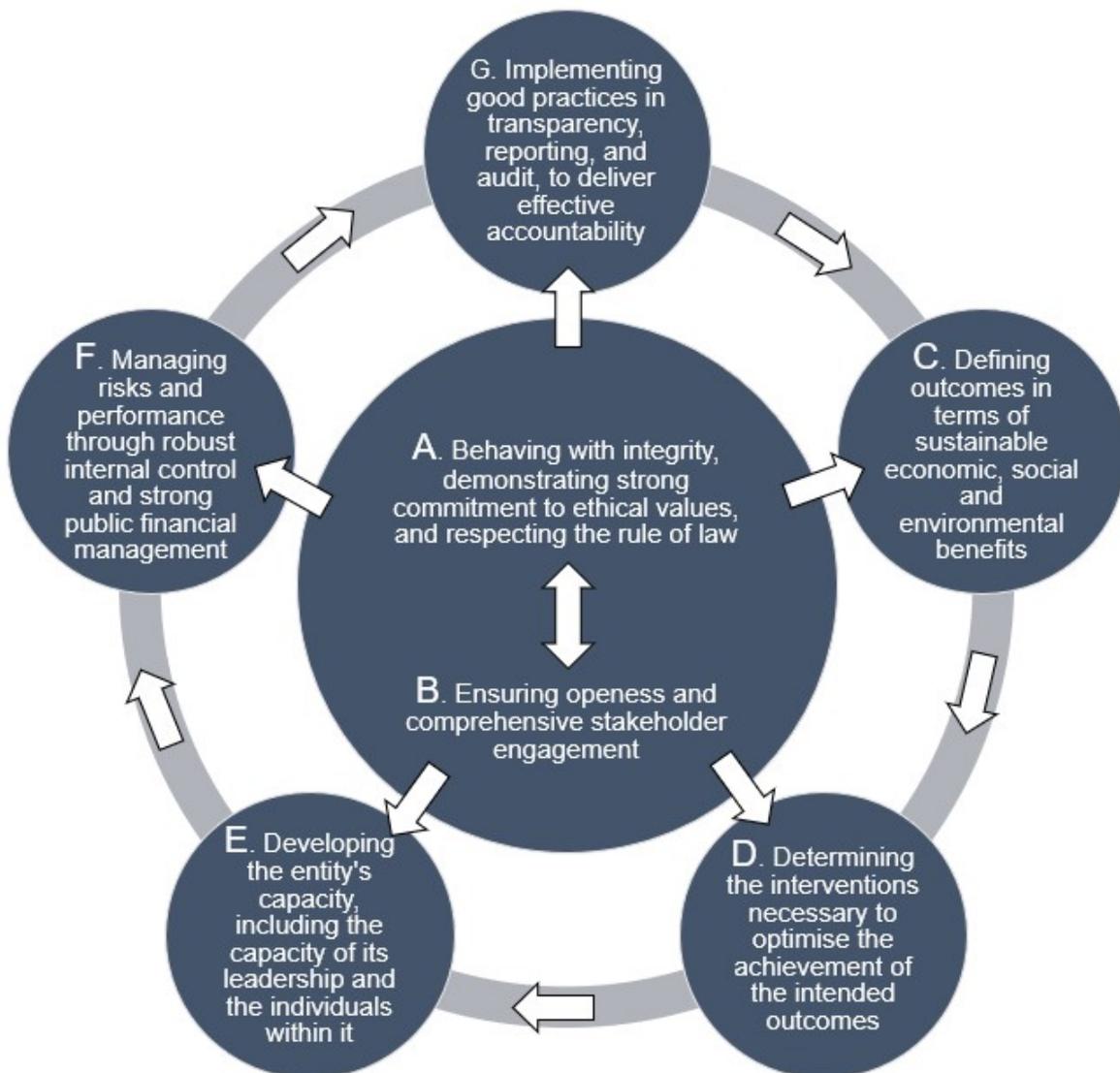


Fig. 1 Seven Principles of Good Governance

1. Scope of Responsibility

South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (SWFRA) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. SWFRA also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

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

This statement explains how SWFRA has complied with the Governance Framework.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which SWFRA is directed and controlled, and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with, and leads the community. This enables SWFRA to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

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

This Statement gives assurances that the governance framework has been complied with at SWFRA for the year ending 31 March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

3. The Governance Framework

The Governance Framework describes the key elements of the systems and processes that comprise SWFRA's governance arrangements and are as follows:

SWFRA is responsible for ensuring that South Wales Fire & Rescue Service (SWFRS) is effective, efficient, and accountable to the public.

Membership is made up of Members of the 10 unitary authorities covered by the SWFRS service area as defined by the Fire Service (Combination Scheme) Order 1995.

SWFRA is organised into committees which are appointed at the annual meeting. Each committee has a comprehensive set of terms of reference. Working groups are established on an ad-hoc basis as and when required. (See Fig.2)



Fig. 2 Committees of the Authority

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT), comprising the Chief Fire Officer, Directors, and the Treasurer of the Authority, is responsible for strategic leadership, political interface, and corporate challenge. The Senior Management Team (SMT) includes the same officers and Heads of Service, both uniformed and corporate, and provides organisational leadership, functional challenge, and service delivery.

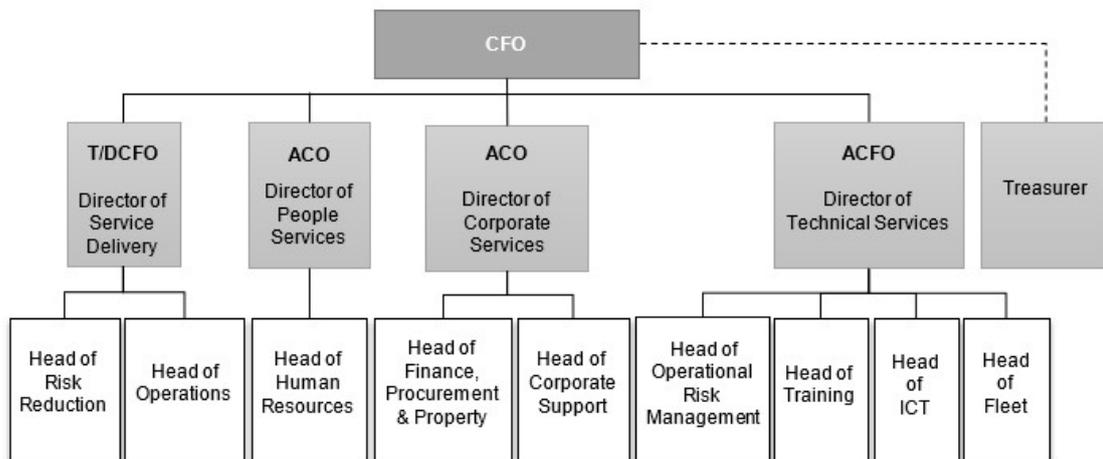


Fig. 3 Senior Management Structure of the Service

The Chief Fire Officer is also the Head of Paid Service, responsible for ensuring that all the Authority's functions are properly coordinated as well as organising staff and appointing appropriate management.

The Treasurer is responsible for the proper administration of SWFRA's financial affairs as required by Section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, and SWFRA's financial management arrangements are assessed against the governance requirements set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer in Public Organisations (2009).

The Director of Corporate Services is designated the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, and ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, laws, and regulations. They are required to report on matters they believe to be illegal or amount to maladministration, to be responsible for matters relating to the conduct of elected members and officers and, to be responsible for the operation of the Authority's constitution.

Constitutional Documents – the SWFRA constitution was redrafted in 2022 and can be found on its [website](#). The constitution includes Contract Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegations and Financial Regulations. The constitution is periodically reviewed by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer, and any identified changes needed are carried out under delegated authority or are reported to SWFRA for their approval.

To provide a practical method of operational and financial management throughout the organisation, officers have been given certain powers by SWFRA in the form of Officer Delegations. Under the Local Government Act 1972, a list of these powers must be maintained, and this is done by the Monitoring Officer who regularly reviews their effectiveness. Any identified changes needed are carried out under delegated authority or are reported to SWFRA for their approval. These powers form an integral part of the Governance arrangements and were last reviewed in March 2023 and can be seen on page 87 of this linked [document](#).

The current Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covers the period 2022-2023 to 2027-2028 and forms the cornerstone of the detailed budget construction annually. It provides a view on potential funding both nationally and locally. The MTFS was reported to the SWFRA on 26 September 2022 and the report can be reviewed on this [video link](#) alternatively the paper was also reported at the 10 October 2022 Finance Audit and Performance Management (FAPM) Committee and can be read on page 11 on this [link](#).

The Strategy considers:

- An assessment of potential un-hypothecated grant settlements and local taxation yields for constituent councils based on best, worst, and anticipated figures.
- Intelligence from outturn for last financial year and current year's revenue budget as the base.
- A view on relevant indices to be applied to the base.

- A snapshot of transformational projects currently identified within the period of the MTFS.
- A planned approach to reserves as a result of the MTFS projection and Reserve Strategy.
- A view on potential funding gaps and planned approaches to these over the period in question.
- The current economic climate and public service partner financial pressures are also considered as well as the general financial environment in which the Service operates.

[Strategic Plan](#) – The year four update on the plan outlines the direction that the organisation is taking and how we intend to meet the challenges over the 2020-2030 period to continue to deliver high quality services that meet the needs of our communities.

SWFRA's performance against the Strategic Plan and Statutory indicators is reported regularly to SWFRA and FAPM Committee together with an overall report that is reported annually to SWFRA and on our website through the document [Annual Improvement Plan How did we do in 2021-2022 and what we plan to do 2023-2024.](#)

Strategic Planning Framework – Our vision is to make South Wales safer by reducing risk. We recognise that safer communities can only be achieved by challenging and improving the way we work through a safe and competent workforce and effectively managing our resources. We therefore set a strategic direction for the organisation through our [Strategic Plan](#) which now covers a ten year period and addresses the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 together with the requirements of the Welsh Government's Wales Fire and Rescue Services National Framework Document 2016 and the Services responsibilities within the Socio Economic Duty 2021. Each directorate and department formulate their own plans in support of the strategic objectives which are reported on quarterly.

Risk Management Policy – the policy sets out the process we use to identify and control exposure to uncertainty, which may impact on the achievement of our objectives or activities. Senior managers identify, review, and score Departmental and Strategic Risks assessing them in terms of likelihood and impact; identify any actions in place and any further actions required to prevent the likelihood of risk occurring or to mitigate the impact should they occur. The Corporate Risk Register records these risks, and they are regularly monitored and reported at SMT planning meetings. Strategic Risks are reported to the SWFRA's FAPM Committee. Specific financial risks are identified and managed within the MTFP and management accounting regime.

The FAPM Committee and the Scrutiny Group consider the effectiveness of the SWFRA's risk management arrangements and the work of the Internal and External Auditors. In 2022-2023, the Scrutiny Group considered the Strategic Risks of the Service in the 28 November 2022 meeting and can be viewed on this [video link](#). The FAPM Committee also considered departmental risks on 06 February 2022

and can be viewed on this [video link](#). The departmental risks were also reviewed at the 13 March 2023 FAPM Committee the report can be seen on this [link](#).

There are established arrangements for effective financial controls through SWFRA's accounting procedures, key financial systems, and the Financial Regulations. These include established budget planning procedures and regular reporting to Authority Members and comparing actual revenue and capital expenditure to annual budgets. SWFRA's Treasury Management arrangements follow professional practice and are subject to annual review by Members. Key financial controls are reviewed annually as part of the annual internal audit plan. Additionally, the adoption of the CIPFA Financial Management code and associated gap analysis and action plan further enhances the robustness of these controls.

The Service has signed up to the Wales Fire & Rescue Services' Procurement Strategy which makes the best of opportunities to deliver efficiencies and other improvements in the acquisition of goods, services, and the awarding of contracts across the Fire & Rescue Services in Wales.

SWFRA has in place counter fraud arrangements and whistleblowing arrangements which are regularly reviewed by officers. There are agreed procedures to meet the requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 which have been agreed by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner and key staff have received training in the application of these regulations.

Internal Audit is outsourced to a private sector organisation, who work to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards which are applicable to all Internal Audit providers in Wales. The Annual Internal Audit Plan is agreed by the FAPM Committee which receives regular reports on the audits undertaken together with the provider's annual report.

The Auditor General for Wales is SWFRA's statutory auditor, with the audit provided by Audit Wales. They provide challenge under the Public Audit (Wales) Measure 2004, The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, the Local Government Act 1999, and the Code of Audit Practice. They issue annual reports or statements on the performance of SWFRA, namely to:

- Examine and certify if the financial statements are true and fair.
- Assess if proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in the use of resources have been made.
- Audit and assess if the duties and requirements of the Measure have been met.
- Undertake studies to enable considered recommendations for improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness or for improving financial or other management arrangements.

The Auditor General and Audit Wales present their Audit Plan to Members annually, and regularly report progress and outcomes to them. All reports are published on the Audit Wales website (www.audit.wales).

The Annual Pay Policy Statement is approved by the SWFRA and published in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. This was reviewed at the HR & Equalities meeting on 27 February 2023 and can be read on page 9 of this [link](#) and approved by SWFRA at the 27 March 2023 meeting on page 31 of this [link](#). Following an independent Pay review for Principal Officer remuneration (page 57 on this [link](#)) the Authority agreed a review on Principal Officers' pay would be carried out on a yearly basis by an external consultant for a period of two years commencing in 2022, followed by a review thereafter.

Members' allowances are paid in accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel recommendations and are published in accordance with their requirements.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (the public sector Regulations), all public authorities are required to publish gender pay gap information by reporting the percentage differences in pay between their male and female employees. Public authorities must publish the required information based on data captured on the snapshot date of 31 March 2022, within 12 months. Accordingly, SWFRA published this information within the deadline. SWFRS 2022 Gender Pay Gap Report can be accessed [here](#).

All users of SWFRA's ICT equipment use an online acceptance tool which individuals must pass through before using internet facilities, agreeing to the organisation's ICT policies.

Related party returns are completed and signed by SWFRA Members and senior officers in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK. These returns help to establish transactions and balances as required by the relevant accounting standard (International Accounting Standard 24, Related Party Disclosures) and assist in identifying actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

4. SWFRA Governance Assurances aligned to CIPFA Principles

The following section provides a brief overview of the governance assurances undertaken by SWFRA during 2022-2023. Although a criterion may be allocated under a particular principle there are many occasions when the same criteria will contribute to more than one criterion.

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

Vision Mission and Values - The Services Vision Mission and Values are published in the Strategic Plan and on the Services Website. These are the foundation of the decision making processes within the Service ([link](#)).

Strategic and Improvement Plans – The Services 10 year strategic Plan ([link](#)) was published in 2019 this identifies the Services longer-term aims and commitments and has an update published on an annual basis by 31st March each year (the stage 1 improvement plan [link](#)). This details the Improvement Objectives as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance

with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The improvement Plan is published every October and the Service Publishes it's Stage 2 Improvement Plan over a 12-week period between October and January, the Service consults on the proposed Improvement and Wellbeing Objectives ([link](#)).

The Constitution - The Authority's Constitution is available on the Service's website ([link](#)) and explains how the Authority operates and how it makes decisions. The Constitution sets out the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority and its committees and includes the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (section 11.7). The constitution was revised in 2022 following publication of the final Model Welsh Local Authority Constitution. There is also an easy read constitution guide.

The Code of Conduct for Members - which is published within section 16 of the Constitution, outlines the behaviours and conduct expected of Members. This is monitored by the Standards Committee ([link](#)).

The Code of Conduct for Officers (Staff) – is published within section 17 of the Constitution it outlines the behaviours and conduct expected of Officers (all members of staff [link](#)).

Complaints process – the Service has a procedure to receive and respond to any complaints made.

Head of Paid Service – the Chief Fire Officer is responsible for ensuring that all the Authority's functions are properly coordinated as well as organising staff and appointing appropriate management.

Section 112 (2) Officer – also known as the Chief Financial Officer or Treasurer performs the duties of the Section officer. Section 112 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires FRSs to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S112(2) Officer to have responsibility for those arrangements. The Treasurer is a member of the Executive Leadership Team and is actively involved in decision-making.

The Monitoring Officer - has a specific duty to ensure the Authority, its Officers and elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct. The Authority's Monitoring Officer also has a specific duty to report matters he or she believes are, or likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration. The Monitoring Officer therefore ensures the lawfulness and fairness of Authority decision making. The Monitoring Officer also ensures that the necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate effective communication between Officers and Members, and the formal recording and publication of the democratic decision-making process.

To Minimise Risk of Fraud - Key policies are in place to prevent and minimise the risk of fraud. Policies include the Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. Where wrongdoing is suspected arrangements are in place to ensure that it is thoroughly investigated.

Legal Advice – When appropriate legal advice is sought during the decision-making processes within the Authority and Service.

Discipline – all allegations of wrongdoing are investigated in accordance with the Service’s Disciplinary Procedure which complies with ACAS best practice.

Strategic Equality Plan – the Service publishes a Strategic Equality Plan in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Equality objectives and actions are reviewed annually and monitored throughout the year ([link](#)).

Ethical – The Service acts in an ethical way by considering its values in its decision-making processes. The Service is also committed to sustainable and ethical procurement buying local products when possible and ensuring that modern slavery safeguards are in place with all suppliers.

Working Wage employer – South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are currently paying employees over and above the Real Living Wage and are committed to becoming an accredited Real Living Wage employer.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

Corporate Planning Framework and Cycle - The Service has a well-established corporate planning framework and cycle which is regularly reviewed to ensure its effectiveness. Part of this cycle includes pre-engagement of the Improvement Objectives to be proposed in the October document.

Communications and Engagement Strategy - outlines the Service’s approach to communication, including an overview of key stakeholders and the most appropriate mechanism to ensure effective communications and engagement with key target groups.

Access to Meetings and Information - All Fire Authority meetings are advertised and open to the public. All meetings are now available on a multilocation basis where participants may be physically located in the meeting venue whilst others join from their home or other remote location. This is defined in the constitution ([link](#)). All Authority and Committee meetings are recorded and published on the Services Website ([link](#)). Agendas and papers are available on the Service’s website ([link](#)).

Commitment to openness – the Service demonstrates this by:

- open publication of reports provided to the Fire Authority for decision making.
- completion of impact assessments for all key decisions
- the Services Complaints Process
- regular engagement through programmed meetings and ad hoc engagement with all Employee Representative groups
- the Services whistleblowing policy

Public Engagement - methods the Service employs include:

- directed communication using social media, with accounts on multiple social media platforms, engagement with young people via the Phoenix programme, Fire cadets and school visits
- community safety engagement with householders and businesses
- positive action events such as Fire Fit for firefighter recruitment
- attendance at open days/events– for example, the Eisteddfod and 999 weekend

Internal communication - methods include:

- publications Routine Notice (weekly), Shout Newsletter (monthly), and the Spark Annual review
- Opportunities for staff Discussions include shout engagement forums, Principal officer visits to Stations and Departments, Senior middle leader events (Hosted by CFO) and Middle leader Events to share ideas and learning and to debate current and ongoing issues
- Service Update and Service Information Emails sent individually to all staff.

Media Campaigns - Our public media campaigns are led by the appropriate teams across the Service and delivered collaboratively with our Media and Communications team. We regularly collaborate with the other 2 Fire and Rescue Services in Wales in developing and delivering campaigns.

Partnership arrangements - are in place for Local Resilience Forum's, and their subsequent subgroups and membership of our local Public Services Boards and the Regional Partnership Boards. SWFRS also has partnership arrangements with other Public and Emergency Services including joint training exercises.

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - SWFRS is committed to supporting the Act and continues to play a key role in the formation of all the Local Well-being Plans, which represent the communities of South Wales.

Strategic Planning – the Services Strategic planning process contains the WBFGA at its core, the process begins with a PESTLE analysis, involves significant engagement with staff, partners, and the public to ensure that the priorities of the Service are aligned with both public expectation, partner and communities needs and have our community's wellbeing at their core.

Financial Planning – the Service has robust Treasury, Capital and Medium Term Financial Strategies that are regularly reviewed and scrutinised by the FAPM and full Fire Authority Committees. The key financial controls of the Service are audited on a regular basis.

Sustainability – The Service has published and reviewed its Carbon reduction and Biodiversity plans. The Service is also committed to improving its sustainable and energy efficiency infra structure from using Electric vehicles with suitable charging

points on sites, to encouraging staff to develop biodiverse wellbeing areas, improving the biodiversity at our sites in sustainable ways.

Business Continuity – throughout the Covid Pandemic and during the recent planning for potential industrial action (IA) the Service has demonstrated its commitment and competence in developing and maintaining suitable business continuity arrangements.

Safeguarding – the Service has a Safeguarding policy and procedure in place to refer vulnerable people the Service meets, to other agencies.

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Governance and Scrutiny – The governance and scrutiny provided by the Elected Members, the associated committees and working groups of the Service ensures robust assessment of Officer recommendations, the performance and outcomes achieved by the Service. Additionally, Member Champions provide subject specific scrutiny and challenge in several areas.

Performance Reporting – there are regular performance and monitoring reports to the Fire Authority. The Senior Management team have a monthly scheduled timetable of assurance measures that are reviewed and scrutinised internally. These cover progress reports and performance monitoring on operational performance, strategic indicators, and financial performance amongst others.

Internal and External Audit – the Service engages in regular internal and external audit programmes. The regular reporting and scrutiny of audit performance and monitoring of delivery on audit actions ensures that the Service continues to secure continuous improvement. This is evidenced in compliance certificates from Audit Wales.

Strategic Plans – The Service develops and delivers against a few strategic plans which include the Strategic Plan, Strategic Equality Plan, Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction Plan. The Business Management system BMIS is used to monitor and record progress against these achievements.

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

Constitution – as described in Principle A the constitution is used as the guiding document to inform the workings of the authority as well as the behavioural expectations for members and officers.

The NFCC leadership model – has been adopted by the Service as the basis for the personal review process and the framework for the Pathways and continuous professional development (CPD).

Training, Development, and Induction – Training and development opportunities are available for Members and Officers alike throughout their time with the Service.

There are proactive induction programmes for all and pathway programmes as well as online learning and development packages.

Health and Wellbeing – the Service understands the importance of health and wellbeing for operational and corporate staff alike. Challenging incidents attended by operational staff are tagged and a proactive programme of activity is carried out post incident to make staff aware of the support available to them. The Service has a Wellbeing Delivery Group specifically putting in place supportive and preventative measures and programmes to support all staff.

Occupational Health – The Occupational Health offered to all staff encompasses both physical and mental health provisions throughout their career in Service. This ranges from Pre-employment medical examinations, Routine Medical Surveillance, LGV medical examinations for those that require this for their role. There are also Counselling Services for all that need them as well as targeted Post Critical Incident Support and Post Exposure Surveillance.

Health and Fitness – in addition to the above the Service has Gym provisions at all sites to enable staff to manage their fitness levels. The Services Health and Fitness Advisors support all staff in their fitness goals from regular fitness tests for Operational staff to fitness advice for corporate staff. They also provide nutrition advice and guidance as well weekly workouts published in Routine Notice.

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

Statutory Officers – as referred in Principle A the statutory officers (Head of Paid Service, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer) have a key role in the management of risks, performance and robust internal control and strong financial management. The treasurer of the authority is independent of the Head of Paid Service which enhances the robustness of the accounts management.

Performance Reporting – as referred to in Principle B.

Governance and Scrutiny – as referred to in Principle D.

Internal and External Audit – as referred to in Principle D, specifically the external audit of accounts.

Training, Development, and Induction - as referred to in Principle D. Ensuring the Service has trained and qualified staff.

Risk Management – the risk management process which identifies, monitors and manages risks on a strategic and departmental basis enables the Service to identify issues in advance and put in risk management strategies to manage, mitigate, and monitor risks.

Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Whistleblowing Policies– the Service has a dedicated Fraud Officer, as well as robust and embedded anti-fraud, anti-bribery, and whistleblowing policies. In addition, there is the expectation and requirement of

officers and members to register declarations of interest, Related party returns and the M10 hospitality reporting process, as necessary.

Financial Procedure Rules – including the procurement frameworks, tendering process and where necessary the exceptional need for exemptions approval is carefully and closely controlled.

Information and Data protection – the Service has clearly defined processes and policies on information management and data security. The Security Risk Group meets on a regular basis and continually assesses potential risks to the Service. The Service has engaged in information sharing protocols with partners.

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Access to Information – All Fire Authority Meetings are documented with an Agenda and Minutes as well as Videos of the meetings being available on the Service Website for public scrutiny.

Annual Governance Statement – this statement itself is evidence of how the Service implements good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.

Governance and Scrutiny – as described in Principle D.

Performance Reporting – as described in Principle D.

Financial Procedure Rules – as described in Principle F.

Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Whistleblowing Policies – as described in Principle F.

5. Review of Effectiveness

SWFRA has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its Governance Framework, including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Executive Leadership Team within the Service who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, and the work and reports of the internal and external auditors.

External Auditor Programme of Audit and Reports – Audit Wales

| Report | Issued |
|---|---------------|
| Cyber Resilience in the Public Sector | Dec 2022 |
| Audit of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Assessment of 2021-22 Performance | Dec 2022 |
| Audit Wales – Certificate of compliance for the Audit of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's 2022-23 Improvement Plan | Jul 2022 |
| Audit Wales Final Audit Letter | Jul 2022 |
| Carbon Emissions Reduction | Apr 2022 |
| Audit Wales Enquiries to 'Those Charged with Governance' – Draft Response | Feb 2022 |
| South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Audit Summary | Feb 2022 |
| Audit Wales Report – Joint Working Between Emergency Services | Jan 2022 |
| Audit Wales Presentation | |
| South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – Annual Audit Summary 2021 | Jan 2022 |
| South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – Annual Audit Summary 2019-20 | Nov 2021 |
| South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – Annual Audit Summary 2019-20 | May 2021 |

Internal Auditor Programme of Audit and Reports

| Audit | Overall Assessment | Issued |
|---|---------------------------|---------------|
| Key Financial Controls | Reasonable Assurance | Feb 2023 |
| Assurance Review of Human Resources Management - Training | Substantial Assurance | Feb 2023 |
| Risk 203 – Cyber Risk – ICT services are affected by a cyber-attack | Reasonable Assurance | Feb 2023 |
| Rostering | Reasonable Assurance | Feb 2023 |
| Indicative Internal Audit Annual Report 2022-2023 | Satisfied | Feb 2023 |
| Station Visits | Substantial Assurance | Mar 2022 |
| Mitigating Controls | Substantial Assurance | Mar 2022 |
| Internal Audit Annual Report 2021-2022 | Satisfied | Mar 2022 |
| Summary report Key Financial Controls | Reasonable Assurance | Feb 2022 |
| Death In Service Benefit Scheme | Reasonable Assurance | Feb 2022 |
| Assurance Review of Equality and Diversity 2021-22 | Substantial Assurance | Feb 2022 |

Fire Advisor Reports

| Report | Issued |
|---|---------------|
| Thematic Review of Operational Training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services – October 2022 | Oct 2022 |
| SWFRS Recommendations | Mar 2023 |
| Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales – Fire & Rescue Service Capacity – Thematic Review | Apr 2022 |
| SWFRA Recommendations | Mar 2023 |

The regular and ongoing processes that have been applied to maintain, review, and improve effectiveness of the Governance Framework include:

- Regular review of policies and procedures by the officer responsible and by the Senior Management Team.
- Periodic review of the constitution and ethical governance arrangements by the Monitoring Officer and Treasurer, which were last reviewed in March 2023.
- The FAPM Committee regularly scrutinises the revenue and capital expenditure against the allocated budget together with regular scrutiny of the performance of the Service against the Strategic Plan.
- Senior officers regularly review the organisational risks with regular reports to Members through the SWFRA and FAPM Committee.
- SWFRA receives annual reports from each of its committees including the Scrutiny group outlining the work that had been undertaken throughout the year, giving Members the opportunity to challenge and scrutinise any area that they feel fit. Directorate reports are also presented to the Scrutiny Group.
- The appointed internal auditor provides SWFRA, through its FAPM Committee, with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. The Head of Internal Audit has confirmed in their annual report that:

Head of Internal Audit Opinion

“HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT’S ANNUAL OPINION TIAA is satisfied that, for the areas reviewed during the year, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has reasonable and effective risk management, control, and governance processes in place. This is an indicative opinion and will be updated once all audit reports have been issued as final. This opinion is based solely on the matters that came to the attention of TIAA during the course of the internal audit reviews carried out during the year and is not an opinion on all elements of the risk management, control and governance processes or the ongoing financial viability or your ability to meet financial obligations which must be obtained by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service from its various sources of assurance.”

This can be viewed on page 68 of the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee papers presented at the 13 March 2023 meeting on this [link](#).

The Auditor General also provides assurance to SWFRA, through their Audit Wales Final Audit Letter. This was reported to the 10 October FAPM Committee and can be found on page 123 of this [link](#). In this document dated 28 July 2022 the Auditor general for Wales states:

“I am pleased to be able to advise you that the audit of your Authority’s accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 has been completed. I have not had to issue a report in the public interest under Section 22 of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.”

The Audit Wales South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Audit Summary 2022 reported to the Fire Authority on 13 February 2023 and can be found on page 199 of this [link](#), stated that:

For 2021-22:

- ***the Auditor General gave an unqualified true and fair opinion on the Authority's financial statements on 26 July 2022, five days ahead of the statutory deadline.***
- ***the Authority's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report were prepared in line with the CIPFA Code and relevant guidance. They were also consistent with the financial statements prepared by the Authority and with our knowledge of the Authority.***
- ***the quality of the draft statements presented for audit on 1 June 2022 was good.***
- ***a small number of changes were made to the Authority's financial statements arising from our audit work, which were reported to the Finance, Audit and Performance Management Committee in our Audit of Financial Statements Report in July 2022.***
- ***the Auditor General issued the certificate confirming that the audit of accounts for 2021-22 has been completed.***

Additionally, the Auditor General stated that for continuous improvement:

"The Auditor General certified that the Authority has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 during 2021-22."

Corporate governance processes have operated as intended throughout the year, a summary of which can be seen below:

| Issues identified | Performance in 2022-2023 |
|--|---|
| Formal reports by Section 127 or Monitoring Officer | None issued. |
| Issues Identified by SWFRA or Monitoring Officer recommendations | No significant issues or breaches of Officer conduct have occurred. |
| Proven frauds carried out by members of staff | None. |
| Use of Regulation of investigatory Powers Act | There were no applications for RIPA authorisations in 2022-2023, nor were there any previous authorisations that carried onto 2022-2023. |
| Complaints and Compliments received from members of the public | A total of 66 complaints received in 2022-2023 (to date 31 March 2023) A total of 84 letters of thanks received during 2022-2023 (to date 27 March 2023). |
| Number of Whistle blowing cases | There were two cases that qualify as whistleblowing items during 2022-2023. |
| Independent Review | <p>An ITV investigative news article screened on 12th and 13th December 2022 reported the outcomes of two historic discipline cases previously investigated by the Service. In response to this disturbing news article the Chief Fire Officer commissioned an Independent Review of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the culture of the Service • discipline processes • historic cases of where employees have failed to uphold our professional values and standards <p>An Independent Panel have appointed Fenella Morris KC as the Independent Chairperson to lead the Service's review. Fenella Morris KC anticipates the review will be completed by the end of 2023 calendar year</p> |

6. How We Met Significant Governance Issues and Challenges for 2022-2023

The Service maintained its response to the Covid-19 endemic with the continuation of regular Covid Review meetings. The Service has also developed and maintained a critical timeline of decision-making, documenting and recording the changing government regulations and guidance and the subsequent decisions made within the Service to secure an accurate record of activity and enable structured long-term learning. This will also provide a significant evidence base to support the forthcoming public enquiry.

The specific Strategic Covid-19 Risk was maintained and associated control tasks continued to be implemented and monitored. The actions taken ensured that we continued to mitigate the effects of the endemic on the Service and its work in our wider communities. The Service transitioned to respond and operate in a Covid Environment

The significant investment made at all Service locations to enable remote working and facilitate improved engagement with stations and partners using video conferencing equipment continued to prove effective. This substantial investment continues to deliver improvements and development of the Service. The introduction of Office 365 has further enhanced remote working, data management and internal collaborative working improving the connect ability amongst all Service locations.

Meetings of the Authority were held in a hybrid fashion blending in person attendance and virtual attendance using video conferencing software and were recorded for publication on the Service website and can be viewed via this [link](#). It remains the case that remote working is a viable, cost-effective, and sustainable way of operating the Authority. The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 made permanent the ability for the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) to maintain remote attendance at FRA meetings and the requirement for certain meeting documents to be published electronically. The Service continues to operate all the governance functions in a hybrid fashion.

Joint Fire Control (JFC) commenced on 18th October 2017, following the merger of Mid & West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) and South Wales Fire and

Rescue Service (SWFRS) control functions. A review into the structure at JFC was sanctioned in 2020. The final JFC review report was published in September 2021 with the following key focus areas (KFA) identified:

The review team were tasked with the following key focus areas (KFA):

- KFA 1 - Head of Control appointment
- KFA 2 - Working Conditions
- KFA 3 - Structure review
- KFA 4 - Hand back
- KFA 5 - Shift times
- KFA 6 - Environmental Issues (Policy and Procedures, Uniform)

The review team has been successful in fulfilling some of the KFA's, including the appointment of the Head of Control, improving the working environment with the introduction of rest PODs, appointment of an ICT expert delivering on improving the ICT structure, a hand back to services on some key work streams and other environmental improvements. It is now recommended that a mid-term review of the implementation roadmap is conducted as well as instigating an internal audit of the embedment of operational learning from the Grenfell Tower inquiry and Manchester Arena incident 2017.

The Service has four distinct groups of employees: Operational (firefighters), Joint Fire Control, Corporate and Auxiliary staff. To deliver services to the communities of South Wales the Service maintains robust risk assessments and working procedures implementing actions to allow staff to maintain good hygiene and work safely both within operational incidents and in the general workplace.

Activities such as working with young people, visiting schools, carrying out Safe and Well visits and Fire Safety Audits were maintained. We continued to ensure those most at risk were as safe as possible, whilst maintaining innovative ways to deliver our interventions. This work will continue in 2023-2024.

The Service continues to review business continuity processes, which remain robust, and the integrated Business Continuity plans continue to be exercised on a long-term basis. The Service continued to work with external partners to identify wider risks and exercise joint response plans with Welsh Government, Local Resilience Forums on a multi-agency basis.

The Service has actively managed its preparations for potential IA by both Operational and Control Firefighters through regular Business Continuity meetings to ensure compliance with the Authority's statutory duty obligations. The frequency was adjusted throughout the autumn and winter, meeting more frequently when the likelihood of IA had increased, to ensure that the Service matched pace with developments. Putting in place provisions to minimise risk, mitigate potential impacts and respond safely whilst serving the communities of South Wales. During the recent public sector strikes the Service worked with partners to minimise disruption to our communities when partner public sectors exercised their right to strike

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 replaced the Welsh Language Act 1993, and as part of the new legislation, in Wales the Welsh language has equal legal status with English and must not be treated less favourably. Public bodies no longer need to develop and implement Welsh Language Schemes but instead must now comply with a set of national Welsh Language Standards.

The Welsh Language Commissioner set out the [Standards that apply to SWFRA](#) in September 2016 along with any exemptions and their implementation dates. SWFRA received the internal annual report on compliance against the standards in the HR & Equalities Committee on 27 February 2023 the report can be accessed on page 81 of this [link](#).

The Service further developed the Business Management Information System (BMIS) which enables the Service to link and display overall performance to help

inform the Service of its progress and drive decision making. Over the last twelve months further functionality of the system was developed to establish additional internal assurance. The system is now regularly used by stations allowing greater interaction and use of the system particularly the additional statistical data measures. Further suites of dashboards were developed which provides up to date information informing the Service of its performance and enabling evidence-based decision making.

The system continued to deliver our Business Plans and station Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs), as well as statistical performance data (including incident statistics). To improve the user experience significant stakeholder engagement was conducted to co-create the preferred solution for the users.

The Service's integrated Core HR and Payroll system successfully maintained the online recruitment digital module enabling prospective employees to apply for Wholetime Firefighter posts electronically, whilst still enabling prospective employees to apply in more traditional means. The HR team are also conducting a move from the Core back-office product to the Core portal product.

Additionally, the Personal Review process was launched across the Service utilising the Talent Module within Core HR. The Learning Management system and learning pathways for supervisory managers went live from 01 March 23. There is now the ability for operational staff to apply for Continued Professional Development payments through the Core system, becoming automated through the HR Core system.

The Service continued to embed the 2020-2021 IIP successes where it achieved Gold in the People award and Silver in the Wellbeing award. Actions from the 12-month review have been carried out through normal business planning processes and recorded in the BMIS system used by the Service. The Services Wellbeing Delivery Group is active in promoting and generating Wellbeing improvements for all staffing groups.

The aim of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. The Service's statement of wellbeing is published in the year four update of the [Strategic Plan 2020-2030](#) which is available on this [link](#).

We continued to work with local health boards to share information to identify the extent of unreported injuries resulting from fires to enable identification of potential vulnerable people or higher risk premises.

As one of the statutory partners on four Public Service Boards, we continued to support the local Well-being Plans. We have ensured that we were able to deliver against the needs and expectations of each Public Service Board's objectives without impacting on the day-to-day service delivery of the organisation. At the 27th March 2023 Fire Authority Meeting the Authority reviewed and approved the Cwm Taf Morgannwg, Cardiff, Gwent and Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Boards Well-being Plans 2023-2028. The report can be seen on this [link](#).

The Service maintained and expanded its co-location projects at locations throughout the South Wales area in a number of locations. Significant building works have continued this year. The Service has maintained and is exploring further

options to expand its co-location provision and enhance working links with blue light partners. A project also commenced during the year to formalise our approach to the day to day running of our co-location sites and part of this is developing a standard suite of documents with consistent terms and conditions to enable and enhance local management.

Progress has been made regarding future proofing the Services building portfolio and ensuring investment not only meets operational requirements but focuses on decarbonising the estate. Preparatory work is ongoing to introduce New Inn Fire Station as the first, net zero carbon (NZC) station in Wales. The existing fire station at New Inn is beyond repair and no longer fit for purpose and will be replaced with a completely new build. Unfortunately, investment in solar panel installations at both HQ and Barry sites has not come to fruition as investigative work has shown roof types / conditions are not conducive to affixing panelling as it compromises the integrity of the roof. Wider investigative work will continue across the portfolio to identify opportunities and we will work with our partners at the Welsh Energy Service to achieve this.

2022-2023 has also seen the completion of the new Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) facility based at Whitchurch. This facility accommodates national assets and has been fully funded by Welsh Government (WG).

The Service has continued to invest in its on-call provision and work has commenced on a project that will run for 4-5 years. The project involves 9 on-call duty system (OCDS) stations and looks to improve training, learning and storage spaces in a sustainable manner and to address the evolution and growth in PPE firefighting equipment / issue. Work commenced at Pontycymmer station in January and a second site, i.e., Treorchy is due commence soon. Grant funding has been secured to part fund design costs of sustainable elements i.e., air source heat pumps, solar panels, drying room tech, etc.

Investment in the Fire Station Tower Project is underway following a strategic review in 2021-2022 and the importance this has for on-site station training and competency. Two out of six identified towers will be replaced with the new style, steel tower by the end of 2022-2023 with a further two will be complete by 31 May 2023 and the remainder being addressed in 2023-2024 as and when individual planning permission allows.

A £169k grant was secured from WG during the year to increase coverage of electric vehicle (EV) charging capabilities across the property portfolio and included 26 additional sites and completed coverage of every wholetime site (except for those due to have major refurb / development work) in addition to 85% of on-call sites. This work will complete by the end of the financial year although focus in this area is ongoing and future plans for EV charging will focus on the introduction of rapid chargers to compliment the current 7kw provision.

2022-2023 also saw a plan for investment in non-gender specific welfare facilities on whole time fire stations to ensure our facilities are inclusive to all and are fit for the modern fire service. Investment has started and will continue throughout 2023-2024.

The Service Completed Phase 1 of the Job Evaluation Project with all appeals concluded in 2022. This has ensured a good foundation of the procedures and policies to enable the move to Phase 2 of the project. The Service was unable complete Phase 2 of the Job Evaluation Project in 2022-2023 which was planned to will include reviews of Job Titles and allowances for on call and out of hours cover by green book staff.

Changes to pension and tax legislation continued to provide challenges to the organisation. Regular updates on progress and emerging issues were reported to and monitored by the Local Pension Board and FRA. To create capacity to deal with the complex issues with existing resources a temporary structure was put in place. To enhance the experience for operational staff approaching retirement and provide more up to date estimations of retirement benefits the Service Website has been updated with the GAD Calculator.

The Accounts and Audit (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 set the requirement to approve and publish the accounts by 31 May and 31 July this has now transformed into business as usual. The public had the opportunity to exercise their right to inspect the accounts from Monday 6th June to Friday 1st July inclusive. The 4^h of July was nominated as the date the public could exercise their right to question the Auditor General until completion of the audit. The CIPFA Financial management Code was adopted in March 2022.

Although the LGE Act dis-applies the Local Government Measure ('2009 Measure') for principal councils this has not yet been commenced in respect of Fire and Rescue Authorities. To dis-apply the 2009 Measure, new performance management arrangements will need to be developed under section 167 of the Act, which in turn depends on developing a new National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. Discussions and work to create a new National Framework and performance arrangements continued to be paused the Authority waits for these to be resumed. Until a new National Framework and revised arrangements have been introduced, the 2009 Measure will continue to apply to FRAs in Wales.

The Service maintained compliance with the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services (2016) whilst awaiting replacement guidance or legislation.

The SWFRA continued to follow the progress of national negotiations on pay and the broadening of the firefighter role and continued to assess any consequent impacts upon the Authority. The Authority received the Welsh Government Fire Advisor report in July 2022 ([link](#)) and then received a further report on the SWFRS recommendations ([link](#)).

The Authority also received a report from the Welsh Government Fire Advisor Thematic Review of Operational Training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services in December 2022 ([link](#)) and subsequently received and approved the SWFRS Recommendations ([link](#)) in March 2023.

2022-2023 saw the continuation of the current Carbon Reduction Plan and biodiversity plan. The Service published the Carbon Reduction Plan on its website

which is accessible via this [link](#). Updates on the Carbon Reduction Plan and Biodiversity plan have been reported to full Fire Authority, annually since and the update was reported 26 September 2022. 2023-24 will see the three-year update for both plans, which will present themes, actions, and smarter metrics to illustrate how the Service is changing year on year and as a result of instigating elements of the plan.

Audit Wales completed a Carbon Emissions Reduction Report which was received by the FAPM Committee in April 2022 and can be seen on page 41 on this [link](#). The review determined that the Fire & Rescue Authority is creating the right infrastructure to become carbon neutral by 2030 but needs to deliver its ambitious targets and address some big risks.

This Annual Governance Statement reflects the operation of the Service during the whole of the 2022-2023 financial year and up to the date of approval of the publication of the Statement of Accounts.

SWFRA approved the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Annual Report 2021-2022 at the 26 September 2022 (which can be viewed on page 85 of this [link](#)) the report provided a summary of the key activities' undertaken, and the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the area of Health, Safety and Wellbeing which evidenced the delivery of an environment that was supportive of the Health, Safety and Welfare of staff.

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Thematic Review Progress Report was presented to SWFRA on 14 February 2022 (which can be viewed on page 97 of this [link](#)). Following this report, the Business Fire Safety (BFS) Department are currently collaborating with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) to facilitate the implementation of Phase 3 audits which will address any concerns with internal compartmentation and external wall systems. The Service are in receipt of regular updates regarding the internal and external surveys conducted by the WAG contractor to conduct Type-2 internal (compartmentation) surveys (Type-3 and Type-4 where required) and external wall assessments.

BFS are also using the BMIS high rise risk-based data in conjunction with the surveys carried out by WAG to prioritise the phase 3 auditing program on High-Rise Residential Buildings (HRRB's). There are approximately 170 High-Rise Residential Buildings (sleeping risk) that may require a phase 3 audit which will be dependent on the data above and the BFS department will prioritising these audits going forward.

The Scrutiny Group arrangements within the Authority were reviewed. The new Scrutiny Group covers wider organisational areas of scrutiny and thematic reviews within the Authority. The effect of this reform on the FAPM Committee and the HR & Equalities Committee and associated changes to the various terms of reference have been agreed and embodied in the revised constitution.

The Service continues to be an active participant in the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) and along with the other partner agencies will continue to work collaboratively to improve the services provided to and outcomes for our communities. The recommendations from the Audit Wales "Joint Working Between Emergency Services" report published January 2022 which can be seen on this [link](#)

will be considered by JESG and implemented as appropriate. The governance surrounding these recommendations continued to be reported through the Strategic Collaboration Board to JESG.

Supply chain issues for key strategic contracts continued to be closely monitored to limit the risks and impacts to the Service. Using stronger contract management to minimise the impact on the Service due to either global shortages, Covid impacts, or global conflict proved effective. Procurement, in conjunction with Service departments, are continuing to manage the economic shocks brought about by the pandemic, Brexit, and the invasion of Ukraine. Supply chain issues have been problematic for a number of high-profile contracts i.e., breathing apparatus, PP and driving licence checks.

7. Significant Governance Issues and Challenges for 2023-2024

Following the ITV investigative news article report on the outcomes of two historic discipline cases previously investigated by the Service. The Service will fully support the Independent Review of:

- the culture of the Service
- discipline processes
- historic cases of where employees have failed to uphold our professional values and standards

The Independent Chairperson of the Culture Review has been confirmed as Fenella Morris King's Counsel (KC). Fenella Morris KC anticipates the review will be completed by the end of 2023 calendar year.

The Service will also continue to support the work of White Ribbon. Continuing all the actions and engagement events that the Service has done in the past.

The Service will also continue to engage with and perform against the IIP action plans that are currently running.

The Service will continue to prepare for potential IA ensuring that the good preparation work carried out in 2022-2023 is embedded and becomes business as usual. This will involve regular exercising and testing of IA plans.

To enhance scrutiny arrangements within the Authority a Scrutiny Committee Forward work plan will be developed in preparation for when the Scrutiny Group commutes to a Scrutiny Committee in the new Municipal year.

The Service will continue to consider and work toward the accepted recommendations from the two Welsh Government Fire Advisor Thematic reviews of broadening the role of the firefighter and operational training.

The Fire Control Review team had an opportunity to look holistically at the JFC and have also identified future opportunities, including lessons learnt from COVID, thus ensuring that a continuous learning culture is part of the ethos of the JFC moving forward. Some areas already identified are:

- Intelligent mobilisation through mobile video software i.e., 999 eye.

- Remote working e.g., call handling, mobilisations and supporting spate conditions
- Software integration both external and internal to both Services i.e., tactical officer rotas, what3words, Boss Mobile
- System thinking of all processes for efficiency

Meetings of the Authority will continue to be held in a hybrid fashion of in person and virtually, using video conferencing software and recorded for publication online. The Service continues to work towards embodying the full provisions of the LGE Act including the broadcasting and access to recordings of SWFRA meetings.

SWFRS will continue to safely deliver services to the communities we serve using the robust risk assessments by maintaining the procedures for safe systems of work maintain good hygiene and work safely both within operational incidents and in the general workplace. Staff who can work from home are still enabled to do so whilst ensuring that all teams are represented effectively in the workplace. (The Service is adopting a flexible approach to recognising that individuals will have a designated workplace) The safer and more innovative ways of delivering services that were developed will be maintained and built upon during 2023-2024.

Over the next 12 months the Service will continue the development of BMIS to support effective information gathering and real time decision making in times of IA and to support business as usual.

The Service's integrated Core HR and Payroll system will be further developed to streamline pay processes and the services we offer for internal customers. The exit procedure will be enhanced with auto generated questionnaires and the Services on boarding processes will be improved.

The Services Wellbeing Delivery Group will continue activity promoting and generating Wellbeing improvements for all staffing groups. The Service will also be conducting a review and refresh of Equality, Inclusion and Diversity activity, establishing a baseline and identifying future strategy. Station wellbeing areas will continue to be developed across the Service resulting from the successful mental health project and biodiversity action plan which will continue to be a future focus of the organisation.

The Service will progress Phase 2 of the Job Evaluation Project which will include reviews of Job Titles and allowances for on call / out of hours cover by green book staff.

Changes to pension and tax legislation continue to provide challenges to the organisation. The temporary restructure to provide capacity to deal with these complex issues with existing resources is in place and progress will be regularly reported to the Local Pension Board and FRA.

Public Sector Funding is an increasing challenge for all. The continuing impact of increased demand on public sector services and spending reductions in the public sector alongside the cost-of-living crisis is a key issue for SWFRA and the

settlements that local authorities face is always considered when SWFRA sets its annual budget. These factors are always carefully considered when determining the MTFS.

The action plan resulting from the self-assessment, to evaluate the extent to which the Service meets the requirements set out in the CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019, and the resulting actions and recommendations from the FAPM Committee in March 2022 will be pursued.

The Authority will take necessary actions to ensure that all the requirements placed on it by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to ensure that all provisions are implemented.

The SWFRA will continue to follow the progress of national negotiations on pay and the broadening of the firefighter role and assess any consequent impacts upon the Authority and its financial arrangements.

Looking to longer term improvement and developments the Service will continue to progress the Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction plans. The introduction of the Sustainability Steering Group (SSG) which has representation from key areas of the organisation i.e., Property, Facilities, Fleet, Procurement, Service Improvement, and provides oversight of current and prospective sustainable projects in addition to monitoring the carbon footprint will prove fruitful in embedding the changes required to meet this significant challenge.

The Sustainability Officer has instigated a Wales wide Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) sustainability group comprising subject experts as each FRS is at a different point in their journey and this group will help to support the sharing of learning and understanding on what is an important and developing area.

These groups will be supplemented by the introduction of Green Champions, i.e., station-based membership, to complete the Services, 'Green Network' and ensure all aspects of the Service have an avenue to feed into and ask questions about the CRP and biodiversity plans.

In addition, the last quarter of 2022-2023 has seen progress in the preparatory and planning work to introduce and embed 'sustainable procurement' (SP), as a method of understanding where our suppliers are in their sustainability journey and to better monitor and aid decision making on the impact procurement has on the Services carbon footprint metric Co2. Work is ongoing with WRAP Cymru to determine a suitable procurement tool for Service departments and suppliers to use to assist data capture and monitor our progress. This will continue for 2023-2024.

The Socio-Economic Duty is embedded at the heart of decision making and delivering services. As a public body subject to the duty, we consider how our strategic decisions can improve inequality of outcome for people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage. A statement on how we consider and act upon the Socio-Economic Duty can be seen on page 7 of the year 4 update of our Strategic plan which can be viewed [here](#).

The Service continues to be an active participant in the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) and along with the other partner agencies will continue to work collaboratively to improve the services provided to and outcomes for our communities.

8. Governance Action Plans

Governance action Plan 2022-2023

| Governance Action Plan 2022-2023 | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Issue | Action | Outcome | Completion Date | Progress |
| <p>Constitutional Documents</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services</p> | <p>To review and update the Constitutional Documents of the Service.</p> | <p>The constitutional documents will be updated to reflect the outcomes of:</p> <p>Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act taking necessary actions consequently implemented.</p> | <p>Model Constitution still in development working with Monitoring Officer Group.</p> <p>September 2022</p> | <p>Complete Constitution approved at FA meeting in December 2022.</p> <p>Implementation of constitution deferred until next municipal year to allow for Scheme of delegations to be updated and implemented as one.</p> |
| <p>Member Induction and Refresher training</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services</p> | <p>Following the Local Government Elections, the new Fire Authority will be inducted on the governance mechanisms of SWFRS.</p> | <p>Fully Trained Members able to constructively support the delivery of the statutory duties of the Fire Authority and the Service.</p> | <p>September 2022</p> | <p>Complete Member induction completed in person for members in Summer 2022. Offline version developed and will be issued to members in February 2023 Revised members handbook</p> |
| <p>Supply chain challenges</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services</p> | <p>Provide adequate supplies to support all operational and prevention activities.</p> | <p>The Service will continue to receive supply chain items with minimal disruption.</p> | <p>March 2023</p> | <p>Complete Little or no disruption to supply chains due to robust contract management..</p> |

Governance Action Plan 2022-2023

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Completion Date | Progress |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| <p>Fire Fighter Pensions</p> <p>Appeals Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director People Services</p> | <p>To implement the decision of the Employment Tribunal in respect of McCloud / Sargeant.</p> | <p>Firefighters' pensions corrected and calculated appropriately going forward.</p> | <p>As per the new legislative framework.</p> | <p>Ongoing Category 1 cases - not retired still employed have progressed in year. Category 2 cases – already in receipt of pension on hold until regulations are published (expected October 2023).</p> |
| <p>Job Evaluation</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director People Services</p> | <p>Phase 2 of the programme to establish a more coherent approach for naming conventions across the Service for Corporate Roles. There will also be a review of the allowances applied to particular corporate roles.</p> <p>Identify future working practices for the Service to enable consistent Job Evaluation activity.</p> | <p>Review of Job Titles and Allowances.</p> <p>Established process for future Job Evaluation activity.</p> | <p>Q4 2022-23</p> | <p>Deferred to 2023-2024 Due to essential staff absences and competing priorities this action was deferred and has been carried over to 2023-2024</p> |

Governance Action Plan 2022-2023

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Completion Date | Progress |
|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction Plan</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services</p> | <p>To seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and reduce the carbon footprint in the proper exercise of the Services functions, and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems.</p> | <p>Develop and implement the first 3-year plan to reduce the impact of the Service on the environment and support the Environmental objectives of the Wellbeing Future Generations Act.</p> | <p>Q4 2022-23</p> | <p>Ongoing continues to 2023-2024.</p> |
| <p>Fire Safety Act 2021</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Director Service Delivery</p> | <p>Identify requirements from the Fire Safety Act 2021 and embody and actions required to enable the Service to fully support the act.</p> | <p>Service able to fulfil its statutory duty.</p> | <p>Q3 2022-23</p> | <p>Ongoing Action plans in place and significant progress made. This action will continue in 2023-2024 Strategic Risk is being actively managed.</p> |
| <p>Living Wage Foundation Accreditation</p> <p>Lead Officer: Assistant Chief Officer - Director People Services</p> | <p>Achieve living wage accreditation.</p> | <p>Become an accredited living wage employer.</p> | <p>Carried forward to 2023-2024</p> | <p>Approved by FA on Monday the 20 Dec 2021.</p> <p>All staff in receipt of living wage the next phase is the review with contractors.</p> <p>Awaiting accreditation determination.</p> |

Governance Action Plan 2022-2023

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Completion Date | Progress |
|--|--|--|-------------------|---|
| <p>Living with Covid-19 transitioning from pandemic to endemic</p> <p>Lead Officer: Chief Fire Officer</p> | <p>To continue to review and reflect on learning from the Services response to and recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> | <p>Tested business continuity plans to respond to and recover from future instances.</p> | <p>Q4 2022-23</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Robust and integrated business continuity plans in place.</p> <p>BMIS Dashboard created and available for future use to enable real time decision making based on evidence.</p> <p>Regular Covid review meetings held to assess current threat levels and appropriate actions.</p> |
| <p>Lead Officer: Chief Fire Officer</p> <p>Lead Officer: Chief Fire Officer</p> | <p>Maintain an appropriate Covid-19 Secure Workplace.</p> <p>Continue to deliver value for money and effective governance in a Covid-19 Environment.</p> | <p>A robust Service able to deliver services within a Covid19 working environment.</p> <p>The Service continues to maintain the highest of standards of conduct regarding financial administration and corporate governance.</p> | | <p>Complete</p> <p>Service can respond and adapt to all covid alert levels.</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Service fully evidenced covid expenditure displaying sound financial management. Corporate Governance mechanisms adapted and flexible with hybrid meetings as standard business practice</p> |

Governance Action Plan 2022-2023

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Completion Date | Progress |
|--|---|--|-----------------|--|
| Lead Officer: Chief Fire Officer | Identify new and innovative ways to deliver Services and Engage with the public in a Covid-19 environment. | New ways of working to safely deliver Services and engage with our communities in person, remotely and virtually to ensure the Service continues to reduce risk across the communities that it serves. | Q4 2022-2023 | Complete Digital engagement improved and social media campaigns proving more effective. |
| CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019 Lead Officer: Treasurer | Embody actions and recommendations from the self-assessment of the Service's compliance with the principles of the CIPFA FM Code. | Improve financial resilience of the Service by embedding enhanced standards of financial management. Address any gaps or limitations in compliance with the FM Code. | Q4 2022-23 | Ongoing planned to continue 2023-2024 |

Governance action Plan 2023-2024

| Governance Action Plan 2023-2024 | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|------------------------------|
| Issue | Action | Outcome | Lead Officer | Completion Date |
| Industrial Action (IA) | To continue to test and have in place robust and effective business continuity plans to enable the Service to deliver its statutory duties in times of IA. | During times of IA, the Service can deliver its statutory duty to receive and action emergency incidents where there is risk to life or property. | Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Director of Technical Services | March 2024 |
| Independent Review | To put in place, support and champion the mechanism and process of an independent review into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the culture of the Service • discipline processes • historic cases of where employees have failed to uphold our professional values and standards. | To receive learning and recommendations from the independent review; and to develop and implement actions to address the recommendations of the Review. | Chief Fire Officer | March 2024 September 2024 |
| Job Evaluation Phase 2 | Phase 2 of the programme to establish a more coherent approach for naming conventions across the Service for Corporate Roles. There will also be a review of the allowances applied to particular corporate roles. Identify future working practices for the Service to enable consistent Job Evaluation activity | Review of Job Titles and Allowances. Established process for future Job Evaluation activity. | Assistant Chief Officer – Director People Services | March 2024 |

Governance Action Plan 2023-2024

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Lead Officer | Completion Date |
|--|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| Fire Fighter Pensions | To implement the decision of the Employment Tribunal in respect of McCloud / Sargeant - age. Matthews / Obrien par time working regs | Firefighters' pensions corrected and calculated appropriately going forward. | Assistant Chief Officer - Director People Services | As per the new legislative framework. |
| Living Wage Foundation Accreditation | Achieve confirmation of living wage accreditation. | Become an accredited living wage employer. | Assistant Chief Officer - Director People Services | September 2024 |
| Biodiversity and Carbon Reduction Plan | To seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and reduce the carbon footprint in the proper execution of the Services functions, and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems. | Develop and implement the first 3-year plan to reduce the impact of the Service on the environment and support the Environmental objectives of the Wellbeing Future Generations Act. | Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services | March 2024 |
| CIPFA Financial Management Code 2019 | Embody actions and recommendations from the self-assessment of the Service's compliance with the principles of the CIPFA FM Code. | <p>Improve financial resilience of the Service by embedding enhanced standards of financial management.</p> <p>Address any gaps or limitations in compliance with the FM Code.</p> | Treasurer | March 2024 |
| COVID Enquiry | Prepare to respond to the Covid 19 Enquiry | | Chief Fire Officer | March 2024 |

Governance Action Plan 2023-2024

| Issue | Action | Outcome | Lead Officer | Completion Date |
|---|---|---|---|-----------------|
| Internal Communication of Constitution and contents | To completed and evidence communication and understanding of the constitution across the Service specifically officer code of conduct section | All staff within the Service have read and understood the Officers Code of Conduct | Assistant Chief Officer - Director Corporate Services | December 2023 |
| Fire Control Review | Implementation of the Joint Fire Control review report. 5 Key Task Areas (KTA) Published in September 2021. | Service able to fulfil its statutory duty. An efficient, effective, and resilient Joint Fire Control room function. | T/DCFO Director of Service Delivery | March 2024 |

Internal documents referred to in this statement can be found on our website at www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/

9. Summary Conclusion

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority recognises its responsibility as a public service organisation to both provide a vision for the community it serves and to lead by example in its decision making and other processes and actions, with Members and officers acting in accordance with high standards of conduct. The organisation operates in an economical, effective, efficient, and ethical manner.

The Authority recognises that good governance provides the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet the needs of stakeholders and ensures that public money is well spent. The Authority considers that its governance arrangements for 2022-2023 remained fit for purpose.

It is believed that that the scrutiny, internal and external audit processes as well as risk management have demonstrated that the Corporate Governance in this organisation is effective, existing arrangements are fit for purpose and the Authority is well placed to meet its aims and objectives, to achieve the intended outcomes for the community and service users.

The Authority is satisfied that appropriate governance arrangements are in place and remains committed to enhancing these through the implementation of the action plan for 2023-2024.

10. Joint Statement by the Fire & Rescue Authority Chairperson and Chief Fire Officer

We propose to take steps to address all the above matters to further enhance our governance arrangements during the coming year as outlined in the plan above. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review. However due to external influences beyond our control it may not be possible to achieve everything identified.

The Annual Governance Statement for 2023-2024, will include an updated position against the governance issues identified in the 2022-2023 Statement.

| | |
|--|---------------------------|
| Signed: | Signed: |
| Fire & Rescue Authority Chairperson | Chief Fire Officer |
| Date: | Date: |

AUDITOR'S REPORT

The independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of:

- South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority;
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund

for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's financial statements comprise the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The Firefighters Pension Fund Accounts comprise the Fund Account and Net Assets Statement and related notes.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021-22.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund as at 31 March 2023 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the responsible financial officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements and my auditor's report thereon. The Responsible Financial Officer is responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

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

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022-23;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

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

- adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my team;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

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

My procedures included the following:

- enquiring of management and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to South Wales Fire and Rescue

Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund's policies and procedures concerned with:

- identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals;
- obtaining an understanding of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund.

In addition to the above, my procedures to respond to identified risks included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations discussed above;
- enquiring of management, the Finance, Audit and Performance Management Committee about actual and potential litigation and claims;
- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Fire and Rescue Authority;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

I also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all audit team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is affected by the inherent difficulty in detecting irregularities, the effectiveness of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund's controls, and the nature, timing and extent of the audit procedures performed.

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website

www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Certificate of completion of audit

I certify that I have completed the audit of the accounts of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund in accordance with the requirements of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 and the Auditor General for Wales' Code of Audit Practice.

The maintenance and integrity of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's website is the responsibility of Authority; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

Ann-Marie Harkin
For and On Behalf of the Auditor General for Wales
XX XXXX 2023

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT (CIES)

| 2021/22 | | | | 2022/23 | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Gross Expenditure £000 | Gross Income £000 | Net Expenditure £000 | | Gross Expenditure £000 | Gross Income £000 | Net Expenditure £000 |
| 87,670 | -7,642 | 80,028 | Fire Fighting costs | 84,431 | -8,398 | 76,033 |
| 87,670 | -7,642 | 80,028 | Cost of Services | 84,431 | -8,398 | 76,033 |
| 0 | -58 | -58 | Other operating income & expenditure (note 6) | 0 | 13 | 13 |
| 22,057 | -10 | 22,047 | Financing and investment income and expenditure (note 7) | 27,564 | -260 | 27,304 |
| 0 | -78,926 | -78,926 | Taxation and non-specific grant income (note 8) | 0 | -81,694 | -81,694 |
| | | 23,091 | Deficit on Provision of Services | | | 21,656 |
| 420 | -5,319 | -4,899 | Surplus or Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | -60,670 | Re-measurement of the net defined benefit (asset) / liability (note 21 & 34) | | | -324,600 |
| | | -65,569 | Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure (MiRS) | | | -324,600 |
| | | -42,478 | Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure | | | -302,944 |

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT (MiRS)

| | General Fund Balance £000 | Earmarked General Fund Reserves £000 | Capital Receipts Reserve £000 | Total usable Reserves £000 | Unusable Reserves £000 | Total Authority Reserves £000 |
|---|------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Balance as at 31 March 2022 carried forward | -3,000 | -14,174 | 0 | -17,174 | 943,069 | 925,895 |
| Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure | 21,656 | 0 | 0 | 21,656 | -324,600 | -302,944 |
| Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (note 3) | -21,761 | 312 | 0 | -21,449 | 21,449 | 0 |
| Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves | -105 | 312 | 0 | 207 | -303,151 | -302,944 |
| Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves | 105 | -105 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (Increase)/Decrease in 2022/23 | 0 | 207 | 0 | 207 | -303,151 | -302,944 |
| Balance as at 31 March 2023 carried forward | -3,000 | -13,967 | 0 | -16,967 | 639,918 | 622,951 |

| | General Fund Balance £000 | Earmarked General Fund Reserves £000 | Capital Receipts Reserve £000 | Total usable Reserves £000 | Unusable Reserves £000 | Total Authority Reserves £000 |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Balance at 31 March 2021 carried forward | -3,000 | -10,526 | -129 | -13,655 | 982,028 | 968,373 |
| Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure | 23,091 | 0 | 0 | 23,091 | -65,569 | -42,478 |
| Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations (note 3) | -26,918 | 179 | 129 | -26,610 | 26,610 | 0 |
| Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves | -3,827 | 179 | 129 | -3,519 | -38,959 | -42,478 |
| Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves | 3,827 | -3,827 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| (Increase)/Decrease in 2021/22 | 0 | -3,648 | 129 | -3,519 | -38,959 | -42,478 |
| Balance as at 31 March 2022 carried forward | -3,000 | -14,174 | 0 | -17,174 | 943,069 | 925,895 |

BALANCE SHEET

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 | |
|-------------------|--|------------------|-------|
| £000 | | £000 | Notes |
| 85,235 | Property, Plant and Equipment | 87,419 | 9 |
| 111 | Intangible assets | 184 | |
| 200 | Long Term Debtors | 100 | 13 |
| 85,546 | Long Term Assets | 87,703 | |
| 962 | Inventories | 1,073 | |
| 4,738 | Short Term Debtors | 6,071 | 13 |
| 7,158 | Cash and Cash Equivalents | 2,163 | 14 |
| 12,858 | Current Assets | 9,307 | |
| -419 | Short Term Liabilities | -437 | 33 |
| -1,572 | Short Term Borrowing | -1,535 | 10 |
| -4,783 | Short Term Creditors | -5,425 | 15 |
| -38 | Provisions | -38 | 16 |
| -6,812 | Current Liabilities | -7,435 | |
| -26,737 | Long Term Borrowing | -25,354 | 10 |
| -3,677 | Other Long Term Liabilities – PFI | -3,240 | 33 |
| -987,073 | Liability related to defined benefit pension schemes | -683,932 | 34 |
| -1,017,487 | Long Term Liabilities | -712,526 | |
| -925,895 | Net Assets | -622,951 | |
| -17,174 | Usable Reserves | -16,967 | 17 |
| 943,069 | Unusable Reserves | 639,918 | 18 |
| 925,895 | Total Reserves | 622,951 | |

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|---------|---|---------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 23,091 | Net deficit on the Provision of Services (CIES & note 23) | 21,656 |
| -30,567 | Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services for non-cash movements (note 23) | -25,080 |
| -1,185 | Adjustments for items included in the net surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing activities (note 23) | 161 |
| -8,661 | Net cash (inflow)/outflow from Operating Activities | -3,263 |
| 1,837 | Investing Activities (note 24) | 6,122 |
| 2,864 | Financing Activities (note 24) | 2,136 |
| -3,960 | Net (increase) or decrease in cash and cash equivalents | 4,995 |
| 3,198 | Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period | 7,158 |
| 7,158 | Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (note 14) | 2,163 |

Note

A detailed breakdown of the above is provided in note 23 and 24.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

GENERAL

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Authority's transactions for the 2022/23 financial year and its position for the year ended 31 March 2023. The Authority is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23 (the Code), supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and statutory guidance issued under Section 12 of the 2003 Act.

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

ACCRUALS INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

In the revenue accounts, income and expenditure are accounted for, net of recoverable VAT, in the year in which they arise, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Fees, charges and rents due are accounted for as income at the date the Authority provides the relevant goods or services.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed. Where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and consumption they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for 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 and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash in no more than three months with insignificant risk of change in value.

CHARGES TO REVENUE FOR NON CURRENT ASSETS

Cost of services are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding non-current assets during the year:

- Depreciation attributable to the assets used by the 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 Authority is not required to raise contributions to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by contributions made from General Fund Balances i.e. minimum revenue provision (MRP) and capital expenditure to revenue account (CERA) by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the MiRS.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits payable during employment

Salaries and employment-related payments are recognised in the period in which the service is received from employees. The cost of annual leave entitlement earned but not taken by employees at the end of the period ('accumulated absences') is recognised in the financial statements to the extent that employees are permitted to carry-forward leave into the following period.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Authority to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy/retirement. These costs are charged on an accruals basis when the Authority is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an officer or group of officers or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority 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

Pensions

The Authority participates in distinct pension schemes for Fire fighter and corporate members of staff. The schemes are as follows:

1. Fire Fighter Pension Schemes (FPS)

The Fire Fighters pension schemes are unfunded defined benefit schemes, meaning that there are no investment assets built up to meet the pensions liabilities and cash has to be generated to meet the actual pension payments as they fall due. Employee and employer contributions are based on a percentage of pensionable pay set nationally by the Welsh Government and this is subject to triennial revaluation by Government Actuary's Department (GAD).

The pension fund is treated as a separate income and expenditure statement in the Statement of Accounts and is ring fenced to ensure accounting clarity, please

see notes 21, 34 and the 'Fire fighters Pension Fund Account' for more detail. It is through the pension fund that the Authority discharges its responsibility for paying the pensions of retired officers, their survivors and others who are eligible for benefits under the scheme.

The estimated long term liability to the Authority to meet these costs is disclosed by a note to the accounts as required by IAS 19.

2. Corporate and Control Room Staff

This is a funded scheme with pensions paid from the underlying investment funds managed by Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council pension fund (the 'fund') which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). Actuaries determine the employer's contribution rate. Further costs, which arise in respect of certain pensions paid to retired employees, are paid on an unfunded basis. Please see note 34 for more detail.

EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified.

- a) Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period (adjusting events), and
- b) Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period (non-adjusting).

PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS, CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND ESTIMATES AND ERRORS

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

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Authority'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 period.

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) 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.

This means that for most borrowings of the Authority, the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest if applicable); and interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Financial Assets

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

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

The Authority's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost.

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority 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 (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For the financial assets held by the Authority, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Authority has adopted a simple approach to impairment and measures the loss of Trade Debtors and Loans to Third Parties at an amount equal to expected lifetime loss using a provision largely based on the age of the debt. This method ensures early recognition of the impairment of financial assets.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Government grants and third party contributions are recognised as income at the date the Authority satisfies the conditions of entitlement, there is reasonable assurance that the monies will be received and the expenditure for which the grant is given has either been incurred or there exists reasonable expectation. Revenue grants are matched in service revenue accounts with service expenditure to which they relate. Grants to cover general expenditure are credited to the foot of the CIES after Net Operating Expenditure.

INVENTORIES AND LONG TERM CONTRACTS

Inventories are included in the balance sheet at the lower of cost or NRV. The cost of inventories is assigned using the Average Cost Method (AVCO).

LEASES

Finance leases

Where substantially all risks and rewards of ownership of a leased asset are borne by the Authority, the asset is recorded as Property, Plant and Equipment and a corresponding liability is recorded. The value at which both are recognised is the lower of the fair value of the asset or the present value of the minimum lease payments, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. The implicit interest rate is that which produces a constant periodic rate of interest on the outstanding liability. The asset and liability are recognised at the inception of the lease, and are de-recognised when the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires. The annual rental is split between the repayment of the liability and a finance cost. The annual finance cost is calculated by applying the implicit interest rate to the outstanding liability and is charged to 'Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure' costs in the CIES.

Operating Leases

Where assets are available for use under leasing arrangements, the rentals payable are charged to the cost of service on a straight-line basis irrespective of the payment arrangements. Since the Authority does not own these assets, the cost does not appear in the Balance Sheet.

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 Authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an assets potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

Property, Plant and Equipment are capitalised where:

- it is held for use in delivering services;
- it is probable that future economic benefits will flow to, or service potentially be provided to, the Authority;
- it is expected to be used for more than one financial year;
- the cost of the item can be measured reliably;
- the cost of the individual asset is at least £15,000;
- the items form a group of assets which individually have a cost of at least £500, collectively have a cost of at least £60,000, where the assets are functionally interdependent, they broadly have simultaneous purchase dates, are anticipated to have simultaneous disposal dates and are under single managerial control; and
- the items form part of the initial equipping and setting-up cost of a new building or refurbishment of a station or offices, irrespective of their individual or collective cost. Where a large asset, for example a building, includes a number

of components with significantly different asset lives e.g. plant and equipment, then these components are treated as separate assets and depreciated over their own useful economic lives.

- Where the acquisition or creation of IT systems incorporates both physical hardware and licences to use the system, judgement is made as to whether this will be classified wholly as Property, Plant and Equipment or Intangible Assets, as per the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Council Accounting.

Measurement (Valuation Basis)

All property, plant and equipment assets are 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.

Property is subsequently valued for the financial statements on the basis of 'fair value' (FV) and, where the property is of a specialist nature, i.e. operational and there is no active market, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) has been applied.

Land and building assets are valued every 5 years by a professionally qualified valuer in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Appraisal and Valuation Manual. Annual impairment reviews are carried out in other years internally. The annual reviews are conducted using the most appropriate information available at the date of the review. A full revaluation was last carried out 31 March 2020 and a desktop valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2022 to reflect increases in property value for buildings held at Depreciated Replacement Cost.

The Authority 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 Authority). 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 Authority.

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

- Assets under construction - historical cost.
- Surplus assets – fair value.
- All other assets - current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use.

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

current value. Where non-property assets have short useful lives and/or low values, depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current 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.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 31 March 2010 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Subsequent expenditure

Where subsequent expenditure enhances an asset beyond its original specification, the directly attributable cost is added to the asset's carrying value. Where subsequent expenditure is simply restoring the asset to the specification assumed by its economic useful life then the expenditure is charged to operating expenses.

Revaluation and impairment

Increases in asset values arising from revaluations are recognised in the revaluation reserve, except where, and to the extent that, they reverse impairment previously recognised in operating expenses, in which case they are recognised in operating income.

Decreases in asset values and impairments are charged to the revaluation reserve to the extent that there is an available balance for the asset concerned, and thereafter are charged to operating expenses.

Gains and losses recognised in the revaluation reserve are reported in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) and 'other comprehensive income and expenditure'.

Depreciation

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

- Buildings – straight line allocation over the remaining life of the property as estimated by the valuer.
- Vehicles, plant and equipment – straight line allocation over the remaining useful life (if bought before 31 December in the year of account).
- Land – depreciation is not applied to land.
- Software is depreciated on a straight line basis over periods of up to 5 years.
- No residual value is accounted for.

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

Disposals

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

Amounts received for disposal of assets are categorised as capital receipts and credited to the Capital Receipts Reserve to be used only for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Authority's underlying need to borrow. Receipts are appropriated to the Capital Receipts Reserve from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against contributions, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

The Authority has entered into a long term contractual agreement under PFI for the provision of the training centre at Cardiff Gate. Under the scheme the Welsh Government provides some revenue support to the project in the form of an annual grant (PFI credits), and the Authority funds the balance by making contributions from the annual revenue budget.

In order to spread contributions evenly over the life of the contract an equalisation reserve is operated whereby surplus credits and contributions are invested and used to reduce contributions in later years. The reserve will be reviewed annually and contributions amended with the intention that the balance on the reserve at the end of the contract will be nil.

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Authority an obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits, but where the timing of the transfer is uncertain.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate revenue account when the Authority becomes aware of the obligation, based on the best estimate of the likely settlement. When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision set up 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 be required, the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant revenue account.

Contingent Liabilities

IAS 37 defines contingent liabilities as either:

- a possible obligation that arises from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of one or more uncertain future events not wholly within the Authority's control,
- or a present obligation that arises from past events but is not recognised because:
 - a) it is not probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required to settle the obligation, or
 - b) the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Where a contingent liability exists it would not be recognised within the accounts as an item of expenditure, but would be disclosed in a note to the balance sheet which would describe the nature of the contingent liability and where practicable an estimate of its financial effect and an indication of the uncertainties related to the amount of any outflow.

Reserves

The Authority maintains reserves to meet future expenditure. These are disclosed within the balance sheet and their purposes are explained in the notes to the balance sheet.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

The Authority is reimbursed for VAT incurred and the revenue accounts have therefore been prepared exclusive of this tax.

ACCOUNTING STANDARDS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BUT NOT YET ADOPTED

New standards and amendments to existing standards that have been published but not adopted by the Code until 2023/24 are:

- Definition of Accounting Estimates (Amendments to IAS 8)
- Disclosure of Accounting Policies (Amendments to IAS 1 and IFRS Practice Statement 2)
- Deferred Tax related to Assets and Liabilities arising from Single Transaction (Amendments to IAS 12)
- Updating a Reference to the Conceptual Framework (Amendments to IFRS 3)

It is not anticipated that the above amendments will have a material impact on the information provided in the Authority's financial statements

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Note 1 - CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements in the statement of accounts are;

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

Note 2 - ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF ESTIMATION

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority 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 Authority's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

| Item | Uncertainties | Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions |
|---|---|--|
| Pension Liabilities (note 34) | Assumptions have been made in the accounts as to the value of future pension costs and income, i.e. liabilities and assets. This is to provide an understanding as to the potential liabilities faced by the Authority. | Changes to pension assumptions will affect the value of assets and liabilities and will impact on the main financial statements, i.e. MiRS, CIES, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow. |
| Property, Plant and Equipment (note 9) | The Authority revalues its assets every 5 years. The last revaluation was undertaken in 2019/20. Valuations are based on assumptions about asset conditions, useful lives, residual values and market conditions. Since the valuation date there has been a significant uplift in Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) construction data, therefore, as at 31 March 2022 a desktop revaluation exercise of operational properties measured on depreciated replacement costs (DRC) was completed by the Authority's Valuers. | A fluctuation in property values would impact on the values held in the Balance Sheet and on the corresponding depreciation charge. |

Note 3 - ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS & FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATION

This note details the adjustments that are made to the Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure recognised by the Authority in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Authority to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

| 2021/22 | | | | | 2022/23 | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|---------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| General Fund Balance £000 | Earmarked General Fund Reserves £000 | Capital Receipts Reserve £000 | Movements in Unusable reserves £000 | | General Fund Balance £000 | Earmarked General Fund Reserves £000 | Capital Receipts Reserve £000 | Movements in Unusable Reserves £000 | |
| | | | | Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account: | | | | | |
| | | | | Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement: | | | | | |
| -4,375 | 0 | 0 | 4,375 | Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets | -5,564 | 0 | 0 | 5,564 | |
| | | | | Revaluation losses on Property Plant and Equipment | | | | | |
| 392 | 0 | 0 | -392 | Capital grants and contributions applied | 1,425 | 0 | 0 | -1,425 | |
| -179 | 179 | 0 | 0 | PFI transactions to earmarked reserves | -312 | 312 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | | | Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| -4,162 | 179 | 0 | 3,983 | | -4,451 | 312 | 0 | 4,139 | |
| | | | | Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement: | | | | | |
| | | | | Statutory provision for the financing of Capital Investment | | | | | |
| 3,066 | 0 | 0 | -3,066 | Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund | 3,630 | 0 | 0 | -3,630 | |
| 200 | 0 | 0 | -200 | | 200 | 0 | 0 | -200 | |
| | | | | Adjustments primarily involving the capital receipts reserve: | | | | | |
| 58 | 0 | -60 | 2 | Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal | -13 | 0 | -24 | 37 | |
| 0 | 0 | 189 | -189 | Contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure | 0 | 0 | 24 | -24 | |
| 3,324 | 0 | 129 | -3,453 | | 3,817 | 0 | 0 | -3,817 | |
| | | | | Adjustments primarily involving the Pensions Reserve: | | | | | |
| | | | | Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement | -33,226 | 0 | 0 | 33,226 | |
| -37,525 | 0 | 0 | 37,525 | | | | | | |
| 11,275 | 0 | 0 | -11,275 | Employer's pension contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year | 11,767 | 0 | 0 | -11,767 | |
| -26,250 | 0 | 0 | 26,250 | | -21,459 | 0 | 0 | 21,459 | |
| | | | | Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account: | | | | | |
| | | | | Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements (note 22) | 332 | 0 | 0 | -332 | |
| 170 | 0 | 0 | -170 | | | | | | |
| -26,918 | 179 | 129 | 26,610 | Total Adjustments: | -21,761 | 312 | 0 | 21,449 | |

Note 4 – EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS (EFA)

| 2021/22 | | | 2022/23 | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund £000 | Adjustments between the funding & Accounting Basis £000 | Net Expenditure in the CIES £000 | | Net Expenditure Chargeable to General Fund £000 | Adjustments between the funding & Accounting Basis £000 | Net Expenditure in the CIES £000 |
| 73,703 | 5,933 | 79,636 | Fire Fighting Services | 79,199 | -4,591 | 74,608 |
| 73,703 | 5,933 | 79,636 | Net Cost of Services | 79,199 | -4,591 | 74,608 |
| -77,530 | 20,985 | -56,545 | Other Income and Expenditure | -79,304 | 26,352 | -52,952 |
| -3,827 | 26,918 | 23,091 | (Surplus) / Deficit (Note 4 and Note 5) | -105 | 21,761 | 21,656 |
| -3,000 | | | Opening General Fund Balance | -3,000 | | |
| -3,827 | | | +/- (Surplus) / Deficit on General Fund | -105 | | |
| 3,827 | | | Transfers to / (from) earmarked reserves | 105 | | |
| -3,000 | | | Closing General Fund Balance at 31 March | -3,000 | | |

| | 2022/23 | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the CIES Amounts | Adj's for Capital Purposes £000 | Net change for the Pensions Adj's £000 | Other Differences £000 | Total £000 |
| Fire Fighting Services | 2,152 | -4,581 | -2,162 | -4,591 |
| Net Cost of Services | 2,152 | -4,581 | -2,162 | -4,591 |
| Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis | 13 | 26,040 | 299 | 26,352 |
| Difference between General Fund Surplus / Deficit and CIES Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services | 2,165 | 21,459 | -1,863 | 21,761 |

| | 2021/22 | | | |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the CIES Amounts | Adj's for Capital Purposes £000 | Net change for the Pensions Adj's £000 | Other Differences £000 | Total £000 |
| Fire Fighting Services | 1,474 | 5,780 | -1,321 | 5,933 |
| Net Cost of Services | 1,474 | 5,780 | -1,321 | 5,933 |
| Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis | -58 | 20,470 | 573 | 20,985 |
| Difference between General Fund Surplus / Deficit and CIES Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services | 1,416 | 26,250 | -748 | 26,918 |

Note 5 - EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ANALYSED BY NATURE

The Authority's Income & Expenditure (I&E) is analysed as follows:

| | 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| | £000 | £000 |
| Expenditure | | |
| Salaries, NI & Superannuation | 61,251 | 65,537 |
| Pensions (ill health) | 975 | 982 |
| Travel & Subsistence | 242 | 464 |
| Total Employee Costs | 62,468 | 66,983 |
| Premises Related Expenses | 5,324 | 5,642 |
| Training Expenses | 1,549 | 1,668 |
| Supplies & Services | 5,522 | 6,247 |
| Transport Related Expenses | 1,433 | 1,601 |
| Contracted Services | 958 | 1,159 |
| Capital Costs / leases | 4,101 | 4,556 |
| Gross Expenditure | 81,355 | 87,856 |
| Income | -7,652 | -8,657 |
| (Surplus) / Deficit for the year | 73,703 | 79,199 |

Reconciliation of I&E to the Provision of Services in the CIES

Amounts in the CIES not reported in the I&E

| | | |
|--|---------|---------|
| Accumulated absences | -170 | -332 |
| IAS 19 adjustments | 26,250 | 21,459 |
| PFI operating costs | 1,331 | 1,420 |
| Financing adjustment re: PFI /Leases | 491 | 482 |
| Depreciation (Inc impairments) | 4,375 | 5,564 |
| Capital grant | -392 | -1,425 |
| Non-current asset disposal | -60 | 13 |
| Contributions from constituent authorities | -77,530 | -79,304 |
| PFI Grant | -1,004 | -965 |

Amounts included in I&E not in the CIES

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|
| CERA | -200 | -200 |
| MRP (excluding PFI & Leases) | -2,699 | -3,211 |
| Contribution to PFI | -1,004 | -1,044 |

| | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| (Surplus) / Deficit on the Provision of Services | 23,091 | 21,656 |
|---|---------------|---------------|

Note 6 - OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE AND INCOME

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| -58 | Net (Gain)/Loss on disposal of non-current assets | 13 |
| -58 | Total | 13 |

Note 7 - FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 1,587 | Interest payable and similar charges | 1,524 |
| 20,470 | Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions assets | 26,040 |
| -10 | Interest receivable and similar income | -260 |
| 22,047 | Total | 27,304 |

Note 8 - TAXATION AND NON SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 77,530 | Local Authority Contributions (note 29) | 79,304 |
| 392 | Capital Grants & Contributions | 1,425 |
| 1,004 | Government Grants – PFI (note 33) | 965 |
| 78,926 | Total | 81,694 |

Note 9 - PLANT, PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Fixed Assets 2022/23

| | Land & Buildings | Vehicles & Equipment | Training Centre / PFI | AUC | PPE Total |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------|--------------|
| <u>Cost/Valuation</u> | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Gross book value at 31 March 2022 | 66,390 | 37,475 | 6,405 | 0 | 110,270 |
| Additions | 1,631 | 5,313 | 0 | 156 | 7,100 |
| Disposal of Assets | -37 | -286 | 0 | 0 | -323 |
| Gross book value at 31 March 2023 | 67,984 | 42,502 | 6,405 | 156 | 117,047 |
| <u>Depreciation and Impairments</u> | | | | | |
| Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2022 | 303 | 24,732 | 0 | 0 | 25,035 |
| Annual depreciation | 1,732 | 2,937 | 210 | 0 | 4,879 |
| Disposal of Assets | 0 | -286 | 0 | 0 | -286 |
| Accumulated depreciation as at 31 March 2023 | 2,035 | 27,383 | 210 | 0 | 29,628 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2022 | 66,087 | 12,743 | 6,405 | 0 | 85,235 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2023 | 65,949 | 15,119 | 6,195 | 156 | 87,419 |

Note: all properties with exception of PFI are freehold.
Assets under Construction relate to Electric Vehicle Chargers that we delivered prior to 31st March 2023 but were not installed.

Fixed Assets 2021/22

| | Land & Buildings | Vehicles & Equipment | Training Centre / PFI | PPE Total |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Cost/Valuation</u> | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Gross book value at 31 March 2021 | 63,814 | 36,932 | 5,890 | 106,636 |
| Additions | 1,164 | 1,072 | 0 | 2,236 |
| Disposal of Assets | 0 | -529 | 0 | -529 |
| Impairment | 1,412 | 0 | 515 | 1,927 |
| Gross book value at 31 March 2022 | 66,390 | 37,475 | 6,405 | 110,270 |
| <u>Depreciation and Impairments</u> | | | | |
| Accumulated depreciation at 31 March 2021 | 1,485 | 22,728 | 180 | 24,393 |
| Annual depreciation | 1,542 | 2,531 | 180 | 4,253 |
| Revaluation | -2,724 | | -360 | -3084 |
| Disposal of Assets | 0 | -527 | 0 | -527 |
| Accumulated depreciation as at 31 March 2022 | 303 | 24,732 | 0 | 25,035 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2021 | 62,329 | 14,204 | 5,710 | 82,243 |
| Net book value at 31 March 2022 | 66,087 | 12,743 | 6,405 | 85,235 |

Note: all properties with exception of PFI are freehold.

Note 10 - FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

1. Financial Instruments Balances

The borrowings and investments disclosed in the balance sheet are made up of the following categories of financial instruments

| | Long-Term | | Current | |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | 31 March 2022 | 31 March 2023 | 31 March 2022 | 31 March 2023 |
| Borrowing | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Financial liabilities (principal amount) | 26,737 | 25,354 | 1,409 | 1,383 |
| + Accrued Interest (accrued interest is short term) | 0 | 0 | 163 | 152 |
| Total borrowings | 26,737 | 25,354 | 1,572 | 1,535 |
| PFI liabilities | 3,677 | 3,240 | 419 | 437 |
| Creditors | | | | |
| Financial liabilities at amortised cost | 0 | 0 | 4,783 | 5,425 |
| Investments | | | | |
| Loans and receivables (principal amount) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| + Accrued interest | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total investments | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Debtors | 200 | 100 | 4,738 | 6,071 |

Note – Under accounting requirements the carrying value of the financial instrument is shown in the balance sheet which includes the principal amount borrowed or invested. Accrued interest is shown separately in current assets/liabilities where the payments/receipts are due within one year.

2. Financial instruments Gains/Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

| Financial Instruments Gains and Losses | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2021/22 | | 2022/23 | |
| | Financial Liabilities Measured at amortised cost £000s | Financial Assets Loans and receivables £000s | Financial Liabilities measured at amortised cost £000s | Financial Assets Loans and receivables £000s |
| Interest expense in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services | 1,587 | 0 | 1,524 | 0 |
| Interest income in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services | 0 | 10 | 0 | 260 |
| Net gain/(loss) for the year | 1,587 | 10 | 1,524 | 260 |

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is as follows, with the maximum and minimum limits for fixed interest rates maturing in each period:

| Period/Term | Approved Minimum limits | Approved Maximum limits | Actual 31 March 22 £000's | Actual 31 March 23 £000's |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Less than 1 year | 0% | 25% | 1,409 | 1,383 |
| Between 1 and 2 years | 0% | 30% | 1,383 | 1,395 |
| Between 2 and 5 years | 0% | 50% | 4,616 | 4,525 |
| Between 5 and 10 years | 0% | 70% | 8,638 | 9,334 |
| More than 10years | 0% | 95% | 12,100 | 10,100 |
| Total | | | 28,146 | 26,737 |

The debt portfolio comprises of PWLB Equal Installment of Principal (EIP) and Maturity loans. The loans outstanding at the balance sheet date is £26.7 million with an average debt rate equating to 3.80%.

Note 11 - FAIR VALUE OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES CARRIED AT AMORTISED COST

Financial liabilities and assets represented by loans and receivables are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost (in long term assets/liabilities with accrued interest in current assets/liabilities). Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- ✓ For loans payable from the PWLB, the fair value can be included under debt redemption procedures;

- ✓ For loans receivable (of which there are none), the prevailing benchmark market rates would be used to provide the fair value;
- ✓ No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- ✓ Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or the billed amount;
- ✓ The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

Where assets are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the contract will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gains and losses that arise on de-recognition of the asset are credited/debited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Fair values pertaining to loans are as follows:

| | £000s | 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 | |
|-------------------|-------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| | | Carrying amount | Fair value | Carrying amount | Fair value |
| PWLB debt | | 28,139 | 30,834 | 26,737 | 25,500 |
| Non-PWLB debt | | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Total debt | | 28,146 | 30,841 | 26,737 | 25,500 |

The fair value is less than the carrying amount because the Authority's portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the rates available in the market at the balance sheet date.

Note 12 - SHORT TERM INVESTMENTS

In accordance with the treasury management strategy, there are no short term investments outstanding at the end of the year.

Note 13 - DEBTORS

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--|
| £000 | | £000 | |
| 2,638 | Central Government Bodies | 3,168 | |
| 1,058 | Other Local Authorities* | 1,415 | |
| 20 | NHS Bodies | 63 | |
| 1,222 | Other Entities and Individuals | 1,525 | |
| 4,938 | Total | 6,171 | |

* Includes long term debtors of £200k for 21/22 and £100k for 22/23.

Note 14 - CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| <u>7,158</u> | Bank current accounts | <u>2,163</u> |
| <u>7,158</u> | Total | <u>2,163</u> |

Note 15 - CREDITORS

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 1,463 | Central government bodies | 1,482 |
| 595 | Other local authorities | 333 |
| 15 | NHS Bodies | 22 |
| 34 | Public Corporations and Trading Funds | 0 |
| 1,302 | Other Entities and Individuals | 2,805 |
| 259 | Receipts in Advance | 0 |
| 1,115 | Accumulated Absences (note 22) | 783 |
| <u>4,783</u> | Total | <u>5,425</u> |

Note 16 - PROVISIONS

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 |
|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| <u>38</u> | Part time worker regulations | <u>38</u> |
| <u>38</u> | Total | <u>38</u> |

Note 17 - USABLE RESERVES

| Balance at 1 April 2021 £000 | Transfers Out 2021/22 £000 | Transfers In 2021/22 £000 | Balance at 31 March 2022 £000 | | Transfers Out 2022/23 £000 | Transfers In 2022/23 £000 | Balance at 31 March 2023 £000 |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|--|
| 6,400 | -72 | 3,927 | 10,255 | Change Management Reserve | -7,437 | 276 | 3,094 |
| 400 | -100 | 0 | 300 | Joint Control Lease Reserve | -100 | 0 | 200 |
| 3,683 | -179 | 0 | 3,504 | PFI Equalisation Reserve | -312 | 0 | 3,192 |
| 43 | 0 | 72 | 115 | Managed Under Spend Reserve | -71 | 97 | 141 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Cultural Review Reserve | 0 | 340 | 340 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Carbon Reduction Reserve | 0 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Reserve | 0 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Equipment Renewals Reserve | 0 | 2,000 | 2,000 |
| 129 | -189 | 60 | 0 | Capital Receipts | -24 | 24 | 0 |
| 3,000 | -3,827 | 3,827 | 3,000 | General Fund | -105 | 105 | 3,000 |
| 13,655 | -4,367 | 7,886 | 17,174 | Total Usable Reserves | -8,049 | 7,842 | 16,967 |

Movement in earmarked reserves have occurred during the year, as follows;

- The revenue under spend and annual lease costs for the Joint Public Service Centre have been transferred to the change management reserve. In addition, any projects completed during 2022/23, along with those forecast for completion during 2023/24, have been transferred from and to, respectively, the managed underspend reserve. Balances have also been transferred from change management reserves to the newly established reserves to support the strategies outlined in each area.
- The balance remaining on the Joint Public Service Centre lease which is payable over 8 years, commencing from 2017/18, is shown as a separate reserve.
- The PFI equalisation reserve exists to ensure the necessary funds are available to accommodate future payments to the PFI provider.
- £97k has been transferred from the change management reserve to the managed under spend reserve as detailed above, with £71k being transferred to the change management reserve for projects completed in 2022/23.
- The cultural review reserve has been established to accommodate costs set out as part of the Independent Cultural Review process across the service.
- The carbon reduction reserve has been established to achieve aims set out in the Carbon Delivery Plan 2020-2030.
- The equality, diversity and inclusion reserve has been established to support the framework to promote in-house equality, diversity and good practice.
- The equipment renewals reserves has been established to level out variances in the required annual provisions for replacement.
- Capital receipts are ring fenced to fund capital investment with £24k received during the year and used against capital expenditure.

General Fund

In addition to the earmarked reserves above, the General Fund Balance is sustained at a minimum level deemed adequate to provide a level of operational resilience in respect of major incidents/catastrophes.

Note 18 - UNUSABLE RESERVES

| 31 March 2022 | | 31 March 2023 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| -18,492 | Revaluation Reserve (note 19) | -18,147 |
| -26,627 | Capital Adjustment Account (note 20) | -26,650 |
| 987,073 | Pensions Reserve (note 21) | 683,932 |
| 1,115 | Accumulated Absence Reserve (note 22) | 783 |
| 943,069 | Total Unusable Reserves | 639,918 |

Note 19 - REVALUATION RESERVE

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

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

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| -13,770 | Balance at 1 April | -18,492 |
| -5,319 | Revaluation Adjustment | 0 |
| 420 | Impairment adjustment | 0 |
| 177 | Difference in fair value and historical cost depreciation | 345 |
| <u>-18,492</u> | Balance at 31 March | <u>-18,147</u> |

Note 20 - CAPITAL ADJUSTMENT ACCOUNT

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions. The account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement and depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the revaluation reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority to finance the cost of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2010, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

| 2021/22 £000 | Capital Adjustment Account | 2022/23 £000 |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| -26,980 | Balance as at 1 April | -26,627 |
| -3,066 | MRP (note 30) | -3,630 |
| 4,123 | Depreciation (net of revaluation) | 4,617 |
| -627 | Revaluation | 0 |
| 702 | Impairments | 602 |
| -200 | Capital expenditure financed from revenue resources (CERA) (note 30) | -200 |
| -392 | Capital Grants (note 30) | -1,425 |
| 2 | Net non-current asset disposal | 37 |
| -189 | Assets funded by Capital Receipts | -24 |
| -26,627 | | -26,650 |

Note 21 - PENSIONS RESERVE

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require any benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer contributions to pension funds or, eventually pays pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

| 2021/22 £000 | | 2022/23 £000 |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1,021,493 | Balance at 1 April | 987,073 |
| -60,670 | Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability (asset) | -324,600 |
| 37,525 | Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the CIES | 33,226 |
| -11,275 | Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year | -11,767 |
| 987,073 | Balance at 31 March | 683,932 |

Note 22 - ACCUMULATED ABSENCES ACCOUNT

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|---|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| -1,285 | Balance at 1 April | -1,115 |
| 1,285 | Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year | 1,115 |
| 1,115 | Amounts accrued at the end of the current year (note 15) | 783 |
| 170 | Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from the remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements. (note 3) | 332 |
| -1,115 | Balance at 31 March | -783 |

Note 23 - CASH FLOW STATEMENT – OPERATING ACTIVITIES

| 2021/22 £000 | | 2022/23 £000 |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| 23,091 | Net Deficit on the Provision of Services | 21,656 |
| | Adjustments to Net Deficit for Non Cash Movements; | |
| -83 | Increases/(Decrease) in stock | 111 |
| -2,379 | Increase/(Decrease) in debtors | 1,233 |
| 2,292 | (Increase)/Decrease in creditors | 280 |
| -4,375 | Depreciation charge (inc impairment) | -5,564 |
| 58 | Gain on asset disposal | -13 |
| -26,250 | IAS 19 adjustments | -21,459 |
| 170 | Other non cash-items charged to the net deficit on the provision of services | 332 |
| -30,567 | Less Total | -25,080 |
| | Adjustments for items included in the net deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities; | |
| -1,587 | Interest Payable | -1,524 |
| 10 | Interest Receivable | 260 |
| 392 | Capital Grants | 1,425 |
| -1,185 | Less Total | 161 |
| -8,661 | Net Cash Flow from Operating Activity | -3,263 |

Note 24 - CASH FLOW – INVESTING AND FINANCING ACTIVITIES

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|--------------|--|--------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 2,289 | Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets | 7,236 |
| -60 | Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets | -24 |
| -392 | Capital Grants received | -1,090 |
| 1,837 | Net cash (in)/outflow from investing activities | 6,122 |
| 0 | Cash Receipts from short & long term borrowing | 0 |
| -8 | Other receipts from financing activities | -226 |
| 365 | Cash payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases and on-balance sheet PFI contracts | 419 |
| 916 | Repayments of short and long-term borrowing | 409 |
| 1,591 | Other payments for financing activities | 1,534 |
| 2,864 | Net cash (in)/outflow from financing activities | 2,136 |

Note 25 - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

During 2022/23, under the Local Authorities (allowances for Members of Fire Authorities) (Wales) Regulations 2004, the following annual rates were payable;

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 69 | Total of members' allowances | 74 |
| 0 | Total of members' expenses | 2 |
| 69 | Total | 76 |

The Fire & Rescue Authority comprises 24 councillors from the 10 Local Authorities that combined to form it. All members' expenses were paid as a reimbursement of costs in pursuance of duties.

Note 26 - OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The remuneration paid to the Authority's senior employees is as follows:

| Title | Year | Salary £000 | Taxable Expenses £000 | *Benefits in Kind £000 | Total Excluding Pension £000 | Employers Pension £000 | Gross remuneration £000 |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Chief Fire Officer | 2022/23 | 145 | 0 | 0 | 145 | 39 | 184 |
| | 2021/22 | 140 | 0 | 0 | 140 | 38 | 178 |
| Deputy Chief Officer** | 2022/23 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 33 | 2 | 35 |
| | 2021/22 | 106 | 0 | 0 | 106 | 16 | 122 |
| Asst Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery (A) / DCFO (B) | 2022/23 | 114 | 0 | 0 | 114 | 30 | 144 |
| | 2021/22 | 105 | 0 | 0 | 105 | 31 | 136 |
| Asst Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery (B) / Technical Services (C)***** | 2022/23 | 41 | 0 | 0 | 41 | 9 | 50 |
| | 2021/22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asst Chief Officer Corporate Services**** | 2022/23 | 90 | 0 | 0 | 90 | 14 | 104 |
| | 2021/22 | 71 | 0 | 2 | 73 | 11 | 84 |
| Asst Chief Fire Officer Technical Services (A) / DCFO (A)*** | 2022/23 | 97 | 0 | 0 | 97 | 27 | 124 |
| | 2021/22 | 109 | 0 | 0 | 109 | 29 | 138 |
| Asst Chief Officer People Services | 2022/23 | 90 | 0 | 5 | 95 | 14 | 109 |
| | 2021/22 | 87 | 0 | 5 | 92 | 13 | 105 |
| Treasurer | 2022/23 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 29 | 4 | 33 |
| | 2021/22 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 28 | 4 | 32 |
| Asst Chief Fire Officer Technical Services (B) / Industrial Action***** | 2022/23 | 92 | 0 | 0 | 92 | 19 | 111 |
| | 2021/22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

* Benefits in kind relate to an allowance for a vehicle on the service lease car scheme.

** DCO III Health retirement 22/23 includes pay in lieu of notice

*** Assistant Chief Fire Officer Technical Services/DCFO (A)

- undertook DCFO duties from 06/09/21 – 05/07/22

- commenced sickness leave between 23/05/22 – 06/07/22, the DCFO post was covered by Asst Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery (A) / DCFO (B).

- Reverted back to ACFO TS on 06/07/23 but remained on sickness leave until 08/11/22

- Commenced a second sickness leave from 22/12/22 – Present, they have been covered by ACFO TS (B) on the below dates and are currently being covered by ACFO TS (C)

**** ACO Corporate Services

- Covered partial DCO duties from 07/06/21 – 09/10/22. Role was made permanent on 10/10/22

***** Asst Chief Fire Officer Technical Services (B)

- Covered ACFO TS (A) duties from 01/06/22 – 15/01/23

- Became ACFO IA (temp post) on 16/01/23 – Present

***** Asst Chief Fire Officer Service Delivery (B) / Technical Services (C)

- Covered SD (A) between 19/04/22 – 14/06/22 and ACFO TS (A) from 16/01/23 – Present

Authority employees receiving more than £60,000 remuneration for the year were paid in the following amounts:

| Salary Bracket | Number 2021/22 | Number 2022/23 |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| £60,000 to £64,999 | 12 | 13 |
| £65,000 to £69,999 | 11 | 11 |
| £70,000 to £74,999 | 1 | 2 |
| £75,000 to £79,999 | 1 | 0 |
| £80,000 to £84,999 | 2 | 1 |
| £85,000 to £89,999 | 3 | 1 |
| £90,000 to £94,999 | 0 | 2 |
| £95,000 to £99,999 | 0 | 2 |
| £100,000 to £104,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £105,000 to £109,999 | 3 | 1 |
| £110,000 to £114,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £115,000 to £119,999 | 0 | 1 |
| £120,000 to £124,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £125,000 to £129,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £130,000 to £134,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £135,000 to £139,999 | 0 | 0 |
| £140,000 to £144,999 | 1 | 0 |
| £145,000 to £149,999 | 0 | 1 |

Remuneration includes all sums paid to/receivable by an employee, expense allowances chargeable to tax and the money value of benefits. The above data does not include employer's pension contributions or arrears of pay. Individuals reported in the above salary brackets are also included in the senior officers' remuneration table above.

The median remuneration across the Service for 2022/23 is £33k and the ratio of the CFO remuneration to the median remuneration is 4.46:1.

For 2021/22 the median remuneration across the Service was £30k and the ratio of the CFO remuneration to the median remuneration was 4.65:1.

The median remuneration is based on FTE salary and does not include taxable expense allowances. This allows the calculation to tie back to a specific salary grade.

| Exit Package cost band | 2021/22 | | | | 2022/23 | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| | Number of compulsory Redundancies | Number of Other Departures agreed | Total number of Exit Packages in each Cost band | Total cost of packages in each Cost Band £000 | Number of compulsory Redundancies | Number of Other Departures agreed | Total number of Exit Packages in each Cost band | Total cost of packages in each Cost Band £000 |
| £0 - £20,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 20 |
| £20,001 - £40,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 28 |
| Total Cost | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 48 |

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure. Ill Health retirement costs are met by SWFRS revenue.

Note 27 - EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

| 2020/2021 | | 2022/2023 |
|------------------|---|------------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 75 | Current year fees paid / due to the Auditor General for Wales | 84 |
| 75 | Total | 84 |

Note 28 - GRANTS

Gains relating to grants and donated assets are recognised in the CIES. Income is credited at the point when the Authority has met all stipulations, conditions and restrictions agreed with the entity providing the gain. (Grants from Welsh Government are marked WG).

| 2021/22 | Revenue | 2022/23 |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 618 | Community Risk Reduction (WG) | 606 |
| 1,637 | New Dimensions and USAR Funding (WG) | 1,353 |
| 110 | MTA (WG) | 265 |
| 374 | Other* | 122 |
| 632 | Fire Link (WG) | 632 |
| 28 | Anti-Social Behaviour | 31 |
| 0 | Natural Resources Wales | 22 |
| 4 | Circular Economy (WG) | 4 |
| 2,950 | SCAPE (WG) | 2,947 |
| 42 | WAST Volunteers | 0 |
| 207 | Covid-19 (WG) | 0 |
| 232 | FF Apprentices | 350 |
| 14 | AFAN Project | 3 |
| 12 | NFCC | 21 |
| 17 | D20, C-19 & Winter Pressures | 0 |
| 5 | Aneurin Bevan UHB | 0 |
| 6 | Cardiff & Vale UHB | 1 |
| 0 | Wales & West Utilities | 2 |
| 0 | Hafod | 13 |
| 6,888 | | 6,372 |

| 2021/22 | Capital | 2022/23 |
|------------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 308 | NR – USAR Property Build (WG) | 990 |
| 0 | DIM Electric Vehicles (WG) | 102 |
| 0 | DIM Detection Equipment (WG) | 165 |
| 21 | NR – Vehicle (WG) | 0 |
| 63 | Energy Efficiency (WG) | 156 |
| 0 | Low Carbon Heat Development (WG) | 12 |
| 392 | | 1,425 |

* Other grants (external funding) comprises funding for small, non-recurring project.

Note 29 - RELATED PARTIES

The Authority is required to disclose material transactions with related parties (bodies) or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Authority or to be controlled or influenced by the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to bargain freely.

RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has a number of links with constituent authorities and this is reflected in the income detailed below which represents the 'Fire Levy' payable to the Service to finance annual running costs each.

Each member of the Fire and Rescue Authority is also a member of one of the constituent local government authorities.

During the year transactions with related parties arose as shown below.

| | In Year Transactions | | Balances Outstanding at 31 st March, 2023 | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|--|------------------------------|
| | Income | Expenditure | Owed to Authority (Debtor) | Owed by Authority (Creditor) |
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Blaenau Gwent CBC | 3,548 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Bridgend CBC | 7,544 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Caerphilly CBC | 9,287 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Cardiff CC | 18,776 | 39 | 0 | 2 |
| Merthyr Tydfil CBC | 3,107 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Monmouthshire CC | 4,871 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Newport CBC | 8,067 | 126 | 0 | 0 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC | 12,385 | 193 | 0 | 9 |
| Torfaen CBC | 4,801 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The Vale of Glamorgan CBC | 6,918 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| | 79,304 | 399 | 0 | 11 |

Payments include the costs for supplies and services. Also included are associated costs of unfunded pensions, fire pension reforms and payroll charges. National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) and salary deductions have been excluded from the above.

Members and senior officers of the Authority were asked to declare any third party transactions during the year. The declarations disclosed a variety of potential related parties, with the following table being the only relationships where payments have been made.

| Related Party Organisation | Nature of relationship | No. of transactions | In Year Transactions | | Balances Outstanding at 31 st March, 2023 | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------|--|--------------------------------|
| | | | Income £ | Expenditure £ | Owed to Authority (Debtor) £ | Owed by Authority (Creditor) £ |
| Aneurin Bevan Health Board | FAPM Member-Nominee | 12 | 0 | 60,444 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwent Police | Deputy Chief Officer - Spouse | 4 | 0 | 16,487 | 0 | 0 |
| Miss Tilley's | Deputy Chief Officer - Friend | 40 | 0 | 2,554 | 0 | 0 |
| St.Johns's | Deputy Chief Officer - Spouse | 3 | 0 | 936 | 0 | 0 |
| Cardiff University | Ex-member | 1 | 0 | 250 | 0 | 0 |

Welsh Government is regarded as a related party due to its control of relevant legislation and funding. Significant financial transactions with Welsh Government relate to a top up grant for funding Fire Fighters' pensions (see Firefighter's Pension Fund Account see Note 34) and grants (see Note 28).

This note has been compiled in accordance with the current interpretation and understanding of IAS 24 as applicable to the public sector.

Joint Operations

In April 2014 South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with South Wales Police and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) to work together to establish a Joint Public Service Centre (JPSC). In October 2017 the JPSC went "live". SWFRS and MAWWFRS have joint control of the operation and the agreed approach is set out in a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The SLA outlines a set of agreed high-level principles in relation to the day-to-day management of the team. It is the expectation of both Chief Fire Officers that the FRSs will work in collaboration to achieve the aims and objectives set out within the SLA.

The SLA provided that as from the point of the team becoming operational (October 2017) the staff budget (direct and indirect costs) for the JPSC would be shared on a 50% basis. For 2018/19 onwards the SLA was renegotiated resulting in a revised

basis – direct staff costs 60% SWFRS and 40% MAWWFRS, and 50% each for indirect staff costs.

The Authority's share of the Joint Arrangement Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet are shown in the table below.

| Joint Public Service Centre from Oct 2017 | 2021/22 | | 2022/23 | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | Joint Operation Total | SWFRS Share | Joint Operation Total | SWFRS Share |
| Revenue | | | | |
| Staff Expenditure | 2,531 | 1,519 | 2,690 | 1,614 |
| Non-Staff Expenditure | 110 | 55 | 128 | 64 |
| Total Expenditure | 2,641 | 1,574 | 2,818 | 1,678 |
| Intangible Asset - Command & Control System | | | | |
| Gross Book Value | 308 | 154 | 308 | 154 |
| Accumulated Amortisation | (258) | (129) | (308) | (154) |
| Net Book Value | 50 | 25 | 0 | 0 |

The authority also has a long-term debtor of £100k and short-term debtor of £100k with South Wales Police in relation to the Joint Public Service Centre.

Note 30 - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND CAPITAL FINANCING

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|---------------|---|---------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 41,630 | <i>Opening Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)</i> | 40,226 |
| 2,443 | Property, Plant and Equipment investment | 7,857 |
| 2,443 | Total Additions | 7,857 |
| | <i>Sources of finance</i> | |
| -392 | Government grants and other contributions (note 28) | -1,425 |
| 0 | Sums set aside from revenue (note 20) | 0 |
| -200 | Direct revenue contributions (note 20) | -200 |
| -189 | Capital Receipts | -24 |
| -3,066 | MRP/loans fund principal (note 20) | -3,630 |
| 40,226 | Closing Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) | 42,804 |
| | <i>Increase in underlying need to borrow</i> | |
| -1,404 | Increase/(Decrease) in CFR | 2,578 |

Capital expenditure is incurred on schemes which have a life beyond one year, and is largely financed by a mix of borrowing and revenue contributions, albeit capital receipts can and will be used.

Note 31 - FINANCING OF CAPITAL SPEND

Capital expenditure in the year was financed as follows:

| 2021/22 | | 2022/23 |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| £000 | | £000 |
| 200 | Revenue contribution (note 30) | 200 |
| 392 | Grant funding (note 28) | 1,425 |
| 1,662 | Internal Borrowing | 6,208 |
| 189 | Capital Receipts | 24 |
| 2,443 | Total | 7,857 |

Note 32 - CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The Authority is committed to capital expenditure in future periods arising from contracts entered into at the balance sheet date. Capital expenditure committed at the 31 March 2023 for future periods equates to £5.083m (2021/22: £5.668m). The commitments relate to property refurbishments, and the vehicle, ICT and Equipment programmes.

Note 33 - PFI.

During 2005/06 financial year, the Authority entered into a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangement for the provision of a training centre at Cardiff Gate. The arrangement will run until September 2030. There is a commitment of £15.8m (Net Present Value) over the duration of the contract, which is to be funded by a combination of PFI Credits, agreed by the Welsh Government and Fire and Rescue Authority resources.

The Authority meets the costs of the Unitary Charge from its own resources and receives an annual grant from the Welsh Government. The profile of funding from the Assembly reduces annually until the expiry of the contract term whereas the unitary charge payable by the Authority increases annually over the same period. This results in a “surplus” of resources for PFI when compared to payments for the initial period of the contract period. These surplus amounts are set-aside in an earmarked reserve to fund the later part of the contract period where annual payments are greater than annual resources.

As at 31 March 2023, the balance on the PFI equalisation earmarked reserve is £3.192 million. The total unitary payment is divided into the service charge element, the repayment of the liability element and the interest element and these payments will be made over the life of the PFI contract. Annual funding from the Welsh Government has been and will be receivable for the life of the contract. The PFI Finance Lease Liability will be written down over the life of the PFI contract.

The below table details the aforementioned movement;

| PFI Element | 2021/22 £'000 | 2022/23 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|---------|
| Unitary Charge | | |
| Service Charge | 1,331 | 1,420 |
| Interest | 491 | 482 |
| Finance Lease | 365 | 419 |
| | 2,187 | 2,321 |
| Grant Funding | -1,004 | -965 |
| Fire Authority Contribution | -1,004 | -1,044 |
| Net contribution to equalisation | 179 | 312 |
| Equalisation Account | | |
| 0/balance | -3,683 | -3,504 |

Note 34 - PENSIONS (IAS 19)

(i) Local Government Services and Control Staff

In 2022/23 the Authority paid employer pension contributions of £1.47 million to 'the fund' which provides members with defined benefits related to pay and service. Under current pension regulations, contribution rates are set to meet 100% of the overall liabilities of 'the Fund'.

Pension contributions to be paid into the scheme for the financial year 2023/24 are estimated to be £1.533 million for the employer.

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan (but also includes certain unfunded pensions) with benefits earned up to 31 March 2014 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2014 are based on a Career Average Revalued Earning scheme (CARE).

The unfunded pension arrangements (Compensatory Added Years) relate to termination benefits made on a discretionary basis upon early retirement.

Further information on the RCT Pension Fund can be found in the Pensions Fund Annual Report and Accounts which is available on request from the Pensions Section, Rhondda Cynon Taf C.B.C. Bronwydd House, Porth, Rhondda, CF39 9DL or on the website rctpensions.org.uk.

(ii) Fire Fighters

The Fire Fighters' pension scheme is an unfunded scheme with defined benefits. In 2022/23 the Authority paid employer pension contributions of £9.274 million. Pensions paid from revenues equated to £982k. For 2023/24, the employer contribution to the scheme is estimated to be £9.859 million and the current estimate for pensions paid from revenue is £856k. The majority of pension payments to retired Fire Fighters are paid from a separate Pension Fund account administered by the Authority, details of

the Fund and how it operates is provided by the Fire Fighters' Pension Fund Account and related disclosures.

On 1 April 2015 the 2015 pension scheme was introduced in addition to the original 1992 FPS and the (new) 2006 NFPS. The 2015 scheme introduced new contributions rates for both employers and employees and resultant pensioner benefits in an attempt to improve affordability. Members of the 1992 and 2006 schemes who did not meet the prescribed criteria, transitioned into the 2015 scheme under a tapering arrangement. The three schemes are combined in the following tables.

On 1st April 2016 the retained Modified Pension Scheme was introduced. The scheme allowed individuals who were employed as Retained members of staff between the years 2000 – 2006 the opportunity to buy back service. If the individuals were still employees then they could enter into the Retained Modified Pension Scheme which benefits from the same contribution rates as the 1992 scheme.

On 1 April 2022, following a court ruling, legacy schemes including the 1992, 2006 and Modified Pension Schemes were closed for future accruals, and all active members were transitioned into the 2015 Pension Scheme.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits

In accordance with the requirements of International Accounting Standard No 19 – Retirement Benefits (IAS19) the Authority has to disclose certain information concerning assets, liabilities, income and expenditure related to pension schemes for its employees. As explained in 'Accounting Policies', the Authority participates in two schemes, the Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme for full time Fire Fighters which is unfunded, and the Local Government Pensions Scheme (RCT Pension Fund) for other employees which is administered by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. In addition, the Authority has made arrangements for the payment of added years to certain retired employees outside the provisions of the schemes.

To comply with IAS19 the Authority appoints actuaries on an annual basis to assess the assets and liabilities of both schemes. Aon Hewitt was appointed to assess the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Government Actuary's Department the Fire Fighters' scheme as they relate to past and current employees of South Wales Fire Authority. For the Local Government Pension scheme the actuary assessed that the net asset to the Authority as at 31 March 2023 was £2.7 million (*31 March 2022, £24 million net liability*) and for the Fire Fighters' schemes the liability was £687 million as at 31 March 2023 (*31 March 2022, £963 million*). A breakdown of the assets and liabilities of both schemes and the assumptions used in the actuarial calculations can be found overleaf.

The Government has recently published a further consultation and equalisation of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMP), with the proposal being to extend the 'interim solution' to those members who reach State Pension Age after 5 April 2021. A past service cost was included for 2021/22 for extending the equalisation to all future retirees.

There was also a further court ruling on 20 November regarding GMP equalisation. The court ruled that scheme trustees are required to revisit past Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETVs) to ensure GMP equalisation. This may result in additional

top-ups where GMP equalisation means that members did not receive their full entitlement. For public service pension schemes, it is expected that this ruling will be taken forward on a cross scheme basis and will need legal input. This may require revisiting past CETV cases for members with State Pension age after 5 April 2016 and who took a CETV from the scheme before CETVs were equalised. The scope of any costs are yet to be determined but it is expected to be a relatively small uplift for a relatively small subset of members.

Following the Court of Appeal, the McCloud judgment that was handed in December 2018 concluded that the transitional protections introduced in 2015 were discriminatory on the basis of age. The UK Government subsequently announced plans to address the discrimination across the UK public sector pension schemes including the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Currently the UK Government is progressing detailed plans to implement the remedy following the consultation undertaken during 2020. Prospective Remedy Legislation was implemented in April 2022, which actioned the closure, for all future accruals, of all legacy schemes and transitioned previously protected active members into the 2015 Reformed Scheme. Retrospective Remedy Legislation is currently being formulated and will need to be enacted by the 1st October 2023, at the latest. In July 2021 the Fire Authority approved the payment of Immediate Detriment benefits, for those that are considered Category 1 cases, so those that are current active members and have given their retirement notice to the Service formally. This approach will continue until October 2023, for those that meet the criteria.

The net pension liability reported in the accounts includes a potential liability related to the McCloud judgement. The pension fund actuaries have based the estimate on the major provisions of the remedy.

| 2021/22 £000 | Movements on Pension Reserve | 2022/23 £000 |
|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| | Income and Expenditure Account | |
| | Net Cost of Service | |
| | Current Service Cost | |
| -25,870 | - Fire Fighters | -18,210 |
| -4,520 | - Local Government Pension Scheme | -4,290 |
| | Past Service Cost | |
| 0 | - Fire Fighters | 0 |
| 0 | - * Local Government Pension Scheme | 0 |
| 13,335 | Top Up Grant | 15,320 |
| | Net Operating Expenditure | |
| | Interest Cost | |
| -19,830 | - Fire Fighters | -25,410 |
| -2,450 | - Local Government Pension Scheme | -3,040 |
| | Expected Return on Pension Assets | |
| 0 | - Fire Fighters | 0 |
| 1,810 | - Local Government Pension Scheme | 2,404 |
| -37,525 | Total Post-employment benefit charged to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services | -33,226 |
| | Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability (asset) | |
| 50,110 | - Fire Fighters | 294,200 |
| 10,560 | - * Local Government Pension Scheme | 30,400 |
| 23,145 | Total Post-employment benefit (charged)/credited to the C.I.E.S | 291,374 |
| | Movement on Reserve Statement | |
| 1,021,493 | Opening Balance 1 April | 987,073 |
| -23,145 | Reversal of Net Charges for IAS 19 | -291,374 |
| | Actual Amount Charged against the General Fund | |
| | Balance for pensions in the year | |
| | Employer Contributions | |
| -9,224 | Fire Fighters | -9,607 |
| -1,420 | Local Government Pension Scheme | -1,510 |
| -631 | Retirement benefits paid to Fire Fighters | -650 |
| 0 | Transfers in | 0 |
| -34,420 | Movement on Pension Reserve | -303,141 |
| 987,073 | Closing Balance | 683,932 |

*The LGPS movements on pension reserve are inclusive of unfunded pension benefits arrangements;
2022/23 – Interest cost of £10k, actuarial gain of £60k and net benefits paid out £40k

Pension Schemes – Assets / Liabilities

The Authority's estimated share of assets and liabilities from 31 March 2017 to 31 March 2023 were as follows:

| | 31 March | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Estimated share of liabilities in the Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme | -947,849 | -885,690 | -990,340 | -962,740 | -686,590 |
| Estimated share of liabilities in the Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund | -91,335 | -91,164 | -117,564 | -113,865 | -79,995 |
| Total liabilities | -1,039,184 | -976,854 | -1,107,904 | -1,076,605 | -766,585 |
| Share of assets in the Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund | 67,310 | 65,230 | 86,411 | 89,532 | 82,653 |
| Net Pension Deficit | -971,874 | -911,624 | -1,021,493 | -987,073 | -683,932 |

| | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Fire Fighters' Pension Scheme | -947,849 | -885,690 | -990,340 | -962,740 | -686,590 |
| Rhondda Cynon Taff Pension Fund | -24,025 | -25,934 | -31,153 | -24,333 | 2,658 |
| Net Pension Deficit | -971,874 | -911,624 | -1,021,493 | -987,073 | -683,932 |

Liabilities have been valued on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method which assesses the future liabilities of the fund discounted to their present value. The Fire Fighters' Scheme has been valued by the Government Actuary's Department and the LGPS Fund liabilities have been valued by Aon Hewitt, an independent firm of actuaries. The main assumptions used in the calculations are as follows:

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

| | Fire Fighters' Scheme | | LGPS Fund | |
|--|-----------------------|------|-----------|------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Rate of Inflation; | % | % | % | % |
| CPI | 3 | 2.6 | 3 | 2.7 |
| Rate of increase in Salaries | 4.75 | 3.85 | 4.25 | 3.95 |
| Rate of Increase in Pensions | 3 | 2.6 | 3 | 2.7 |
| Rate of Discounting Scheme Liabilities | 2.65 | 4.65 | 2.7 | 4.7 |
| Future Life Expectancy at 65 | | | | |
| Men | | | | |
| Current Pensioners | 21.5 | 21.2 | 21.6 | 21.6 |
| Future Pensioners | 23.2 | 22.9 | 22.6 | 22.9 |
| Women | | | | |
| Current Pensioners | 21.5 | 21.2 | 23.9 | 24.2 |
| Future Pensioners | 23.2 | 22.9 | 25.4 | 25.7 |

Sensitivity analysis

The scheme actuary of the LGPS scheme has estimated the approximate impact of changing the key assumptions on the present value of the funded defined benefit obligation. In each case, only the assumption mentioned is altered, all other assumptions above remain the same.

Discount rate assumption

| Adjustment to discount rate | +0.1%p.a. | -0.1%p.a. |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Present value of total obligation (£m) | 78.10 | 80.96 |
| % change in present value of total obligation | -1.8% | 1.8% |
| Projected service cost (£m) | 1.88 | 2.04 |
| Approximate % change in projected service cost | -3.9% | 4.0% |

Rate of general increase in salaries

| Adjustment to salary increase rate | +0.1%p.a. | -0.1%p.a. |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Present value of total obligation (£m) | 79.69 | 79.37 |
| % change in present value of total obligation | 0.2% | -0.2% |
| Projected service cost (£m) | 1.96 | 1.96 |
| Approximate % change in projected service cost | 0.0% | 0.0% |

Rate of increase to pensions and rate of revaluation of pension accounts

| Adjustment to discount rate | +0.1%p.a. | -0.1%p.a. |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Present value of total obligation (£m) | 80.80 | 78.34 |
| % change in present value of total obligation | 1.6% | -1.5% |
| Projected service cost (£m) | 2.04 | 1.88 |
| Approximate % change in projected service cost | 4.0% | -3.9% |

Post retirement mortality assumption

| Adjustment to discount rate | -1 year | +1 year |
|--|----------------|----------------|
| Present value of total obligation (£m) | 81.60 | 77.46 |
| % change in present value of total obligation | 2.6% | -2.6% |
| Projected service cost (£m) | 2.03 | 1.89 |
| Approximate % change in projected service cost | 3.5% | -3.5% |

The scheme actuary of the Fire Fighters' Pension scheme has estimated the approximate impact of changing the key assumptions on the present value of the defined benefit obligation.

| Impact on defined benefit obligation | % | £ million |
|---|----------|------------------|
| Rate of discounting scheme liabilities +0.5%p.a. | -7.5% | -51 |
| Long term rate of increase in salaries +0.5% p.a. | 1.0% | 8 |
| Rate of increase in pensions / deferred revaluation +0.5% p.a. | 7.0% | 47 |
| Life expectancy: each pensioner subject to longevity of an individual 1 further year younger than assumed | 2.5% | 17 |

Assets

The Fire Fighters' Pension scheme is an unfunded scheme and as such holds no assets to generate income to meet the schemes liabilities. Funding for the payments made from the scheme is met from employer's and employees' contributions in the year and an annual grant from the Welsh Government.

The Local Government scheme is a funded scheme and as such has built up assets over the years to generate income to meet future liabilities. Assets in the RCT Pension Fund are valued at fair value, principally bid value for investments, and consist of:

| Plan Asset Split | % |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| 2023 | |
| Equity Investments | 68.1 |
| Bonds | 22.9 |
| Property | 7.8 |
| Cash | 0.7 |
| Other Assets | 0.5 |
| Total | 100.0 |
| 2022 | |
| Equity Investments | 67.4 |
| Bonds | 24.9 |
| Property | 7.3 |
| Cash | 0.4 |
| Other Assets | 0 |
| Total | 100.0 |

The overall return on pension assets was -6.2% for 22/23 (2021/22: 3.9%).

The movement in the pension deficit for the year can be analysed as followed based on the present value of the scheme liabilities.

| 2021/22 £000 Fire Fighters | 2021/22 £000 LGPS | Liabilities | 2022/23 £000 Fire Fighters | 2022/23 £000 LGPS |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| -990,340 | -117,564 | Balance as at 1 April | -962,740 | -113,865 |
| -25,870 | -4,520 | Current Service cost | -18,210 | -4,290 |
| -19,830 | -2,450 | Interest | -25,410 | -3,040 |
| -4,290 | -610 | Contributions by scheme members | -4,520 | -640 |
| 50,110 | 8,989 | Actuarial Gains and Losses | 294,200 | 39,240 |
| 28,480 | 2,290 | Benefits Paid | 30,390 | 2,600 |
| 0 | 0 | Past Service Cost | 0 | 0 |
| -1,000 | 0 | Transfers in | -300 | 0 |
| -962,740 | -113,865 | Pension Liabilities at Year End | -686,590 | -79,995 |

Changes to the fair value of assets during the accounting period

| 2021/22 £000 LGPS | Assets | 2022/23 £000 LGPS |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 86,411 | Balance 1 April | 89,532 |
| 1,810 | Return on Pension Assets | 2,404 |
| 1,571 | Actuarial Gain/Losses on Assets | -8,833 |
| 1,420 | Contributions by employer | 1,510 |
| 610 | Contributions by Scheme members | 640 |
| -2,290 | Net benefits paid out* | -2,600 |
| 89,532 | Pension Assets at Year End | 82,653 |

* Consists of net benefits cash-flow out of the Fund in respect of the employer, including an approximate allowance for the expected cost of death in service lump sums and Fund administration expenses. Excluding £40k unfunded pension payments.

Actual return on assets

| | 31 March 2022 £ Million | 31 March 2023 £ Million |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Interest income on assets | 1.81 | 2.41 |
| Re-measurement gain/ (loss) on assets | 1.57 | -8.84 |
| Actual return on assets | 3.38 | -6.43 |

Note 35 - CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

In recent years the Service has faced challenge with regards cases related to 'Rule B5C' of the Fire Pension Scheme and USAR allowances. More recently we have had confirmation that a number of individuals have taken their cases to the Pensions Ombudsman on the Rule B5C changes and also we are currently taking legal advice on whether or not secondary contracts should be considered pensionable and as such included as part of the Local Government Pension Scheme contributions schedule. It is not known at this point whether or not there will be any financial implications to either of these recent developments but it is likely that this will be known during 2023.

There are also a number of national issues ongoing in respect of pension schemes and the value of any potential liabilities is yet to be determined. One such case is that of O'Brien, it has been ruled by the courts that a decision to limit the period in which part-time workers could retrospectively purchase past pensionable service was incorrect and no such limit should be applied. The UK Government have recognised the right for retained firefighters employed before 01 July 2000 to elect to become a special member from the start of their employment. This will necessitate a second

options exercise for which legal discussions have commenced, with a public consultation launched during February 2023. An exercise to correct this will commence following legislative changes in October 2023. There will be a financial consequence to the Authority of those wishing to buy historic service, however at this point these costs cannot be anticipated.

Following a Court of Appeal hearing, the McCloud judgment that was handed in December 2018 concluded that the transitional protections introduced in 2015 were discriminatory on the basis of age.

The UK Government subsequently announced plans to address this discrimination across the UK public sector pension schemes including the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Prospective Remedy Legislation was implemented in April 2022, which actioned the closure, for all future accruals, of all legacy schemes and transitioned previously protected active members into the 2015 Reformed Scheme. Retrospective Remedy Legislation is currently being formulated and will need to be enacted by the 1st October 2023, at the latest.

In July 2021 the Fire Authority approved the payment of Immediate Detriment benefits, for those that are considered Category 1 cases, so those that are current active members and have given their retirement notice to the Service formally. This approach will continue, for those that meet the criteria, until Remediable Service Statements have been provided to all members. The Service has 18 months post October 2023 to ensure that these have been communicated.

The net pension liability reported in the accounts includes a potential liability related to the McCloud judgement. The pension fund actuaries have based the estimate on the major provisions of the remedy.

Following recent adverse press coverage of a number of historical disciplinary cases, the Authority has launched an Independent Culture Review. It is not clear at this time whether any of these represent a risk in terms of legal action or financial liability.

Note 36 - NATURE AND EXTENT OF RISKS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Authority's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks:

- Credit risk – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Authority
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Authority might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments
- Market risk – the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Authority as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movement

The Authority has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which ensures the Authority has measures in place to manage the above risks. At the beginning of the financial year Members are presented with a report outlining the Treasury Management Strategy to be followed for the year and setting out the Prudential Indicators (PI's) for the year. Half way through the year a report detailing

progress against strategy and if necessary a revision of the PI's. At year end the final report sets out how the Authority has performed during the year. How the Authority manages risks arising from financial instruments are detailed in the treasury reports presented to Members and can be accessed from www.southwales-fire.gov.uk.

The highest credit risk is for the investments and these are managed through the Treasury Management Strategy as detailed above. The current strategy states the Authority will only invest short term, up to a maximum of 12 months, with institutions that are on the Authority's counterparty list. On a daily basis the Authority is updated with any changes to the credit status of institutions on the counterparty list and if any institutions are downgraded and fail to meet the criteria set out in the Treasury Management Strategy then they are removed from the list. If an institution failed to repay an investment then the financial loss to the Authority could be in excess of £1m. However, due to careful management of the portfolio no institutions have failed to repay monies due.

The Authority has ready access to borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board and there is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Authority will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowing at a time of unfavourable interest rates.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities is provided in note 10 (2) Financial Instruments.

Interest rate risk - The Authority is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Authority, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the General Fund Balance, subject to influences from Government grants. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments that have a quoted market price will be reflected in the Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Authority has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together the Authority's prudential and treasury

indicators and its expected treasury activities, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy a treasury indicator is set which provides maximum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The central treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns, similarly the drawing of longer term fixed rates borrowing would be postponed.

Price risk - The Authority, excluding the pension fund, does not generally invest in equity shares or marketable bonds.

Foreign exchange risk - The Authority has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies. It therefore has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

FIRE FIGHTERS' PENSION FUND ACCOUNT (FFPF)

| 2021/2022 | | 2022/2023 |
|------------------|---|------------------|
| £000 | Income to the fund | £000 |
| | Contributions receivable: | |
| | from employer | |
| -8,880 | normal contributions | -9,274 |
| -344 | other contributions | -332 |
| -4,200 | from members | -4,424 |
| -93 | Past service contributions (retained modified scheme) | -98 |
| -13,517 | | -14,128 |
| -1,065 | Transfers in from other pension funds | -298 |
| -14,582 | Total Income to the Fund | -14,426 |
| | Spending by the Fund | |
| | Benefits Payable: | |
| 22,140 | Pension payments | 23,420 |
| 5,511 | Pension commutations and lump-sum retirement benefits | 6,190 |
| 198 | Other Payments | 110 |
| 27,849 | | 29,720 |
| | Payments to and on account of leavers: | |
| 0 | Transfers out to other authorities | 0 |
| 27,849 | Total Spending by the Fund | 29,720 |
| 13,267 | Net amount payable for the year | 15,294 |
| -13,267 | Annual top up grant receivable from Welsh Government | -15,294 |
| 0 | Net amount payable for the year | 0 |

| 2021/2022 £000 | Net Asset Statement | 2022/2023 £000 |
|-------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1,142 | Current Assets; Top up grant due from Welsh Government | 1,791 |
| <u>1,142</u> | | <u>1,791</u> |
| -14 | Current Liabilities; Commutations due to pensioners | -23 |
| -1,128 | Amount owed to general fund | -1,768 |
| <u>0</u> | | <u>0</u> |

NOTES TO THE FIRE FIGHTERS' PENSION FUND ACCOUNT

The Fund was established 1 April 2007 and covers the 1992, 2006, 2015 and Retained Modified Fire Fighters' Pension Schemes and is administered by the Authority.

Following a recent age discrimination court case, 1st April 2022 saw the closure of the active 1992, 2006 and Retained Modified Fire Fighters' Pension Schemes and all active members (current employees) transferred into the 2015 pension scheme.

Employee and employer (the Authority) contributions are paid into the Fund from the revenue budget and payments to pensioners are made from here. Employees' and employer's contribution levels are based on percentages of pensionable pay set nationally by Welsh Government (WG) and are subject to triennial revaluations by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). The scheme is an unfunded scheme with no investment assets and any difference between benefits payable and contributions receivable is met by the top up grant receivable from the Welsh Government (WG).

Transfers into the scheme are a transfer of pension benefits from another pension scheme for new or existing employees and transfers out are transfer benefits for employees who have left the Authority and joined another pension scheme.

At the beginning of the financial year an assessment is made of the amount of Top Up grant required from WG and 80% of the estimate is paid in addition to the surplus/deficit (asset/liability) payable/receivable from the previous year. As such, any asset/liability on the Pension Fund is matched by a corresponding value on the Authority balance sheet. The 2022/23 estimate includes an assessment of the number of Fire Fighters retiring within the year and as a result, an estimate of pension payments is calculated. In 2022/23 a total of 69 (including 11 deferred members) Fire Fighters retired compared to the estimate of 48. At the year end WG was a debtor to the Pension Fund with a value of £1.791 million.

The Fire Fighters' Pension Fund Account does not take account of liabilities for pensions and other benefits after the period. Details of the long term pension obligations can be found in note 21 and 34 to the core financial statements.

The accounting policies adopted for the production of the Pensions Fund Account are in line with recommended practice and follow those that apply to the Authority's primary statements.

Contribution Rates

Under the Fire Fighters' Pension Regulations the employer contribution rates for the 2015 Scheme was 27.3%. Employee rates are determined by a tiered system according to salary bands with higher earners contributing at a higher rate relative to their salary, i.e. rates start at 8.5% and end at 17% for the current period.