

Due to the current heightened security level at all our premises, Commissioners are reminded to wear their identity badges whilst attending meetings. Any visitors must produce photographic identification at Reception.

SUMMONS

You are required to attend a meeting of the Board of Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service to be held on:

Thursday 28 March 2024, 1000hrs

**In person at South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters,
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX**

or

Remotely via Microsoft Teams - <https://bit.ly/4a3Z1GO>

Please ensure you join the meeting 15 minutes prior to meeting time

**Any issues please contact
01443 232000 and ask for Member Services**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

Commissioners are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 and the Local Government Act 2000.

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4.	To receive the minutes of;	
	Board of Commissioners of Fire & Rescue Service Meeting held on Monday 12 February 2024	5
5.	Update on Outstanding Actions	9
6.	REPORTS FOR DECISION	11
6.i.	Pay Policy Statement	13
6.ii	Maternity Leave Provision	45
6.iii	Gender Pay Gap	49
6.iv	Treasury Management Strategy Report	55
6.v	Strategic Themes and Objectives for 2024/25	89
6.vi	Setting Statutory Strategic Performance Indicators and Strategic Objectives	135
6.vii	Internal Audit Annual Report	153
6.viii	Potential Governance Structure and associated Committee Calendar 2024-2025	185
7	REPORTS FOR INFORMATION	189
7.i	People Services Restructure	191
7.ii	Forward Work Programme for the Board of Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service 2024/2025	203
8.	To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent (Part 1 or 2)	215

Signature of Monitoring Officer:



MEMBERSHIP

Commissioners:

C	Foulkes
V	Randeniya
Baroness	Wilcox
K	Williams

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 1300 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Mr Vij Randeniya, Chair

Baroness Wilcox of Newport

Mr Carl Foulkes

Mrs Kirsty Williams CBE

OFFICERS PRESENT:

CFO Stuart Millington, DCFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, ACO G Thomas – Monitoring Officer & Director of Corporate Services, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, ACFO G Davies – Director of Technical Services, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mrs L Mullan – Head of Finance, Procurement and Property.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairperson welcomed all to the meeting and formal introductions were given. It was requested that the term 'Fire & Rescue Authority' is removed and that all future communications, reports, papers, and interactions with the Commissioners is referred to as 'Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service'.

3. REPORTS FOR DECISION

3.1 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET DETERMINATION FOR 2024/5

The Treasurer provided a presentation to provide context and background to the budget settings. The funding mechanism for the Service is based on the Fire Order which sets out the arrangements in the legislation. The budget is funded by the ten constituent authorities within South Wales and is funded in proportion of population to the constituent population size.

The report included the recommended revenue and capital budget for 2024/25 together with the responses to the consultation exercise undertaken.

The Commissioners were asked to approve the proposed revenue budget of £95,840,240 representing a 7.23% increase over that set for the previous financial year. This increase assumed that the Welsh Government will transfer additional firefighter pension funding to constituent councils in the final local government settlement in accordance with the practice it commenced at this stage last year.

Welsh Government have provided an announcement on Grants which has shown a reduction of £128,000. Commissioner Lady Wilcox suggested that the use of this £128,000 is reviewed. The Commissioners requested a paper to come back in relation to options around the service going forward.

The issue around Welsh Government changing their financing around grants this year whereby they go directly to the Councils was raised. At present, potential challenges are unknown, therefore when setting the Budget today, it will be important to return and review as changes are implemented. Lady Wilcox highlighted three issues. These were the use of the £128,000 identified, the Service receiving the contributions required from Unitary Authorities and lastly to consider potential future challenges. There must be a positive watching brief for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on these issues.

In relation to the above, the Chairperson questioned when reports regarding the £128,000 were going to come back from Welsh Government. The Treasurer stated ideally before the start of the new financial year. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured the Commissioners that a report on Community Safety is being prepared and work is being done. This has been factored into the Treasurer's budget proposal. The Commissioners will be updated on this matter in a timely manner.

Commissioner Williams queried the budget for the implementation plan of the KC Culture Review report and the working groups. In today's presentation by the Treasurer, it was indicated that there is no budget associated to the review. Commissioner Williams asked the Treasurer what consideration was given to attaching resource financial, to the draft implementation plan. The Treasurer assured that there is capacity, and the budget will be revisited constantly.

RESOLVED THAT

- 3.1.1 The Commissioners approved the proposed revenue and capital budgets included within the report.
- 3.1.2 The Commissioners delegated authority to the Treasurer to make an appropriate adjustment to the revenue budget, if any additional pension funding is directed to the Service via grant.

3.2 CONTRACT OF OFFICE CLEANING

The Monitoring Officer presented a report requesting the Commissioners'

approval of the ongoing requirement for office cleaning services across all workplace locations. The current contract expires at the end of February 2024, and therefore a procurement tender process has taken place to ensure a new contract is available from the start of March 2024.

The Service have undertaken the full procurement tender exercise which is above the EU threshold. The Monitoring Officer shared that there was a considerable evaluation process undertaken with the Procurement and Property Maintenance Teams who contract manage this contract. The selection process was based on the most economically advantageous tender process.

The criteria used reflected quality, technical and price considerations. The contract was awarded to Adapt Business Services Ltd who are a Wales based medium sized organisation that meet the requirements of The Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The value of the contract is above the delegated threshold. Therefore, in line with the Contract Standing Orders, the Monitoring Officer sought The Commissioners' approval to proceed with the award of contract for an initial period of three years with a further agreement if all contract management satisfactions are in place, an option to extend for a further four years.

RESOLVED THAT

3.2.1 The Commissioners approved the award of the contract for office clearing services to Adapt Business Services Ltd.

4. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRPERSON DEEMS URGENT (PART 1 OR 2)

There were no items that the Chairperson deemed urgent.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
--

Stuart Millington – CFO Geraint Thomas – ACO CS	Alison Reed – ACO PS Chris Barton – Treasurer
--	--

With the exception of the pensions action below all previous outstanding issues have been closed.

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
21/22 – 17.3.3	Firefighter Pensions – Remedying Age Discrimination : McCloud Exercise	Progress exercise to implement the wider remedy work as described in the outcome of the HMT consultation on public service pensions for implementation by October 2023 at the latest.	ACO PS	The new pensions regulations came into force on 1 October 2023. The resourcing for the internal pensions team has been increased to support the implementation of the new pensions regulations and the team are working with our Pensions Administrator to process all cases in line with the new legislation. All cases processed under Immediate Detriment will be revisited and the team are working to a project plan to implement McCloud in full and within the 18 month timeframe that has been set.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 6

Reports for Decision

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 6.i
28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT OF THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT APPROVED BY CFO STUART MILLINGTON

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO PEOPLE SERVICES, ALISON REED

SUMMARY

The Fire and Rescue Service is required to publish a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year which sets out the policy approach on pay for the new financial year. This report contains the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025 and seeks approval from the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to publish the Statement by the required deadline of 31 March 2024.

The report also references specific aspects of the Morris report into the culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and how this impacts on the Pay Policy Statement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service review and approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Localism Bill 2010 was enacted in Parliament in November 2011, and as such requires South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to publish a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year.
- 1.2 A Pay Policy Statement is expected to contain a number of key elements including the remuneration levels of its Chief Officers, the approach to pay on appointment, changes to the level of remuneration for Chief Officers and more generally the policy approach for pay levels of other staff

including those covered by Green and Grey Book Terms and Conditions. Generally Green Book Terms and Conditions are those given to Corporate employees and Grey Book Terms and Conditions are those given to Operational employees.

1.3 There are supplementary provisions relating to statements as follows:-

- A relevant Pay Policy Statement must be approved by resolution before it comes into force.
- The Statement must be prepared and approved before the end of 31 March.

1.4 The Pay Policy Statement may be amended by resolution, including after the beginning of the financial year to which it relates.

1.5 As soon as is reasonably practicable after approving or amending a Pay Policy Statement, the Statement must be published on the organisation's website.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the 2024/2025 Pay Policy Statement.

2.2 Salary levels within the Pay Policy Statement reflect the latest position in terms of annual pay settlements. There has been one group of staff to receive a pay award under the 2024 pay arrangements (effective 1 January 2024) and this is Principal Officers who are covered by the NJC Brigade Managers arrangements. For all other staff groups, their 2024 pay award will be considered under existing negotiated pay settlement arrangements and implemented as soon as practicable once the Service has been notified.

2.3 A review of pay at senior level was undertaken in September 2023 by an independent consultant. This resulted in a revised pay structure, effective 1 July 2023 which aligned the base pay of Corporate Heads of Service to Operational Heads of Service. The rationale for this change was to reduce pay differentials between the two groups of staff and in turn equal pay proof the pay structure at this level. Further to the recommendations in the Morris report, there is a further piece of work required in relation to ensuring alignment of other relevant aspects of Terms and Conditions at Head of Service level. The alignment of Heads of Service base pay also supported the aim of reducing pay differential between Heads of Service and Principal Officers.

- 2.4 The methodology of linking pay to the Chief Fire Officer's salary was also reviewed in September 2023 and a new pay matrix was introduced at Principal Officer level. The result was a less convoluted and more transparent pay matrix. These changes can be found within Appendix 1 of the Pay Policy Statement.
- 2.5 The Morris report contains two specific recommendations in relation to elements of the Pay Policy Statement; the first is to pause the use of temporary promotions in excess of six months and the second relates to an immediate review of any current temporary promotion with record of reasons why, exceptionally, it should be permitted to continue beyond six months, and plan to end it. This work has commenced, and decisions have already been taken in relation to specific cases in order to achieve the recommendations.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1. The work undertaken to reduce pay differentials at Head of Service level has addressed any potential pay inequalities for this group of staff. As outlined above, there is a further piece of work required in relation to the alignment of other relevant aspects of Terms and Conditions at Head of Service level.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 The Localism Act includes the provision of general powers with a requirement to publish a Pay Policy Statement each year.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 A clear and robust Pay Policy Statement ensures transparency and accountability. The 2024/25 Statement has been reformatted so that it is more inclusive and accessible whilst retaining the essential requirements in line with legislation.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service is required to publish its Pay Policy Statement by 31 March each year.

4.1.1 The Pay Policy Statement contains all relevant information and therefore meets the requirements for publication by 31 March 2024.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service review and approve the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/2025.

Contact Officer:		Alison Reed ACO	
Background Papers		Date	Source / Contact
None			
Title			
Appendices			
Appendix 1	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Pay Policy Statement 2024/25		



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Pay Policy Statement

2024 - 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 South Wales Fire & Rescue Service is committed to operating consistent and equitable pay arrangements for its employees. This policy sets out the key principles that must be adhered to in establishing employee pay levels and in approving pay related allowances. It sets out the basis for determining salaries, how salary levels are arrived at, the method of pay progression and the approval for acting up, honoraria and severance payments.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Localism Act and the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, this policy sets out the pay multiple between the highest paid employee, and the levels for senior employees. The statement is published on the Fire & Rescue Service's website.
- 1.3 The legislation requires pay to include all remuneration including salary, allowances, and expenses. All such payments are covered within this policy, or the other pay policies referred to in this document. There are no discretions to make further payments outside of these policies.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all South Wales Fire & Rescue employees. The Service advocates collective bargaining arrangements and supports existing national level provisions that govern pay and conditions of service for the following employee groups:
 - National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire and Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service
 - National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service
 - National Joint Council for Local Government Services (Green Book)
 - British Medical Association (BMA) guidance within the Occupational Physician (Consultant initial appointment) salary range
 - Royal College of Nursing - NHS Agenda for Change - Pay Rates
 - Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Craft and Associated Employee
 - Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Youth and Community Workers
- 2.2 Pay levels are reviewed annually by these committees and any 'cost of living' award is reported to the Commissioners for the Fire & Rescue Service by way of Employers Groups. These are nationally agreed pay awards reached by collective bargaining and binding on Employers and paid as soon as possible to staff. The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are informed at the next meeting by Chair's Announcements.
- 2.3 The Service has local pay bargaining arrangements for other employees in scope of this policy and any locally agreed 'cost of living' award is approved by the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and applied to their remuneration rate.

3. LEGAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh Local Authorities to produce a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year. The Bill as initially drafted referred solely to Chief Officers (a term which includes both statutory and non-statutory Chief Officers; and their Deputies); but amendments reflecting concerns over low pay and also drawing on Hutton's 2011 'Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector' that introduced requirements to compare the policies on remunerating Chief Officers and other employees, and to set out policy on the lowest paid.
- 3.2 The Act as finally passed required the Pay Policy Statement to range over disparate aspects of remuneration policy and must include the following: -
- The level and elements of remuneration for each Chief Officer.
 - The remuneration of the lowest-paid employees (together with its definition of 'lowest-paid employees' and its reasons for adopting that definition)
 - The relationship between the remuneration of its Chief Officers and other Officers.
 - Other specific aspects of Chief Officers' remuneration: remuneration on recruitment, increases and additions to remuneration, use of performance-related pay and bonuses, termination payments and transparency.
- 3.3 The Act defines remuneration widely, to include not just pay but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increases in/enhancements of pension entitlements, and termination payments.
- 3.4 For the purposes of this statement the term 'Chief Officer' is not limited to Heads of Paid Service or statutory Chief Officers. It also includes those who report directly to them both statutory and non-statutory. For South Wales Fire & Rescue Service this includes the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officers, and Assistant Chief Officers.
- 3.5 The Localism Act 2011 requires the development of a Pay Policy on all aspects of Chief Officer Remuneration (including on ceasing to hold office), and that pertaining to the 'lowest paid', explaining their Policy on the relationship between remuneration for Chief Officers and other groups.
- 3.6 In discharging its legislative responsibilities for transparency under the above Localism Act, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's Pay Policy details each of the arrangements that have been resolved.

4. PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' PAY CONSTRUCT

- 4.1 National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire and Rescue Services (Services Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service 5th edition 2006) confirms the approach on Principal Officers pay. It states there is a two-track approach for determining levels of pay for Brigade Manager roles. At national level the NJC shall review annually the level of pay increase applicable to all those covered by this

agreement. In doing so the NJC will consider affordability, other relevant pay deals and the rate of inflation at the appropriate date. Any increase agreed by the NJC will be communicated to Fire Services by circular.

- 4.2 All other decisions about the level of pay and remuneration to be awarded to individual Brigade Manager roles will be taken by the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, who will annually review these salary levels. To support the twin track approach identified above, the services of an independent pay consultant have been utilised.
- 4.3 Chief Officers are employed under Joint National Council terms and conditions which are incorporated in their contracts. The Joint National Councils for Chief Fire Officers / Chief Officers negotiates on national (UK) annual cost of living pay increases for this group, and any award of same is determined on this basis. Chief Fire Officers / Chief Officers employed under Joint National Council terms and conditions are contractually entitled to any national Joint National Council determined pay rises and the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will therefore pay these as and when determined in accordance with current contractual requirements. NJC for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services (Services Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service 5th edition 2006) recommends that salary levels are reviewed.
- 4.4 The Executive Leadership Team remuneration matrix is identified as comprising:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Notional % of CFO salary</i>
<i>Chief Fire Officer (CFO)</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO)</i>	<i>80% of CFO</i>
<i>Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)</i>	<i>76% of CFO</i>
<i>Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)</i>	<i>75% of CFO</i>
<i>Assistant Chief Officer (ACO)</i>	<i>62% of CFO</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>*</i>

*Treasurer's salary is not directly linked to the CFO however is determined through a benchmarking exercise. *The Treasurer reports directly to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, holds no directorate responsibility and is employed for 118 days per annum.

Note: From time to time the percentage figures may need to be amended to reflect the pay award made to ensure that each roles salary receives the pay award.

- 4.5 The Executive Leadership Team comprises five directors. The Treasurer reports directly to the Commissioners but holds no directorate responsibility. To support the current transformation programme an additional Director is being appointed on a fixed term basis.

- 4.6 The Chief Officers remuneration on appointment is determined by the

Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. There are no performance related pay or bonuses, and no additional allowances or enhancements to salary or pension are offered upon employment. On cessation of their duties no additional payments are made other than those that are due for salary purposes or payments made to the individual in line with the appropriate pension scheme on retirement.

- 4.7 Information on the remuneration of Chief officers is published as part of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service annual end of year Financial Statement.
- 4.8 In accordance with this Pay Policy Statement, Chief Officers' remuneration levels should be reviewed annually as part of Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service commitment to maintaining a competitive grading and remuneration structure. In the absence of nationally determined guidance on 'cost of living' increases the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service may identify and agree a local rate and implementation date. Only the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service may make a final determination in respect of remuneration rates for Chief Officers, including annual cost of living awards.

5. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

- 5.1 Remuneration is in accordance with British Medical Association (BMA) guidance.

6. JOB EVALUATION

- 6.1 In 2021 a Job Evaluation exercise for Corporate Staff was completed. Information was gathered and evaluated against 13 job related factors as defined within the National Joint Council for Local Government Services' (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme. The pay principles adopted included consideration of a number of factors including the pay framework to be implemented as a result of the exercise. This resulted in the lowest spinal point becoming point 5 for Corporate Staff. The effective date of implementation was 1 August 2021.

7. AREA MANAGERS (4 POSTS) – LOCAL AGREEMENT

- 7.1 The remuneration scheme for this group of staff was locally agreed as follows: - AMB salary as per agreed NJC Fire & Rescue Services uniformed pay scales, plus 20% flexi duty allowance, plus 14% continuous duty system payment.

8. CORPORATE HEADS OF SERVICE (4 POSTS)

- 8.1 Since 2023 Corporate Heads of Service base pay has been linked to base pay for Area Managers.

9. ALL OTHER STAFF

- 9.1 All other staff employed by South Wales Fire & Rescue Service are encompassed within Wholetime, On-Call, Control, Corporate and Auxiliary Staff categories, and as such their remuneration is based on the relevant NJC agreed salary schemes as identified in this statement.
- 9.2 In general, the terms and conditions of employment for all staff are covered by existing collective agreements negotiated with those trade unions recognised by the organisation for collective bargaining purposes. These arrangements are embodied in the Scheme of Conditions of Service of the National Joint Council and are supplemented by the organisations rules, records, Organisational Policy & Procedural documents, and other instructions, as amended, along with such other employment law legislation which will apply from time to time.
- 9.3 The 'lowest salary' used by the Fire & Rescue Service is the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government services (Green Book), Spinal Point 5.
- 9.4 An examination of the current pay levels within the Service enables the organisation to identify the multiplier between the lowest pay point and that of the Chief Fire Officer. The multiple between the lowest paid (full time equivalent) employee and the Chief Fire Officer is 1:7.43.

10. DELEGATED AUTHORITY LEVELS

- 10.1 Any variation in pay detailed within this policy is subject to appropriate approval, as described below.
- 10.2 Decisions on pay detailed within this policy are delegated as follows: -

DECISION	DELEGATED AUTHORITY LEVEL
<i>Starting pay (above grade minimum) but not including Assistant Chief Officer (and equivalent level)</i>	<i>Assistant Chief Officer People Services (As identified in the Standing Orders)</i>
<i>Starting Pay Assistant Chief Officer (and equivalent) level and above</i>	<i>Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to agree the senior management organisational structure including grades and salary bands. Appointment panel to agree and approve actual salary on appointment within the management structure agreed by full Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.</i>

<p><i>Appointment to higher graded job (above grade minimum) up to, but not including Assistant Chief Officer level.</i></p>	<p><i>Assistant Chief Officer People Services or delegated to Head of HR.</i></p>
<p><i>Acting-up payment at Assistant Chief Officer level where total salary package is less than £100k.</i></p> <p><i>Acting up payment for posts where total salary package is more than £100k.</i></p>	<p><i>Chief Fire Officer</i></p> <p><i>Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service</i></p>

10.3 People Services is responsible for overseeing any decisions on pay in order to ensure that they are made in accordance with the delegated authority levels and are compliant with the terms of the Pay Policy and legislation.

10.4 Delegations for decision on pay cannot be delegated below the levels outlined in the table above.

11. PAY RELATIVITIES

11.1 The lowest paid persons employed under a Contract of Employment are employed on full time equivalent (37 hours) salaries of £23,5000 which is in accordance with the lowest spinal column point currently in use within the grading structure. The Service engages apprentices (and other such trainees) who are not included within the definition of 'lowest paid' employees.

11.2 The statutory guidance under the Localism Act recommends the use of pay multiples as a means of measuring the relationship between pay rates across the workforce and that of senior managers.

11.3 The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service remunerates substantive personnel above the National Minimum Wage. The Service is a Real Living Wage Employer.

12. STARTING SALARY

12.1 Employees appointed to roles will normally be appointed to the minimum point of the pay grade for the job.

12.2 In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to appoint to a higher point in the pay

grade. This may arise when the preferred candidate for the job is in or has been in or has been in receipt of a salary at a higher level than the grade minimum.

12.3 An Appointment Panel wishing to appoint a candidate up to, but not including Assistant Chief Officer level, at a salary above the grade minimum must seek approval from the Assistant Chief Officer, fully outlining the business case. Managers may seek guidance from People Services. if required.

12.4 The business case should incorporate the following: -

- Preferred candidate's current or most recent salary.
- Salary range for job being appointed to, preferred candidate's interview assessment outcome and details of point scores for other interviewees.
- Benefits to Service and customers of appointing the preferred candidate.
- Potential impact on other jobholders of appointing the preferred candidate at a level higher than the grade minimum.
- Confirmation that increased employee costs will be met by the existing Service budget.

12.5 The Assistant Chief Officer People Services will: -

- Consider the request presented by the recruiting manager.
- Discuss their proposed decision with Head of People Services to ensure it is compliant with the terms of the Pay Policy.
- Response to the appointment panel.
- Complete the relevant payroll authorization so that the recruitment process can be completed.

12.6 The decision of the Assistant Chief Officer People Services is final.

A resolution of the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is required for all organisational re-structures and associated grading and salary.

13. RE-EMPLOYMENT OF FORMER EMPLOYEES

13.1 Former employees are able to be re-employed, but there are several determining factors.

13.2 The introduction of the application of abatement of salaries/pension for a fixed term period in order to retain specialist skills, expertise, and knowledge was agreed.

13.3 Applications for abatement of salaries/pension will be referred by directors back the Commissioners for consideration based on business needs.

13.4 When someone retires or is released on voluntary or compulsory redundancy, it would not be expected that they would be re-employed as either an employee or an

agency worker/contractor in the same or similar job role or service area from which they were made redundant. Such action could indicate that the original decision on the voluntary or compulsory redundancy was not a value for money decision for the taxpayer. Therefore, any exceptions to this approach leading to the re-engagement of voluntary or compulsory redundant employees will have to be justified to ensure that the original terms of the redundancy i.e., cessation of work has actually occurred.

- 13.5 Managers who wish to recruit former employees or procure workers who have previously been made redundant from the same Service area will need to provide a business case for doing so and request authorization from the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service or designated Assistant Chief Officer.
- 13.6 When a Local Government Pension Scheme or Fire & Rescue Services (on Grey Book terms and conditions) pensioner is re-employed within the Local Government sector, and combined earnings and pension exceeds final salary in the original employment when adjusted for inflation, the pension will be abated.

14. ACTING-UP TO A HIGHER GRADED JOB

- 14.1 Acting up is appropriate when the higher graded post becomes vacant due to maternity leave, sick leave etc. Acting-up allowances are made to employees who agree to carry out the full or partial duties, and responsibilities of a higher grade job. The higher graded job must be part of the agreed staffing establishment.
- 14.2 The allowance is payable when an employee carries out the work of the higher grade job for a continuous period for any reason other than annual leave.
- 14.3 Employees who undertake the full duties and responsibilities of a higher graded job will receive the salary that would apply if they were promoted to the higher graded post.
- 14.4 Employees who undertake part of the duties and responsibilities of a higher-grade job will receive a partial acting-up allowance. For example, if the employee is covering 20% of the higher graded duties and responsibilities then they would receive 20% of the grade differential as acting up allowance.
- 14.5 Where there are only one or two employees who are able to 'act-up' to the higher-grade job it is relatively easy to identify the jobholder(s) who could reasonably be asked to carry out the higher graded job. Where there are a large number of employees who may be in a position to 'act-up' to the higher graded job, the most appropriate person will be chosen in line with Service promotional processes.
- 14.6 Managers who wish to use either full or partial acting up arrangements must seek

approval from their Head of Service. In addition, managers may also seek guidance from People Services if required.

14.7 The approving officer will:

- Consider the request presented by the requesting manager.
- Discuss their proposed decision within the People Services Department to ensure it is compliant with the Pay Policy.
- Provide a response to the requesting manager, normally within 10 working days.
- Complete and notify the Employee Relations Team if a pay variation is to be implemented.

14.8 Any acting up arrangements at Assistant Chief Officer level must be agreed by the Chief Fire Officer. Any acting up arrangements for posts with remuneration package at or above £100k must also be agreed by the Commissioners for the Fire and Rescue Service. In both cases the salary must be within the organisational structure agreed by Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and be financed in full.

14.9 Acting-up allowances are removed once the need for the acting-up arrangement no longer exists. Managers are responsible for ensuring that employees receive sufficient notice of this.

15. HONORARIUM PAYMENTS

15.1 Whilst the majority of the workforce are contracted to substantive posts, at any given point in time there will be some corporate employees who carry out specific duties in a temporary capacity.

15.2 Where the Service wishes to recognise the significant and additional discretionary efforts of an employee in the above instance, honoraria can be requested to be paid to the employee.

15.3 Payments are made to recognise the employee undertaking agreed *additional* work against their existing job description. This could be due to a sudden and critical requirement to complete a time bound project or a task of which the employee willingly gives their time and effort to undertake, whilst continuing to undertake their usual work. This work can also be planned, but it will be expected that other ways to reward for the work is considered first (e.g. the creation of a new temporary project job, which should be assessed against the job evaluation framework).

15.4 If a manager wishes to recognise this effort and believes the work falls within the definition of an honorarium payment, they must prepare a business case outlining the key factors to their Head of Service and the Head of People Services explaining the circumstances, length of honorarium payment and the amount they recommend

should be paid. This will then be considered by the Heads of Service and a decision will be made as to whether it can be paid.

15.5 The payment structure is set out below:

- a. In the majority of cases this shall be for an additional **three** spinal points above the individual's substantive point. This will take account of any natural progression through the spinal scale to ensure the honorarium payment maintains its value.
- b. In exceptional cases, and only with the approval of the respective Director, the honorarium may be increased beyond three spinal points.

15.6 The duration is as follows:

- a) Where an honorarium payment is requested, this shall not normally extend beyond **six months**. Where it is considered necessary to continue payments beyond six months a review must be undertaken between the Head of Service and their Director to consider whether the payment should continue, or if some other arrangement should be made to cover the duties.
- b) Any extension beyond the six-month period **must** be approved by the Director of People Services prior to commencement and should not normally last for more than a twelve-month period unless there is a specific business reason.

15.7 Only one honorarium can be paid to each employee within a 12-month period. Honorarium payments based on spinal column point differentials will be subject to any cost-of-living increase applied by the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

15.8 Honorarium payments may be pensionable, this however will be dependent on the individual's pensions scheme regulations.

15.9 Information on all honoraria payments will be compiled and reviewed annually by People Services and reported to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for monitoring purposes.

15.10 If the payment of a honoraria leads to a remuneration package exceeding £100k it must also be approved by the Chief Fire Officer and the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service having taken advice from the Assistant Chief Officer for People Services or their nominated representative.

16. SEVERANCE

16.1 On ceasing to be employed, employees will be paid contractual payments due under their contract of employment. In the event of redundancy, severance pay will be paid in line with the employer's discretions as set out in the Employment Protection

Policy retained by Rhondda Cynon Taff Pensions Section.

- 16.2 All business cases for redundancy, early retirement and severance must be reported to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for scrutiny prior to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire Service making a resolution to either accept or reject.
- 16.3 Regulation 30(6) 'Flexible Retirement' – Local Government Pension Scheme Discretion. This discretion will be applied subject to the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Officer People Services agreeing to the application after taking into account the costs and benefits to the organisation. There will be a requirement by the employee to reduce their working hours by at least 40%. Any actuarial reductions in pension benefits will apply.
- 16.4 The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will receive reports to countersign the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Officer People Service's decisions.

17. UNIFORMED FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

17. All Fire & Rescue Service employees up to and including Area Managers, are paid in line with the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire & Rescue Services, Scheme of Conditions of Service. These are nationally agreed terms and conditions (the 'Grey' Book).
- 17.2 Under the National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service (the 'Gold' Book), the Chief Fire Officer and Brigade Managers have separate pay arrangements in place. The Chief Fire Officer's salary is reviewed prior to a new appointment being made and a number of factors are taken into account during this process. These are summarized below:
- The relevant minimum salary of the Chief Fire Officer and the most relevant benchmark data.
 - The relationship of current salary to the national benchmark.
 - Any substantial local factors not common to Fire and Rescue Authorities of similar type and size.
 - Comparative information on salaries in other similar authorities.
 - Top management structures and size of management team compared to those of other Fire and Rescue Authorities of similar type and size.
 - The relative job size of each post and
 - Incident command responsibility and the requirement to provide operational cover.
- 17.3 Other Fire & Rescue Service managers who are paid as a percentage of the Chief Fire Officer's salary may be reviewed at the same time as any review to the Chief

Fire Officer's salary takes place.

17.4 For a review the benchmarking and associated analysis will be collated by the People Services Department and any recommendations presented to the Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for final determination.

18. OTHER PAY RELATED POLICIES

18.1 Other pay related policy areas that are applicable to all employees are: -

- Business Travel and Expenses
- Relocation expenses
- Handling redundancy
- Early retirement – including redundancy, flexible retirement, and efficiency of service
- Pensions – LGPS, Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2007, and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) 2015, RDS Modified Scheme, Firefighter Compensation Scheme

19. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

19.1 The Act defines remuneration widely, to include not just pay but also charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, increased enhancements of pension entitlements and termination payments (Ref Section 4 Principal Officers Pay Construct),

19.2 South Wales Fire & Rescue Service contributes to the lease vehicle payments for its Senior Members of staff that choose to take part in the Service lease vehicle scheme.

19.3 Contributions level vary and are dependent on the specific post. These Service contributions form only part of the lease vehicle cost.

20. MONITORING AND REVIEW

20.1 The Assistant Chief Officer People Services will review the application of this policy on an annual basis. The Pay Policy will then be presented to Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service for final determination annually in March. Any changes or deviation from this policy outside of such a review requires Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service approval.

SALARY SCALES

- Appendix 1 - South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Principal Officers and Heads of Service, salary matrix.
- Appendix 2 - Firefighting Roles, salary matrix
- Appendix 3 - Control – specific roles, salary matrix
- Appendix 4 - On-Call Duty System Payment Structure, salary matrix
- Appendix 5 - Corporate staff, salary matrix
- Appendix 6 - Local Authority Craft & Associated Employees, salary matrix
- Appendix 7 - Auxiliary Firefighter, salary matrix

APPENDIX 1

**SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE, PRINCIPAL OFFICERS
AND HEADS OF SERVICE SALARY DETAILS**

	FT Salary	Actual Salary
DIRECTORS [date of last award – 1 January 2024]		
Chief Fire Officer	£174,661	£174,661
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (80% CFO)	£139,729	-
Deputy Chief Officer (76% - CFO)	£132,742	-
Assistant Chief Fire Officer - Technical Services (75% CFO)	£130,996	£130,996
Assistant Chief Fire Officer- Service Delivery (75% CFO)	£130,996	£130,996
Assistant Chief Officer - People Services (62% -CFO)	£108,290	£108,290
Assistant Chief Officer – Corporate Services (62% - CFO)	£108,290	£108,290
STATUTORY OFFICER		
Treasurer	£ 79,788	£ 36,208
The Treasurer reports directly to the FRA, holds no directorate responsibility and is employed for 118 days per annum.		
HEADS OF SERVICE [date of last award – 1 July 2023]		
Head of Service - Finance (AM baseline salary)	£ 69,283	£ 69,283
Head of Service - Corporate (AM baseline salary)	£ 69,283	£ 69,283
Head of Service - HR (AM baseline salary)	£ 69,283	£ 69,283
Head of Service - ICT (AM baseline salary)	£ 69,283	£ 69,283
Area Manager - Operations	£ 95,553	£ 95,553
Area Manager - Head of Operational Risk Management	£ 95,553	£ 95,553
Area Manager - Head of Risk Reduction	£ 95,553	£ 95,553
Area Manager - Training & Development	£ 95,553	£ 95,553
<i>Area Manager B - Baseline</i>	<i>£69,283</i>	
<i>Salary</i>	<i>£13,857</i>	
<i>20% flexi duty allowance 14%</i>	<i>£11,639</i>	
<i>continuous duty system pay</i>	<i>£774</i>	
<i>CPD</i>		

All **Principal Officers and Treasurer** are included in the pay arrangements as covered by the Brigade Managers pay arrangements, effective 1 January. All **Heads of Service** are included in the pay arrangements as covered by the National Joint Council for Local Authorities' Fire & Rescue Services, Scheme of conditions of service, effective 1 July.

MEDICAL

Occupational Health Physician 50%	£107,646	£53,823
* British Medical Association (BMA) guidance within the Occupational Physician Consultant.		

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX 2

FIREFIGHTING ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

	Basic annual £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter			
Trainee	27,178	12.41	18.62
Development	28,310	12.93	19.40
Competent	36,226	16.54	24.81
Crew Manager			
Development	38,501	17.58	26.37
Competent	40,161	18.34	27.51
Watch Manager			
Development	41,031	18.74	28.11
Competent A	42,170	19.26	28.89
Competent B	44,911	20.51	30.77
Station Manager			
Development	46,712	21.33	32.00
Competent A	48,116	21.97	32.96
Competent B	51,525	23.53	35.30
Group Manager			
Development	53,801	24.57	Not Applicable
Competent A	55,415	25.30	“
Competent B	59,642	27.23	“
Area Manager			
Development	63,163	28.84	Not Applicable
Competent A	65,056	29.71	“
Competent B	69,283	31.64	“

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX 3

CONTROL SPECIFIC ROLES – PAY RATES FROM 1 JULY 2023

*(95% of the respective firefighting role basic annual salary as set out In Appendix A)

	Basic annual £	Basic hourly rate £	Overtime rate £
Firefighter (Control)			
Trainee	25,189	11.79	17.69
Development	26,895	12.28	18.42
Competent	34,415	15.71	23.57
Crew Manager (Control)			
Development	36,576	16.70	25.05
Competent	38,153	17.42	26.13
Watch Manager (Control)			
Development	38,979	17.80	26.70
Competent A	40,062	18.29	27.44
Competent B	42,665	19.48	29.22
Station Manager (Control)			
Development	44,376	20.26	30.39
Competent A	45,710	20.87	31.31
Competent B	48,949	22.35	33.53
Group Manager (Control)			
Development	51,111	23.34	Not applicable
Competent A	52,644	24.04	“
Competent B	56,660	25.87	“

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Paid a Month				52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5	52.5
Total Salary	£8,144.06	£8,485.31	£10,854.38	£13,844.25	£14,442.75	£14,757.75	£15,167.25	£16,151.63	£16,797.38	£17,301.38

63 Hours	Trainee	Development	Competent	Development	Competent	Development	Competent A	Competent B	Development	Competent A
Hourly Rate	£12.41	£12.93	£16.54	£17.58	£18.34	£18.74	£19.26	£20.51	£21.33	£21.97
Active Hours	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin	37.5 + 7.5 hrs Admin
Paid a Month				45	45	45	45	45	45	45
Total Salary	£6,980.63	£7,273.13	£9,303.75	£11,866.50	£12,379.50	£12,649.50	£13,000.50	£13,844.25	£14,397.75	£14,829.75

52.5 Hours	Trainee	Development	Competent	Development	Competent	Development	Competent A	Competent B	Development	Competent A
Hourly Rate	£12.41	£12.93	£16.54	£17.58	£18.34	£18.74	£19.26	£20.51	£21.33	£21.97
Active Hours	31.25	31.25	31.25	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin	31.25+6.25 hrs Admin
Paid a Month				37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5	37.5
Total Salary	£5,817.19	£6,060.94	£7,753.13	£9,888.75	£10,316.25	£10,541.25	£10,833.75	£11,536.88	£11,988.13	£12,358.13

42 Hours	Trainee	Development	Competent	Development	Competent	Development	Competent A	Competent B	Development	Competent A
Hourly Rate	£12.41	£12.93	£16.54	£17.58	£18.34	£18.74	£19.26	£20.51	£21.33	£21.97
Active Hours	25	25	25	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin	25+5 hrs Admin
Paid a Month				30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Total Salary	£4,653.75	£4,848.75	£6,202.50	£7,911.00	£8,253.00	£8,433.00	£8,667.00	£9,229.50	£9,598.50	£9,886.50

31.5 Hours	Trainee	Development	Competent	Development	Competent	Development	Competent A	Competent B	Development	Competent A
Hourly Rate	£12.41	£12.93	£16.54	£17.58	£18.34	£18.74	£19.26	£20.51	£21.33	£21.97
Active Hours	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin	18.75+3.75 hrs Admin
Paid a Month				22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5
Total Salary	£3,490.31	£3,636.56	£4,651.88	£5,933.25	£6,189.75	£6,324.75	£6,500.25	£6,922.13	£7,198.88	£7,414.88

**South Wales Fire & Rescue Service
Corporate Staff Salary Scales Effective from 01 April 2023**

Grade	Spinal Point	Salary
4	5	£23,500
	6	£23,893
5	7	£24,294
	8	£24,702
6	10	£25,545
	11	£25,979
	12	£26,421
7	15	£27,803
	16	£28,282
	17	£28,770
8	20	£30,296
	21	£30,825
	22	£31,364
9	23	£32,076
	24	£33,024
	25	£33,945
10	26	£34,834
	27	£35,745
11	28	£36,648
	29	£37,336
12	30	£38,223
	31	£39,186
13	32	£40,221
	33	£41,418
14	34	£42,403
	35	£43,421
15	36	£44,428
	37	£45,441
16	38	£46,464
	39	£47,420
17	40	£48,474
	41	£49,498
18	42	£50,512
	43	£51,515

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX 6

Extract

**Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority Craft &
Associated Employees**

CRAFT & ASSOCIATED EMPLOYEES

Pay for craft & associated employees from the pay week including 1 **April 2023** are as follows:

Apprentice Engineers & Electricians

Engineering and Electrical Apprentices following a recognised training course. Rate per week and rate for calculation of overtime and other premium payments from the pay week including **1 April 2022** are as follows (percentage of full-time rate is denoted in brackets).

Age at Entry	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
16 Years	£247.87 (55%)	£315.48 (70%)	£405.61 (90%)	£428.15 (95%)
17 Years	£247.87 (55%)	£360.54 (80%)	£405.61 (90%)	£428.15 (95%)
18 Years+	£360.54 (80%)	£383.08 (85%)	£405.51 (90%)	£428.15 (95%)

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE AUXILIARY FIREFIGHTERS

From 1 April 2022 Auxiliary Firefighter will be linked to Green Book terms and conditions and as such pay will be made up of the following components:

Pay award 1 April 2023 3.88%

- £1,129.92 per year retainer (paid in quarterly instalments of £282.48) for the availability of previous 3 months
- £1,129.92 per year for training attendance (paid in quarterly instalments of £282.48) for the attendance and compliance with training requirements
- £282.48 per year enhancement for LGV drivers (to include a one day per year EDRT)

Therefore (subject to availability in meeting retainer requirements and attendance on quarterly training):

- An Auxiliary Firefighter will receive £2,259.84 per annum
- An Auxiliary Firefighter that is also a EDRT (LGV response driver) will receive £2,542.32 per annum
- An Auxiliary who is only EDRT (LGV Response driver) will receive £1,412.40 per annum

Additionally, WDS and RDS personnel of all ranks (up to and including Area Manager) are also able to apply for a "Resilience Contract". The salary will be between £2,259.84 and £3,107.30 depending on skill sets.

Upon deployment Auxiliary firefighters will be paid £70 per hour (inclusive of holiday pay calculation). Existing operational personnel will see their normal pay rate and other Terms & Conditions (including normal hours worked) suspended and all will be paid £70 per hour, irrespective of the position they are deployed to.

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE AUXILIARY CONTROL OPERATORS

Auxiliary Control Operators will be paid at 95% of the ARFF rate above, in line with the main pay agreement for Control Operators. Therefore, their deployment rate will be £66.50 per hour (inclusive of holiday pay calculation). The annual amount paid for attendance at training days will be £1,073.44. There will be no entitlement to Retainer Payment as they will be on a short-term contract.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 6ii
28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT OF THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

MATERNITY LEAVE PROVISION**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT APPROVED BY CFO STUART MILLINGTON

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO PEOPLE SERVICES, ALISON REED

SUMMARY

The Morris report into the Culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service contains a recommendation to review the Service's family friendly policies, one aspect of which is the Maternity Leave Procedure. Whilst there is more work to be done in terms of a full and comprehensive review of the maternity provision and the supporting procedure, this report proposes an immediate change to the duration of full paid maternity leave from 4½ months to 12 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners approve an extension of the current arrangement of maternity leave/pay to 52 weeks on full pay for eligible employees.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Service's current maternity provision has been under review for some months as we have embarked on a benchmarking exercise to evaluate ourselves against other FRS in the UK, and wider good practice. An aspect of the evaluation encompasses occupational hazards as well as recruitment, retention and inclusion considerations.
- 1.2 The levels of maternity pay provided in most UK Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) are detailed in the Grey Book, scheme of conditions of service, sixth edition for Operational Staff and the Green Book, pay and conditions of service.
- 1.3 According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), a woman's childbearing age is assumed to start at 15 years and end at 45 years.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 As of the 29th February 2024, the Service had a total of 306 females employed with 172 of those being at child bearing age. 56% of female staff are non-uniformed and 44% are Operational (including Fire Control). There are currently 6 employees who are on maternity leave.
- 2.2 Eligible employees are currently entitled to the following maternity pay:

Weeks 1-6	Full pay (offset against payments made by way of SMP or Maternity Allowance)
Weeks 7-18	If the individual has decided to return to work they will continue to receive full pay. The full pay will be made without deductions except by the extent to which the combined pay and SMP (or Maternity Allowance and any dependants' allowances if not eligible for SMP) exceeds full pay. If the individual is not returning to work they will receive basic rate SMP only, provided they qualify.
Weeks 19-39	For the next 21 weeks, SMP entitlement, provided they qualify
Weeks 40-52	Unpaid Leave

- 2.3 The proposal is to move to the following model:

Phase 1 (1-3 months) introduce 52 weeks of maternity leave at full pay for all eligible employees across the Service and review the Maternity Leave procedure.

Phase 2 (3-9 months) further evaluate the current provisions in the workplace to ensure that there is adequate support for expectant and new mothers e.g. facilities for breastfeeding.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

- 3.1.1 Moving to 52 weeks paid maternity leave will position the Service as an employer of choice and thus improve recruitment and retention, it will support our ambition to improve the diversity of our staff and will ensure new mothers are able to spend the time they need with their child.

3.1.2 It is also recognised that the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) have been leading a campaign for the sector as a whole to move to 52 weeks paid maternity leave.

3.1.3 According to the Chartered Institute of Personnel (CIPD) and following a survey of 2,000 employers via YouGov, one fifth (21%) of respondents currently offer 26 weeks of enhanced maternity pay at or near the full rate of pay followed by 13 weeks at the SMP rate or 90% of the average weekly earnings.

3.1.4 Greater Manchester, West Midlands and Kent Fire and Rescue Services have recently announced an intention to move to 52 weeks paid maternity leave.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 The Morris report contains a recommendation to review the Service's family friendly policies, one aspect of which is the Maternity Leave Procedure. The remaining suite of family friendly procedures will be reviewed in line with the workstreams allocated to the Policies and Procedures working group, set up to support the implementation of the recommendations within the Morris report and wider cultural change across the organisation.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 The total cost of the maternity leave for the 6 employees who are currently affected by this proposal, based on the Service's current provision is approximately £71,717.46. If these employees were to receive 52 weeks maternity leave on full pay it would cost the Service approximately £111,779.96.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Increasing the paid maternity provision is the right thing to do. It will not only support the recruitment and retention of females, but it will support the ambition for a more diverse workforce. It signals a clear message to current and future employees the importance the Service places on being a family friendly organisation.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Commissioners approve an extension of the current arrangement of maternity leave/pay to 52 weeks on full pay for eligible employees.

Contact Officer:	ACO Alison Reed	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Title		

Appendices	
None	

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 6.iii
28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT OF THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

GENDER PAY GAP 2023**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT APPROVED BY CFO STUART MILLINGTON

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO PEOPLE SERVICES, ALISON REED

SUMMARY

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. The deadline for publication is 31 March 2024.

The report also references specific aspects of the Morris report into the culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and how this is likely to impact the Gender Pay Gap in future years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners approve the 2023 Gender Pay Gap Report at Appendix 1 to be published by 31 March 2024.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force from 6 April 2017, where relevant employers in the private and voluntary sectors are required to publish Gender Pay Gap information by reporting the percentage differences in pay between their male and female employees.
- 1.2 The Gender Pay Gap report must be published within 12 months of the 'snapshot date' of 31 March, meaning that the deadline for publication for report at Appendix 1 is 31 March 2024.

- 1.3 The Gender Pay Gap information should be published, together with a written statement confirming its accuracy, on its own website and the Government website. While there is no legal requirement to do so, organisations are encouraged to publish a narrative to explain their Gender Pay Gap information.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The Gender Pay Gap should not be confused with equal pay, which concerns pay differences between male and female employees performing the same or similar work.
- 2.2 Whilst the Gender Pay Gap figures identified in Appendix 1 signify an improvement compared to the previous year's figures, as noted in the Morris report, the Service understands the need to improve the diversity of its workforce, however the report also notes that a whole system approach is required so that culture improves throughout. Failure is likely to result in talented staff who are from under-represented groups leaving the organisation.
- 2.3 The Service recognises that historically the role of firefighter has been perceived as being an occupation for males only . The Service continues to strive to change the narrative in this regard through a range of methods, such as media campaigns. Promoting the fact that the role can be undertaken by females and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Supporting recruitment campaigns through female firefit sessions, supporting and promoting initiatives such as the recent expedition to the Antarctic by the Antarctic Fire Angels, where one of the females was an employee of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.4 Recent decisions taken to support and achieve an improved gender balance in the organisation include:
- Opening up recruitment for all vacancies at all levels in the organisation to external candidates;
 - Moving to 52 weeks full maternity paid leave;
 - Embedding our work on neurodiversity with the aim of supporting people through their career;
 - Commencing a review of our approach to internal placements by ensuring non-operational managerial roles are held by those with the best skills and experience for the role, whether uniformed or non-uniformed.
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix 1 of this report is the gender pay gap report for 31 March 2023.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 The Gender Pay Gap is based on the average pay of females and males and is directly impacted by the numbers of women and men in different roles and at different levels in the organisation.

3.1.2 Reasons which may contribute to the gap include:

- Differing terms and conditions and pay scales for groups of staff across the Service.
- A high proportion of women in often lower paid part-time roles.
- Pay or promotional choices that are made at various points of an individual's working life.
- Employee benefits such as salary sacrifice scheme i.e. Child Care Vouchers, Personal Lease Car Scheme or Cycle to Work payments.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 An employer who has a headcount of 250 or more must comply with regulations on Gender Pay Gap reporting.

3.2.2 Failure to comply amounts to a breach of the Equality Act 2010 and would therefore open an organisation up to action by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The EHRC have a series of actions and penalties that they can impose on organisations depending on the type of business and nature of the breach.

3.2.3 Failure to address the Gender Pay Gap, could damage the Service's reputation and adversely impact staff recruitment and retention.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 As outlined in Section 2 of this report, whilst the Gender Pay Gap figures signify an improvement compared to the previous year's figures, the Service remains committed to improving the diversity of its workforce. Failure to achieve this, will risk the Service's ability to grow and improve service delivery.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Service is required to publish its Gender Pay Gap by 31 March each year.

4.1.1 The Gender Pay Gap at Appendix 1 contains all relevant information and therefore meets the requirements for publication by 31 March 2024.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Commissioners approve the 2023 Gender Pay Gap Report at Appendix 1 to be published by 31 March 2024.

Contact Officer:		ACO Alison Reed
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Title		
Appendices		
Appendix 1	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Gender Pay Gap 2023	



GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

From 2017 onwards, any UK organisation employing 250 or more employees has to publicly report on its gender pay gap. We are required to report on the mean and median gender pay gap and also a breakdown, by quartiles of the proportion of men and women in each quartile, based on hourly pay.

The gender pay gap is the difference between the actual hourly pay between male and female employees, regardless of their role in the Service. These calculations are based on an individual's net earnings paid in March 2023 and include elements such as salary, allowances, honorariums, and salary sacrifice payments.

The Service is confident that men and women are paid equally for undertaking equivalent roles across the organisation, as staff are paid, irrelevant of gender, using nationally agreed pay scales.

Mean and Median Data

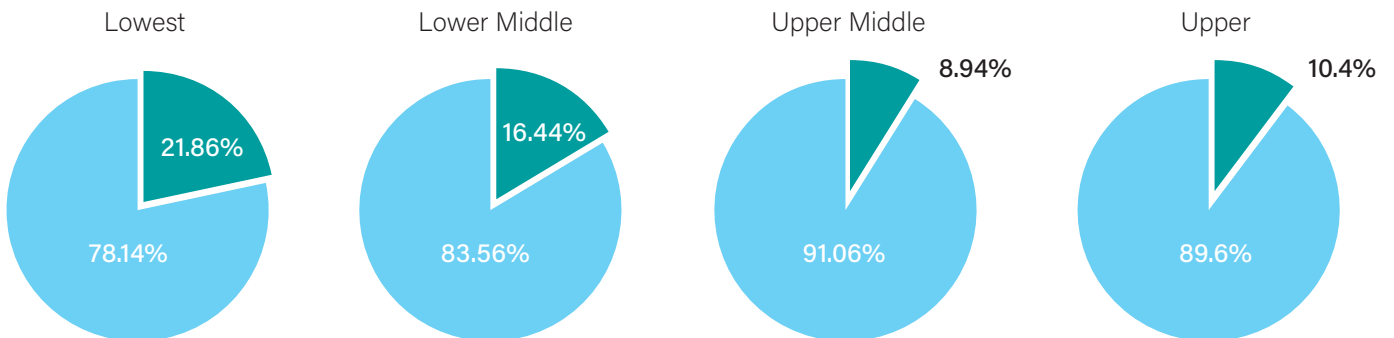
Difference between men and women		
	Mean (Average)	Median (Mid Point)
Hourly rate	8.84% (11.81%)	7.48% (8.85%)

Note: The figures in brackets are the 2022 figures for comparison purposes and the median hourly pay rates, for both male and female employees, are above the mean (average) pay rates for the Service.

The table above shows our overall mean (average) and median (mid-point) gender pay gap based on hourly pay as at the 31 March 2023. This indicates a positive reduction in the gap between male and female employees. Through its positive action the Service has seen some success in increasing the number of employment contracts secured by females, with 16.66% of contracts in March 2023 being held by females, compared to 15.63% at March 2022.

Also worthy of note is that Grey Book staff, who are predominantly male, did not receive the 2022/23 pay award until April 2023, however Green Book staff, who are predominantly female, received their pay award for 2022/23, in November 2022. The delay in the Grey Book pay award relating to 2022/23, would have had some impact on the hourly rate differential being captured within this analysis.

Pay Quartiles (based on hourly pay)



The above information illustrates the gender distribution at South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, as of 31st March 2023, as per Gender Pay Gap Reporting requirements.



GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2023

The gender pay gap is based on the average pay of females and males and one of the biggest causes of this can be the numbers of women and men in different roles and at different levels in the organisation.

For example, if the majority of employees in the upper pay levels are male and the majority of employees in the lower pay levels are female, there is likely to be a gender pay gap, even though everyone is being paid the correct pay for the roles they are undertaking.

Other reasons which may contribute to a gap include:

- Differing terms and conditions and pay scales for groups of staff across the Service
- A high proportion of women in often lower paid part-time roles
- Pay or promotional choices that are made at various points of an individual's working life
- Employee benefits such as salary sacrifice schemes i.e. Child Care Vouchers, Personal Lease Car Scheme or Cycle to Work payments

There are many possible root causes to these reasons. Some may be personal, such as choices people make because of their own circumstances, their work preferences, and their aspirations. Other causes are part of society generally, such as the roles that people have historically been attracted to or feel comfortable working in.

Because there are many contributing factors to a gender pay gap, there isn't one simple solution that fixes it.

As part of our Recruitment and Attraction Strategy, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service actively encourages applications from women, from all backgrounds, across all roles and is also working actively with focus groups to better understand how we break down any perceived barriers to females undertaking uniformed roles in the Service.

Closing the Gender Pay Gap

We are committed to continuing to reduce the overall gap and this is demonstrated through the following initiatives.

Our processes – recruitment, retaining and developing a diverse workforce:

- Mixed gender sift and interview panels
- Blind sifting where all identifiable characteristics are removed
- Changing the perception of some roles in the Service through our media campaigns
- Developing new learning pathways for all staff
- Unconscious Bias Training
- Creating a more inclusive workplace
- Flexible working options

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 6.iv
28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT APPROVED BY THE TREASURER

REPORT PRESENTED BY THE DEPUTY TREASURER - HEAD OF FINANCE,
PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY**SUMMARY**

The Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement and associated information is required to be approved in advance of the new financial year.

The Strategy provides the necessary framework from which officers will manage treasury activities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Commissioners' note and approve the following;

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)

Capital/Prudential Indicators

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy

Borrowing Strategy

Treasury Indicators and Limits

Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

The Treasurer to update Strategies/Policies, as necessary.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Board of Commissioners are required to approve in advance of each financial year its governance arrangements for treasury management (TM) activities. Detailed explanations of what these are, are contained in Appendix 1.

- 1.2 This report is first of three statutory reports to Commissioners in respect of the 2024/25 financial year and sets the scene for subsequent reporting and performance measurement.
- 1.3 The TMSS covers two main areas;
 - Capital Investment
 - Treasury Management

This report and the attached information is designed meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, Welsh Government Investment Guidance and MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Prudential and Treasury Management Codes 2021.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is for Commissioners to consider and have oversight of the treasury management activities required to ensure adequate liquidity and that longer-term capital planning is prudent, sustainable, and affordable.

3. IMPLICATIONS

The approval of the TMSS provides the control framework within which officers can operate to ensure that as far as possible the costs of borrowing are minimised, investment opportunities are maximised, and adequate liquidity is maintained so that payments can be made when they fall due. Such activities are undertaken whilst ensuring risk is kept to a minimum.

3.1 Community and Environment

- 3.1.1 This Treasury Management Strategy provides a framework to ensure the capital investment plans for the Service are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Capital investment across the Service is undertaken utilising sustainable procurement principles which embed social value into the assessment criteria.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

- 3.2.1 The Annual Treasury Management Strategy meets the requirements set out in the Prudential Code for Capital Finance.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

- 3.3.1 This Treasury Strategy recognises the borrowing necessary to fund the capital programme requirements of the Service. The revenue costs of borrowing are included within the revenue budget each year.

4 RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the Commissioners' note and approve the following:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).
- Capital / Prudential Indicators.
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.
- Borrowing Strategy.
- Treasury Indicators and Limits.
- Annual Investment Strategy (AIS).
- The Treasurer to update Strategies/Policies, as necessary.

Contact Officer:	Lisa Mullan Head of Service	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
Local Government Act 2023		
CIPFA Treasury Management Code		
CIPFA Prudential Code		
WG MRP & Investment Guidance		
Medium Term Capital Plans		
Capital Budget 2024/25		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Treasury Management Strategy Statement

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Appendix 1

Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement and
Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

2024/25

INDEX

1.1	Background	3	
1.2	Reporting Requirements	3	
1.3	Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2024/25	4	
1.4	Training	5	
1.5	Treasury Management Consultants	5	
2.	THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2024/25 – 2026/27	7	
2.1	Capital Expenditure and Financing	7	
2.2	The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	8	
2.3	Liability Benchmark (LB)	8	
2.4	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement	9	
3.	BORROWING	10	
3.1	Current Portfolio Position	10	
3.2	Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity	12	
3.3	Prospects for Interest Rates	14	
3.4	Borrowing Strategy	15	
3.5	Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need	15	
3.6	Rescheduling	16	
3.7	New Financial Institutions as a Source of Borrowing and / or Types of Borrowing	16	16
3.8	Approved Sources of Long and Short-term Borrowing	16	
4	ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY	17	
4.1	Investment Policy – Management of Risk	17	
4.2	Creditworthiness Policy	18	
4.3	Investment Strategy	20	
4.4	Investment Performance / Risk Benchmarking	21	
4.5	End of Year Investment Report	21	
4.6	External Fund Managers	21	
5	APPENDICES	22	
5.1	ECONOMIC BACKGROUND	23	
5.2	APPROVED COUNTRIES FOR INVESTMENTS	27	
5.3	TREASURY MANAGEMENT SCHEME OF DELEGATION	28	
5.4	THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT ROLE OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER	29	29

1.1 Background

The Board of Commissioners is required to operate a balanced revenue budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. The main function of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low-risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Board of Commissioners' low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second function of treasury management is the funding of the Board of Commissioners' capital investment plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning, to ensure that it can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans or using longer-term cash flow surpluses. On occasion, when it is prudent and economic, any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet risk or cost objectives.

The contribution the treasury management function makes to the Board of Commissioners is critical, as the balance of debt and investment operations ensure the ability to meet spending commitments as they fall due, either on day-to-day revenue basis or for larger capital investment projects. The treasury operations will see a balance of the interest costs of debt and the investment income arising from cash deposits affecting the available budget. Since cash balances generally result from reserves and balances, it is paramount to ensure adequate security of the sums invested, as a loss of principal will in effect result in a loss to the General Fund Balance.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

“The management of borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

1.2 Reporting Requirements

1.2.1 Capital Strategy

The CIPFA 2021 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy report which will provide the following: -

- a high-level long-term overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services.
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed.
- the implications for future financial sustainability

The aim of the strategy is to ensure that the Board of Commissioners understand the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting Capital Strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

1.2.2 Treasury Management Reporting

The Board of Commissioners is currently required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main treasury reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

- a. **Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy** (this report) - The first, and most important report is forward looking and covers: -
 - the capital plans, (including prudential indicators)
 - a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy, (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time)
 - the Treasury Management Strategy, (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised), including treasury indicators; and
 - an Annual Investment Strategy, (the parameters on how investments are to be managed)
- b. **A mid-year treasury management report** – This is primarily a progress report and will update on the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether any policies require revision. In addition, this Board of Commissioners will receive quarterly update reports as part of budget monitoring reporting.
- c. **An annual treasury report** – This is a backward-looking review document and provides details of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations in comparison to the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Full Board of Commissioners.

Quarterly reports – In addition to the three statutory reports detailed above, from 2023/24 quarterly reporting is also required. However, these additional reports do not have to be reported to Full Board of Commissioners but do require adequate scrutiny (reports, specifically, should comprise updated Treasury/Prudential Indicators).

1.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2024/25

The strategy for 2024/25 covers two main areas:

Capital issues.

- the capital expenditure plans and the associated prudential indicators.
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position.
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Board of Commissioners
- prospects for interest rates
- the borrowing strategy
- policy on borrowing in advance of need
- debt rescheduling
- the investment strategy
- creditworthiness policy; and
- the policy on use of external service providers

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, Welsh Government Investment Guidance and MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

1.4 Training

The CIPFA Treasury Management Code requires the responsible officer to ensure that Commissioners with responsibility for treasury management receive training in treasury management to enable scrutiny.

Furthermore, pages 47 and 48 of the Code state that they expect “all organisations to have a formal and comprehensive knowledge and skills or training policy for the effective acquisition and retention of treasury management knowledge and skills for those responsible for management, delivery, governance, and decision making.

The scale and nature of this will depend on the size and complexity of the organisation’s treasury management needs. Organisations should consider how to assess whether treasury management staff and the Board of Commissioners have the required knowledge and skills to undertake their roles and whether they have been able to maintain those skills and keep them up to date.

As a minimum, authorities should carry out the following to monitor and review knowledge and skills:

- Record attendance at training and ensure action is taken where poor attendance is identified.
- Prepare tailored learning plans for treasury management officers and Board of Commissioners.
- Require treasury management officers and Board of Commissioners to undertake self-assessment against the required competencies (as set out in the schedule that may be adopted by the organisation).
- Have regular communication with officers and Board of Commissioners, encouraging them to highlight training needs on an ongoing basis.

In further support of the revised training requirements, CIPFA’s Better Governance Forum and Treasury Management Network have produced a ‘self-assessment by those responsible for the scrutiny of treasury management’, which is available from the CIPFA website to download.

Annual training will be undertaken by Commissioners and will be supported with in-house learning throughout the year.

The training needs of treasury management officers are periodically reviewed and recorded as part of professional continued professional development arrangements.

A formal record of the training and learning received by officers and Commissioners central to the Treasury function will be maintained by the Senior Accountant.

1.5 Treasury Management Consultants

The Board of Commissioners uses Link Group, Link Treasury Services Limited as its external treasury management advisors.

The Board of Commissioners recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions always remains with the organisation and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon the services of external service providers. All decisions will be undertaken with regards to all available information, including, but not solely, our treasury advisers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Board of Commissioners will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented and subjected to regular review.

2. THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2024/25 – 2026/27

The Board of Commissioners' capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in the prudential indicators, which are designed to provide an overview and confirm capital expenditure plans are prudent, affordable, and sustainable.

2.1 Capital Expenditure and Financing

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Board of Commissioners' capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. Commissioners are asked to approve the capital expenditure plans:

Capital, Prudential and Treasury Indicators	2022/23	2023/24' Mid Year	2024/25'	2025/26'	2026/27'
	Outturn	Review	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Opening CFR	40,226	40,226	45,339	59,710	69,224
Capital Spending	7,857	10,563	19,026	15,517	9,870
CERA	-200	-200	-200	-200	-200
Partner Contribution to Capital		-339	-68	-250	-1,000
Capital Receipts	-24	-66			
Capital Grant	-1,424	-586			
Revenue Reserves	0				
Borrowing requirement for the year	6,209	9,372	18,759	15,067	8,670
Repayment of Debt					
MRP	-3,212	-3,822	-4,297	-5,233	-4,871
MRP on PFI	-419	-437	-91	-320	-538
Closing CFR	42,805	45,339	59,710	69,224	72,485
Movement in closing CFR	2,578	5,113	14,371	9,514	3,261
Gross Borrowing at 1 April	28,146	26,737	27,854	38,959	47,554
New Borrowing	0	6,000	15,000	10,000	6,000
Loan Repayments	-1,409	-1,383	-3,895	-1,406	-1,816
Gross Borrowing at 31 March	26,737	31,354	38,959	47,554	51,738
Investments/Deposits at 1 April	-7,158	-2,163	-2,141	-1,000	-1,000
Investments/Deposits at 31 March	-2,163	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
Net borrowing at 1 April	20,988	24,574	25,714	37,959	46,554
Net borrowing at 31 March	24,574	30,354	37,959	46,554	50,738
Other long term liabilities i.e. PFI	3,677	3,240	3,149	2,829	2,292
Gross Debt	30,414	34,594	42,109	50,383	54,030
Under/Over borrowed (Gross Debt vs CFR)	12,391	10,745	17,602	18,841	18,456

Other long-term liabilities relate solely to the PFI arrangement at Cardiff Gate Training Centre (excludes the Real Fire Training Facility (RFTF) as this is owned and accounted for as an asset on the balance sheet)

The table summarises how capital plans are being financed and how any shortfall results in a borrowing need, i.e. an increase in capital financing requirement (CFR)

The table shows the actual external debt, against the underlying capital borrowing need (CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

The Board is well within the CFR threshold and is anticipating being under borrowed by £17.6million at the end of 2024/25.

2.2 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

The second prudential indicator is the CFR, and this is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for. This is essentially a measure of indebtedness and the underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure above, which has not immediately funded will increase the CFR.

The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which reduces the indebtedness in line with each asset's life, and so charges the economic consumption of capital assets as they are used (much like a depreciation charge)

The CFR includes any other long-term liabilities and whilst these increase the CFR, and the borrowing requirement, these types of schemes include a borrowing facility by the PFI provider and so the Board of Commissioners is not required to separately borrow for these schemes.

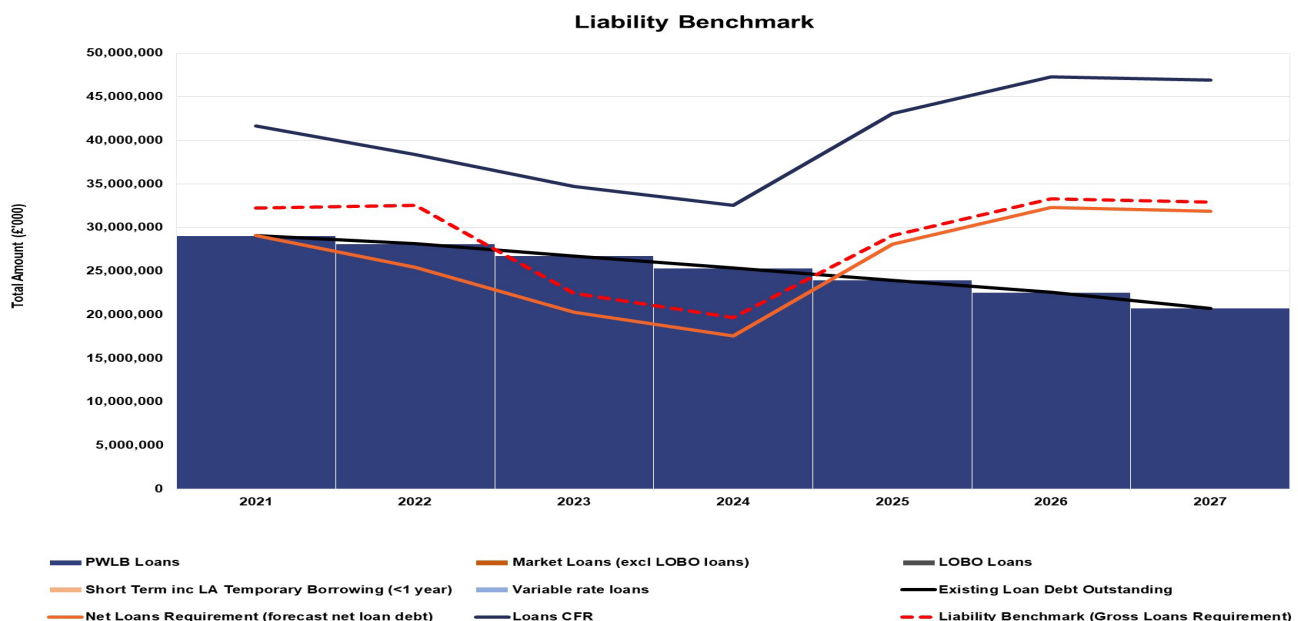
The Board of Commissioners is asked to approve the CFR projections contained in the above table.

2.3 Liability Benchmark (LB)

The Board of Commissioners is required to estimate and measure the LB for the forthcoming financial year and the following two financial years, as a minimum.

There are four components to the LB: -

1. **Existing loan debt outstanding** - now and outstanding in future years.
2. **Loans CFR** - this is calculated in accordance with the loans CFR definition in the Prudential Code and projected into the future based on approved prudential borrowing and planned MRP.
3. **Net loans requirement** - this will show the gross loan debt less treasury management investments at the last financial year-end, projected into the future and based on its approved prudential borrowing, planned MRP and any other major cash flows forecast.
4. **Liability benchmark** (or gross loans requirement): this equals net loans requirement plus short-term liquidity allowance.



CIPFA recommends that the optimum position for external borrowing should be at the level of the Liability Benchmark (i.e., all balance sheet resources should be used to maximise internal borrowing). The above chart indicates future periods where external loans are less than the Liability Benchmark, which indicates a borrowing requirement and exposure to interest rate, liquidity, and refinancing risks.

2.4 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement

Under Regulation 22 a Local Authority that has financed capital expenditure by borrowing is required to make a provision in the revenue budget each year through a revenue charge (MRP).

The Board of Commissioners is required to calculate a prudent provision of MRP which ensures that the outstanding debt liability is repaid over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits. The MRP Guidance (2018) gives four ready-made options for calculating MRP, but the Board of Commissioners can use any other reasonable basis that it can justify as prudent.

The MRP policy statement requires full Board of Commissioners approval in advance of each financial year.

The Board of Commissioners is recommended to approve the following MRP Statement:

For expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 which forms part of supported capital expenditure, the MRP policy will be:

- **4% reducing balance (regulatory method)** - MRP will follow the historical practice outlined in former regulations as 4% of the opening GF CFR balance less adjustment A.

From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing the MRP policy will be:

- **Asset life method (straight line)** – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets.

MRP Overpayments - Under the MRP guidance, any charges made more than the statutory MRP can be made and are known as voluntary revenue provision (VRP).

VRP can be reclaimed in later years if deemed necessary or prudent. For these amounts to be reclaimed for use in the budget, this policy must disclose the cumulative overpayment made each year.

There have been no over payments made during this financial year.

3. BORROWING

The level of actual and forecast capital expenditure are set out in 2.1, above. The treasury management function ensures that cash is organised in accordance with the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to support capital. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions, and the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS).

3.1 Current Portfolio Position

The treasury management portfolio is set out in summary in 2.1 above.

A detailed breakdown of borrowing activity from 2022/23 to 2026/27 is provided in the below table and includes borrowing forecasts for the next 3 financial years as determined by capital investment plans.

The value of loans outstanding at the balance sheet date of 31 March 2024 is £27.85 million.

During 2023/24 £1,382,819 of loan repayments have been made and new borrowing of £2.5m secured with PWLB at an annual rate of 5.7% for a term of 1 year.

This is the first time since December 2020 that borrowing has been secured and is at a rate above the existing debt book average of 3.80%. This will have the effect of increasing the average rate and is the reason borrowing has been secured on a short-term basis to enable new finance to be secured at more affordable rate and for longer durations, in the first quarter of 2025.

The Board of Commissioners' forward projections for borrowing are summarised below.

	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
Borrowing/External Debt	Outturn	Mid Year	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
PWLB					
Opening Principal	28,138,845	26,736,946	27,854,127	38,959,387	47,553,648
New Borrowing		2,500,000	15,000,000	10,000,000	6,000,000
EIP Principal Repaid	-401,899	-382,819	-363,739	-363,739	-363,739
Maturity Principal Repaid	-1,000,000	-1,000,000	-3,531,000	-1,042,000	-1,452,000
Closing Principal	26,736,946	27,854,127	38,959,387	47,553,648	51,737,908
Non PWLB/Salix					
Opening Principal	6,917	0	0	0	0
New Borrowing	0	0	0	0	0
EIP Principal Repaid	0	0	0	0	0
Maturity Principal Repaid	-6,917	0	0	0	0
Closing Principal	0	0	0	0	0
Total					
Opening Principal	28,145,762	26,736,946	27,854,127	38,959,387	47,553,648
New Borrowing	0	2,500,000	15,000,000	10,000,000	6,000,000
EIP Principal Repaid	-401,899	-382,819	-363,739	-363,739	-363,739
Maturity Principal Repaid	-1,006,917	-1,000,000	-3,531,000	-1,042,000	-1,452,000
Closing Principal	26,736,946	27,854,127	38,959,387	47,553,648	51,737,908
Total principal paid	-1,408,816	-1,382,819	-3,894,739	-1,405,739	-1,815,739

The debt portfolio comprises PWLB Equal Installment of Principal (EIP) and Maturity loans.

Cash balances held during 2023/24 were as follows:

Average Month End Balances 2023/24			
	Barclays £	Lloyds £	Total £
MTH01	10,012,880	7,932,403	17,945,283
MTH02	9,999,000	7,814,381	17,813,381
MTH03	3,613,045	7,016,066	10,629,111
MTH04	2,184,768	7,031,929	9,216,698
MTH05	50	8,287,210	8,287,260
MTH06	3,750,250	4,623,819	8,374,069
MTH07	1,328,834	7,727,435	9,056,269
MTH08	897	6,781,024	6,781,921
MTH09	2,880	2,836,577	2,839,457
MTH10			
MTH11			
MTH12			
Total	30,892,605	60,050,843	90,943,448
	Average Balance £		10,104,828

Part of our day-to-day banking arrangements include the receipt of interest for cash balances held overnight. Our main banking contract is with Lloyds who pay interest monthly at Bank of England (BoE) base rate -0.10%.

There is a contingency banking arrangement with Barclays who pay interest quarterly in arrears at base -0.30% and both bank rates applied to the year ending 31 March 2024.

Note: BoE has been 5.25% since August 2023.

Bank Interest Received 2023/24					
		Barclays £	Lloyds £	Total £	
1	MTH01		-32,115.50	-32,116	
2	MTH02		-34,994.25	-34,994	
3	MTH03	-71,660	-36,991.32	-108,651	
4	MTH04		-36,951.62	-36,952	
5	MTH05		-38,263.89	-38,264	
6	MTH06	-51,576	-35,760.65	-87,336	
7	MTH07		-42,413.81	-42,414	
8	MTH08	-1,956	-36,592.15	-38,548	
9	MTH09	-26,479	-30,961.84	-57,440	
10	MTH10		-27,010.49	-27,010	
11	MTH11		-28,650.82	-28,651	* EST
12	MTH12		-16,396.51	-16,397	* EST
	Total	-151,670	-397,103	-548,773	
Barclays paid quarterly in arrears - rate payable base - 0.30%					
Lloyds paid monthly in arrears - rate payable Base - 0.10%					

Estimated interest receivable for 2023/24 is £548,773 (actual interest received for April 2023 – January 2024 is £503,726).

Fixed term deposits were made during the year, £2m for 30 Days @ 4.62% and £3m for 3 months @ 4.92% and were placed with the aim of managing counterparty risk and diversifying the portfolio with a combined yield £45k.

The Finance team have received notice that Bank rates will reduce during 2024/25. Lloyds current account will be set at 2.10% from 15 April 2024 and we will then have the option of placing surpluses in an overnight account at 5.14% for no extra risk. Barclays have also provided notice that from the 1 February 2024 the rate will be paid at 1.4% below base so effectively 3.85% on 18 March 2024.

An estimate of interest receivable during 2024/25 has been calculated at £414k although this is subject to changes in balances held and timing of cash flows.

Within the range of prudential indicators there are several key indicators to ensure that the Board of Commissioners operates its activities within defined limits. One of these is that the Board of Commissioners needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short-term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2024/25 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue or speculative purposes.

The Treasurer reports that the Authority / Board of Commissioners complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes account of current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report.

3.2 Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity

The Operational Boundary

This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt and the ability to fund under-borrowing by other cash resources.

Operational Boundary £000	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Debt	57,000	65,000	75,000	77,500
Other long-term liabilities	3,500	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total	60,500	70,000	80,000	82,500

The Authorised Limit for external debt

This is a key prudential indicator and represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a legal limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the Full Board of Commissioners. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short-term, but is not sustainable in the longer-term.

- This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all local Board of Commissioners plans, or those of a specific Board of Commissioners, although this power has not yet been exercised.
- The Board of Commissioners is asked to approve the following Authorised Limit:

Authorised Limit £000	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Debt	58,000	67,000	77,000	80,000
Other long-term liabilities	3,500	5,000	5,000	5,000
Total	61,500	72,000	82,000	85,000

Affordability Prudential Indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the

Board of Commissioners' overall finances. The Board of Commissioners are asked to approve the following indicators: -

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream.

%	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate
Calculated	6.10%	6.03%	5.74%	7.37%	7.37%
Limit	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

Maturity structure of borrowing. These gross limits are set to reduce the Board of Commissioners' exposure to large, fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.

The Board of Commissioners is asked to approve the following treasury indicators and limits: -

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2024/25		
	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	5%
12 months to 2 years	0%	10%
2 years to 5 years	0%	20%
5 years to 10 years	0%	25%
10 years to 20 years	0%	30%
20 years >	0%	10%

% proportion of overall debt

3.3 Prospects for Interest Rates

The Link Group has been appointed as treasury advisor and part of their service is to assist the Finance team and Board of Commissioners to formulate a view on interest rates. Link provided the following forecasts on 8 January 2024. These are forecasts for bank base rate, average earnings and PWLB certainty rates, gilt yields plus 80 bps.

Link Group Interest Rate View 08.01.24													
	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE	5.25	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	4.80	4.30	3.80	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	5.20	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.70	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10
12 month ave earnings	5.00	4.90	4.40	3.90	3.60	3.20	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.10	3.20	3.20
5 yr PWLB	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.50
10 yr PWLB	4.70	4.50	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
25 yr PWLB	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
50 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.10	4.00	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90

Additional notes on this forecast table: -

- The central forecast for interest rates was previously updated on 7 November and reflected a view that the MPC would be keen to further demonstrate its anti-inflation credentials by keeping Bank Rate at 5.25% until at least until the second quarter of 2024. Rate cuts are expected to start when both the CPI inflation and wage/employment data are supportive of such a move, and when there is a likelihood of the overall economy enduring at least a slowdown or mild recession over the coming months (although most recent GDP releases have surprised with their on-going robustness).
- Naturally, timing on this matter will remain one of judgment: cut too soon, and inflationary pressures may well build up further; cut too late and any downturn or recession may be prolonged.
- In the upcoming months, our forecasts will be guided not only by economic data releases and clarifications from the MPC over its monetary policies and the Government over its fiscal policies, but also international factors such as policy development in the US and Europe, the provision of fresh support packages to support the faltering recovery in China as well as the on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and Gaza and Israel.

PWLB RATES

- The short and medium part of the gilt curve has rallied since the start of November as markets price in a quicker reduction in Bank Rate through 2024 and 2025. This reflects market confidence in inflation falling back in a similar manner to that already seen in the US and the Euro-zone. At the time of writing there is 70 basis points difference between the 5 and 50 year parts of the curve.

The balance of risks to the UK economy: -

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is even.

Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates include: -

- **Labour and supply shortages** prove more enduring and disruptive and depress economic activity (accepting that in the near-term this is also an upside risk to inflation and, thus, could keep gilt yields high for longer).
- **The Bank of England** has increased Bank Rate too fast and too far over recent months, and subsequently brings about a deeper and longer UK recession than we currently anticipate.

- **Geopolitical risks**, for example in Ukraine/Russia, the Middle East, China/Taiwan/US, Iran and North Korea, which could lead to increasing safe-haven flows.

Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates: -

- Despite the tightening in Bank Rate to 5.25%, the **Bank of England allows inflationary pressures to remain elevated** for a long period within the UK economy, which then necessitates Bank Rate staying higher for longer than we currently project.
- **The pound weakens** because of a lack of confidence in the UK Government's pre-election fiscal policies, which may prove inflationary, resulting in investors pricing in a risk premium for holding UK sovereign debt.
- Projected **gilt issuance, inclusive of natural maturities and QT**, could be too much for the markets to comfortably digest without higher yields compensating.

FORECASTS

Link expect the MPC will keep Bank Rate at 5.25% until the second half of 2024, to combat on-going inflationary and wage pressures, even if they have dampened somewhat of late. They do not think that the MPC will increase Bank Rate above 5.25%.

Borrowing advice

Links' long-term (beyond 10 years) forecast for Bank Rate remains at 3% and reflects Capital Economics' research that suggests AI and general improvements in productivity will be supportive of a higher neutral interest rate. As all PWLB certainty rates are currently significantly above this level, borrowing strategies will need to be reviewed in that context. Overall, better value can be obtained at the shorter end of the curve and short-dated fixed Local Authority (LA) to LA monies should be considered. Temporary borrowing rates will remain elevated for some time to come but may prove the best option whilst the market continues to factor in Bank Rate reductions for 2024 and later.

3.4 Borrowing Strategy

The Board of Commissioners is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need, (CFR), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as medium and longer dated borrowing rates are expected to fall from their current levels once prevailing inflation concerns are addressed by tighter near-term monetary policy. That is, Bank Rate remains elevated through to the second half of 2024.

Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2024/25 treasury operations. The Treasurer will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:

- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in borrowing rates, then borrowing will be postponed.*
- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in borrowing rates than that currently forecast, fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates are lower than they are projected to be in the next few years.*

Any decisions will be reported at the next available opportunity.

3.5 Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need

The Board of Commissioners will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved CFR estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Board of Commissioners can ensure the security of such funds.

3.6 Rescheduling

Rescheduling of borrowing is not anticipated.

If rescheduling is to be undertaken, it will be reported to the Board of Commissioners at the earliest meeting following its action.

3.7 New Financial Institutions as a Source of Borrowing and / or Types of Borrowing

Currently the PWLB Certainty Rate is set at gilts + 80 basis points. However, consideration may still need to be given to sourcing funding from the following sources for the following reasons:

- Local authorities (primarily shorter dated maturities out to 3 years or so – generally still cheaper than the Certainty Rate).
- Financial institutions (primarily insurance companies and pension funds but also some banks, out of forward dates where the objective is to avoid a “cost of carry” or to achieve refinancing certainty over the next few years).

We will continue to work with our advisors who will keep us informed as to the relative merits of each of these alternative funding sources.

3.8 Approved Sources of Long and Short-term Borrowing

On Balance Sheet	Fixed
PWLB	●
UK Municipal Bond Agency	●
Local Authorities	●
Banks	●
Pension Funds	●
Insurance Companies	●
UK Infrastructure Bank	●
Market (long-term)	●
Market (temporary)	●
Market (LOBOs)	●
Stock Issues	●
Local Temporary	●
Local Bonds	●
Local Authority Bills	●
Overdraft	●
Negotiable Bonds	●
Internal (capital receipts & revenue balances)	●
Commercial Paper	●
Medium Term Notes	●
Finance Leases	●

Note: Variable rate borrowing will not be considered as budget certainty is key driver of managing the impact of treasury activities.

4 ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Investment Policy – Management of Risk

The Welsh Government and CIPFA have extended the meaning of ‘investments’ to include both financial and non-financial investments. This report deals solely with treasury (financial) investments, (as managed by the treasury management team). Non-financial investments, essentially the purchase of income yielding assets and service investments, are not planned.

The Board of Commissioners’ investment policy has regard to the following: -

- Welsh Government Guidance on Local Government Investments (“the Guidance”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes 2021 (“the Code”)
- CIPFA Treasury Management Guidance Notes 2021

The Board of Commissioners’ investment priorities will be security first, portfolio liquidity second and then yield (return). The Board of Commissioners will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and in accordance with their risk appetite.

The above guidance from Welsh Government and CIPFA places a high priority on the management of risk. This Board of Commissioners has adopted a prudent approach to managing risk and defines its risk appetite by the following means: -

1. Minimum acceptable **credit criteria** are applied to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties. This also enables diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk. The key ratings used to monitor counterparties are the short-term and long-term ratings.
2. **Other information:** ratings will not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution; it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate. The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To achieve this consideration the Board of Commissioners will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as “**credit default swaps**” and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.
3. **Other information sources** used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the financial sector to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.
4. This Board of Commissioners has defined the list of **types of investment instruments** that the treasury management team are authorised to use. There are two lists in Appendix 5.4 under the categories of ‘specified’ and ‘non-specified’ investments.

Specified investments are those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year or have less than a year left to run to maturity, if originally, they were classified as being non-specified investments solely due to the maturity period exceeding one year.

5. **Non-specified investments** are those with less high credit quality, may be for periods more than one year, and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by those charged with governance and officers before being authorised for use. The Board of Commissioners has determined that it will not undertake investment of this kind.

6. **Non-specified and loan investment limits.**
7. **Lending limits**, (amounts and maturity), for each counterparty will be set through applying the matrix table in paragraph 4.2.
8. **Transaction limits** are set for each type of investment in 4.2.
9. This Board of Commissioners will set a limit for its investments which are invested for **longer than 365 days**, (see paragraph 4.4).
10. Investments will only be placed with counterparties from countries with a specified minimum **sovereign rating**, (see paragraph 4.3).
11. This Board of Commissioners has engaged **external consultants**, (see paragraph 1.5), to provide expert advice on how to optimise an appropriate balance of security, liquidity, and yield, given the risk appetite of this Board of Commissioners in the context of the expected level of cash balances and need for liquidity throughout the year.
12. All investments will be denominated in **sterling**.
13. As a result of the change in accounting standards for 2023/24 under IFRS 9, this Board of Commissioners will consider the implications of investment instruments which could result in an adverse movement in the value of the amount invested and resultant charges at the end of the year to the General Fund.

However, this Board of Commissioners will also pursue **value for money** in treasury management and will monitor the yield from investment income against appropriate benchmarks for investment performance, (see paragraph 4.5). Regular monitoring of investment performance will be carried out during the year.

Changes in risk management policy from last year.

The above criteria are *unchanged* from last year.

4.2 Creditworthiness Policy

This Board of Commissioners applies the creditworthiness service provided by the Link Group. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays: -

1. "watches" and "outlooks" from credit rating agencies.
2. CDS spreads that may give early warning of changes in credit ratings.
3. sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

This modelling approach combines credit ratings, and any assigned Watches and Outlooks, in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of CDS spreads. The end-product of this is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are used by the Board of Commissioners to determine the suggested duration for investments. The Board of Commissioners will, therefore, use counterparties within the following durational bands.

- Yellow 5 years *
- Dark pink 5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.25

- Light pink 5 years for Ultra-Short Dated Bond Funds with a credit score of 1.5
- Purple 2 years
- Blue 1 year (only applies to nationalised or semi nationalised UK Banks)
- Orange 1 year
- Red 6 months
- Green 100 days

Y	Pi1	Pi2	P	B	O	R	G	N/C
1	1.25	1.5	2	3	4	5	6	7
Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 5yrs	Up to 2yrs	Up to 1yr	Up to 1yr	Up to 6mths	Up to 100days	No Colour

The Link creditworthiness service uses a wider array of information other than just primary ratings. Furthermore, by using a risk weighted scoring system, it does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

Typically, the minimum credit ratings criteria the Board of Commissioners uses will be a short-term rating (Fitch or equivalents) of F1 and a long-term rating of A-. There may be occasions when the counterparty ratings from one rating agency are marginally lower than these ratings but may still be used. In these instances, consideration will be given to the whole range of ratings available, or other topical market information, to support their use.

All credit ratings will be monitored monthly. The Board of Commissioners is alerted to changes to ratings of all three agencies through its use of the Link creditworthiness service.

- if a downgrade results in the counterparty / investment scheme no longer meeting the Board of Commissioners' minimum criteria, its further use as a new investment will be withdrawn.
- in addition to the use of credit ratings the Board of Commissioners will be advised of information in movements in Credit Default Swap spreads against the iTraxx European Senior Financials benchmark and other market data on a daily basis via its Passport website, provided to the Finance team by Link. Extreme market movements may result in downgrade of an institution or removal from the Board of Commissioners' lending list.

Sole reliance will not be placed on the use of this external service. In addition, this Board of Commissioners will also use market data and market information, as well as information on any external support for banks to help support its decision-making process.

Creditworthiness

Significant levels of downgrades to Short and Long-Term credit ratings have not materialised since the crisis in March 2020. In the main, where they did change, any alterations were limited to Outlooks. Nonetheless, when setting minimum sovereign debt ratings, this Board of Commissioners will not set a minimum rating for the UK.

CDS prices

Although bank CDS prices, (these are market indicators of credit risk), spiked upwards during the days of the Truss/Kwarteng government in the autumn of 2022, they have returned to more average levels since then. However, sentiment can easily shift, so it will remain important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances. Link monitor CDS prices as part of their creditworthiness service to local authorities and the Board of Commissioners has access to this information via its Link-provided Passport portal.

Limits

Due care will be taken to consider the exposure of the Board of Commissioners' total investment portfolio to non-specified investments, countries, groups, and sectors.

- a. **Non-specified treasury management investment limit.** The Board of Commissioners has determined that it will not undertake these investments.
- b. **Country limit.** The Board of Commissioners has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from the UK and from countries with a **minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- or equivalent**. The list of countries that qualify using this credit criteria as at the date of this report are shown in Appendix 5.6. This list will be added to, or deducted from, by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

4.3 Investment Strategy

In-house funds

Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e., rates for investments up to 12 months). Greater returns are usually obtainable by investing for longer periods. The current shape of the yield curve suggests that is the case at present, but there is the prospect of Bank Rate having peaked in the second half of 2023 and possibly reducing as early as the second half of 2024 so an agile investment strategy would be appropriate to optimise returns.

Accordingly, while most cash balances are required to manage the ups and downs of cash flow, where cash sums can be identified that could be invested for longer periods, the value to be obtained from longer-term investments will be carefully assessed.

Investment returns expectations

The current forecast shown in paragraph 3.3, includes a forecast for Bank Rate to have peaked at 5.25% in Q4 2023.

The suggested budgeted investment earnings rates for returns on investments placed for periods up to about three months during each financial year are as follows: -

Average earnings in each year	
2023/24 (residual)	5.30%
2024/25	4.55%
2025/26	3.10%
2026/27	3.00%
2027/28	3.25%
Years 6 to 10	3.25%
Years 10+	3.25%

As there are so many variables at this time, caution must be exercised in respect of all interest rate forecasts.

For its cash flow generated balances, the Board of Commissioners will seek to utilise its business reserve instant access and notice accounts, Money Market Funds, and short-dated deposits, (overnight to 100 days), in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

Investment treasury indicator and limit

Total principal funds will not be invested for greater than 365 days.

4.4 Investment Performance / Risk Benchmarking

These benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk, so they may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmark is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the mid-year or Annual Report.

Security - The Board of Commissioners' will not invest where there is risk of counterparty default.

Liquidity – in respect of this area the Board of Commissioners seeks to maintain: -

- Bank overdraft – there is no overdraft arrangement as part of the current banking arrangements.
- Liquid short-term deposits of at least £2m available with a weeks' notice.

Yield - local measures of yield benchmarks are

- Investments – interest calculation of £414k receivable for the year.

4.5 End of Year Investment Report

At the end of the financial year, the Board of Commissioners will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

4.6 External Fund Managers

The Board does not use or plan to use external fund managers.

5 APPENDICES

1. Economic background
2. Approved countries for investments
3. Treasury management scheme of delegation
4. The treasury management role of the section 151 officer

5.1 ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

- The third quarter of 2023/24 saw:
 - A 0.3% m/m decline in real GDP in October, potentially partly due to unseasonably wet weather, but also due to the ongoing drag from higher interest rates. Growth for the second quarter, ending 30th September, was revised downwards to -0.1% and growth on an annual basis was also revised downwards, to 0.3%;
 - A sharp fall in wage growth, with the headline 3myy rate declining from 8.0% in September to 7.2% in October, although the ONS “experimental” rate of unemployment has remained low at 4.2%;
 - CPI inflation continuing on its downward trajectory, from 8.7% in April to 4.6% in October, then again to 3.9% in November;
 - Core CPI inflation decreasing from April and May’s 31 years’ high of 7.1% to 5.1% in November, the lowest rate since January 2022;
 - The Bank of England holding Bank Rate at 5.25% in November and December;
 - A steady fall in 10-year gilt yields as investors revised their interest rate expectations lower.
- The revision of GDP data in Q2 to a 0.1% q/q fall may mean the mildest of mild recessions has begun. Indeed, real GDP in October fell 0.3% m/m which does suggest that the economy may stagnate again in Q3. The weakness in October may partly be due to the unseasonably wet weather. That said, as the weakness was broad based it may also be the case that the ongoing drag from higher interest rates is more than offsetting any boost from the rise in real wages.
- However, the rise in the flash composite activity Purchasing Managers Index, from 50.7 in November to 51.7 in December, did increase the chances of the economy avoiding a contraction in Q3. The improvement was entirely driven by the increase in the services activity balance from 50.9 to 52.7. (Scores above 50 point to expansion in the economy, although only tepid in this instance.) The press release noted that this was primarily driven by a revival in consumer demand in the technological and financial services sectors. This chimes with the further improvement in the GfK measure of consumer confidence in December, from -24 to -22. The services PMI is now consistent with non-retail services output growing by 0.5% q/q in Q3, but this is in stark contrast to the manufacturing sector where the output balance slumped from 49.2 to 45.9 and, at face value, the output balance is consistent with a 1.5% q/q fall in manufacturing output in Q3.
- The 0.3% m/m fall in retail sales volumes in October means that after contracting by 1.0% q/q (which was downwardly revised from -0.8% q/q) in Q2, retail activity remained weak at the start of Q3. That suggests higher interest rates are taking a bigger toll on real consumer spending.
- Higher interest rates have filtered through the financial channels and weakened the housing market but, overall, it remains surprisingly resilient with the Halifax house price index recently pointing to a 1.7% year on year increase whilst Nationwide’s December data pointed to a -1.8% year on year decrease. However, the full weakness in real consumer spending and real business investment has yet

to come as currently it is estimated that around two thirds to a half of the impact of higher interest rates on household interest payments has yet to be felt.

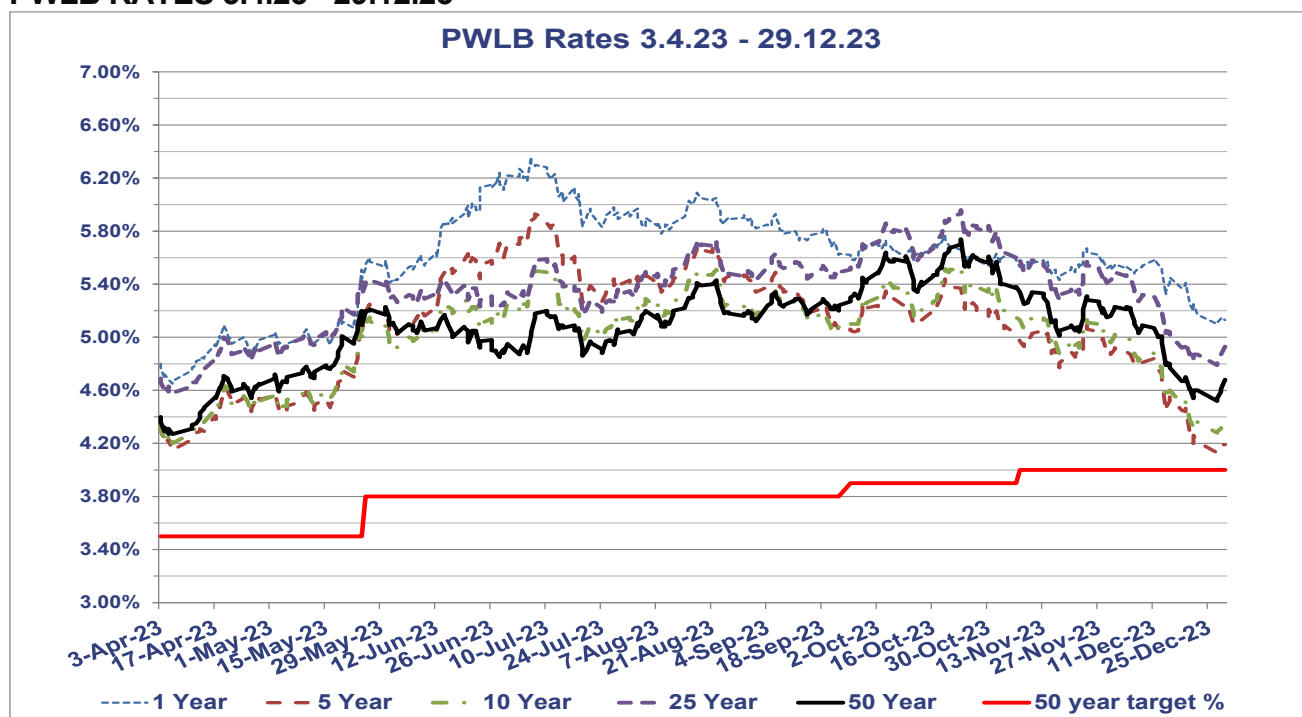
- Overall, we expect real GDP growth to remain subdued throughout 2024 as the drag from higher interest rates is protracted but a fading of the cost-of-living crisis and interest rate cuts in the second half of 2024 will support a recovery in GDP growth in 2025.
- The labour market remains tight by historical standards, but the sharp fall in wage growth seen in October will reinforce the growing belief in markets that interest rates will be cut mid-2024. Wage growth eased in October much faster than the consensus expected. Total earnings fell by 1.6% m/m, which meant the headline 3myy rate eased from 8.0% in September to 7.2% in October. This news will be welcomed by the Bank of England. Indeed, the timelier three-month annualised rate of average earnings growth fell from +2.4% to -1.2%. Excluding bonuses, it fell from 5.3% to 2.0%. Furthermore, one of the Bank's key barometers of inflation persistence, regular private sector pay growth, dropped from 7.9% 3myy to 7.3%, which leaves it comfortably on track to fall to 7.2% by December, as predicted by the Bank in November.
- The fall in wage growth occurred despite labour demand being stronger in October than expected. The three-month change in employment eased only a touch from +52,000 in September to +50,000 in October. But resilient labour demand was offset by a further 63,000 rise in the supply of workers in the three months to October. That meant labour supply exceeded its pre-pandemic level for the first time, and the unemployment rate remained at 4.2% in October. In the three months to November, the number of job vacancies fell for the 17th month in a row, from around 959,000 in October to around 949,000. That has reduced the vacancy to unemployment ratio as demand for labour eases relative to supply, which may support a further easing in wage growth in the coming months.
- CPI inflation fell from 6.7% in September to 4.6% in October, and then again to 3.9% in November. Both these falls were bigger than expected and there are clear signs of easing in domestic inflationary pressures. The fall in core CPI inflation from 5.7% to 5.1% in November was bigger than expected (consensus forecast 5.6%). That's the lowest rate since January 2022. Some of the decline in core inflation was due to the global influence of core goods inflation, which slowed from 4.3% to 3.3%. But some of it was due to services inflation falling from 6.6% to 6.3%. The Bank views the latter as a key barometer of the persistence of inflation and it came in further below the Bank's forecast of 6.9% in its November Monetary Policy Report. This will give the Bank more confidence that services inflation is now on a firmly downward path.
- The Bank of England sprung no surprises with its December monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting, leaving interest rates at 5.25% for the third time in a row and pushing back against the prospect of near-term interest rate cuts. The Bank continued to sound hawkish, with the MPC maintaining its tightening bias saying that "further tightening in monetary policy would be required if there were evidence of more persistent inflationary pressures". And it stuck to the familiar script, saying that policy will be "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long" and that "monetary policy is likely to need to be restrictive for an extended period of time".

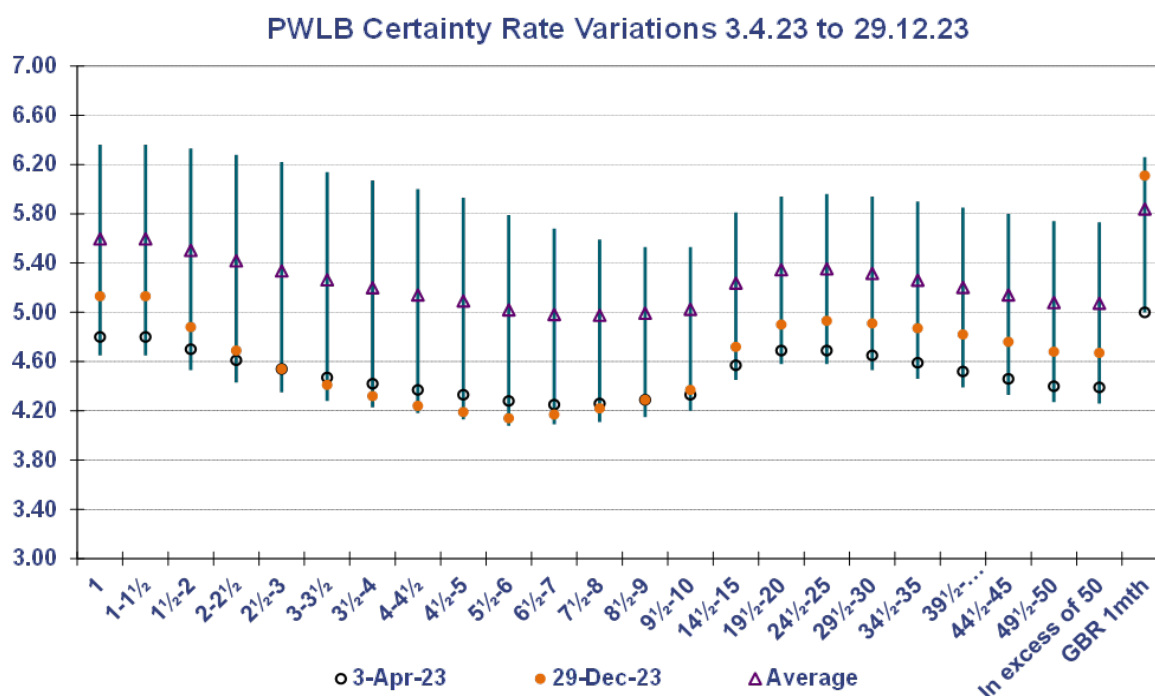
In other words, the message is that the MPC is not yet willing to endorse investors' expectations that rates will be cut as soon as May 2024.

- Looking ahead, our colleagues at Capital Economics forecast that the recent downward trends in CPI and core inflation will stall over the next few months before starting to decline more decisively again in February. That explains why we think the Bank of England won't feel comfortable cutting interest rates until H2 2024.
- The fall in UK market interest rate expectations in December has driven most of the decline in 10-year gilt yields, which have fallen in line with 10-year US Treasury and euro-zone yields. 10-year gilt yields have fallen from 4.68% in October 2023 to around 3.70% in early January, with further declines likely if the falling inflation story is maintained.
- Investors' growing expectations that the Fed will cut interest rates soon has led to an improvement in risk sentiment, which has boosted the pound and other risky assets. In addition, the rise in the pound, from \$1.21 in November to \$1.27 now, has also been supported by the recent relative decline in UK wholesale gas prices.
- The further fall in 10-year real gilt yields in December has supported the recent rise in the FTSE 100. That said, the index remains 5% below its record high in February 2023. This modest rise in equities appears to have been mostly driven by strong performances in the industrials and rate-sensitive technology sectors. But UK equities have continued to underperform US and euro-zone equities. The FTSE 100 has risen by 2.2% in December, while the S&P 500 has risen by 3.8%. This is partly due to lower energy prices, which have been a relatively bigger drag on the FTSE 100, due to the index's high concentration of energy companies.

In the chart below, the rise in gilt yields across the curve in the first half of 2023/24, and therein PWLB rates, is clear to see, prior to the end of year rally based on a mix of supportive domestic and international factors.

PWLB RATES 3.4.23 - 29.12.23





HIGH/LOW/AVERAGE PWLB RATES FOR 3.4.23 – 29.12.23

	1 Year	5 Year	10 Year	25 Year	50 Year
Low	4.65%	4.13%	4.20%	4.58%	4.27%
Date	06/04/2023	27/12/2023	06/04/2023	06/04/2023	05/04/2023
High	6.36%	5.93%	5.53%	5.96%	5.74%
Date	06/07/2023	07/07/2023	23/10/2023	23/10/2023	23/10/2023
Average	5.60%	5.09%	5.03%	5.35%	5.08%
Spread	1.71%	1.80%	1.33%	1.38%	1.47%

MPC meetings 2nd November and 14th December 2023

- On 2nd November, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted to keep Bank Rate on hold at 5.25%, and on 14th December reiterated that view. Both increases reflected a split vote, the latter by 6 votes to 3, with the minority grouping voting for an increase of 0.25% as concerns about "sticky" inflation remained in place.
- Nonetheless, with UK CPI inflation now at 3.9%, and core inflating beginning to moderate (5.1%), markets are voicing a view that rate cuts should begin in Q1 2024/25, some way ahead of the indications from MPC members. Of course, the data will be the ultimate determinant, so upcoming publications of employment, wages and inflation numbers will be of particular importance, and on-going volatility in Bank Rate expectations and the gilt yield curve can be expected.
- In addition, what happens outside of the UK is also critical to movement in gilt yields. The US FOMC has kept short-term rates in the range of 5.25%-5.50%, whilst the ECB has moved its Deposit rate to a probable peak of 4%. Markets currently expect both central banks to start cutting rates in 2024.

5.2 APPROVED COUNTRIES FOR INVESTMENTS

This list is based on those countries which have sovereign ratings of AA- or higher, and (except - at the time of writing - for Hong Kong and Luxembourg), have banks operating in sterling markets which have credit ratings of green or above in the Link creditworthiness service.

Based on lowest available rating

AAA

- Australia
- Denmark
- Germany
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Singapore
- Sweden
- Switzerland

AA+

- Canada
- Finland
- U.S.A.

AA

- Abu Dhabi (UAE)

AA-

- Belgium
- France (downgraded by Fitch on 9th May 2023)
- Qatar
- **U.K.**

5.3 TREASURY MANAGEMENT SCHEME OF DELEGATION

(i) Board of Commissioners

- receiving and reviewing reports on treasury management policies, practices, and activities.
- approval of annual strategy.
- approval of / amendments to the organisation's adopted clauses, treasury management policy statement and treasury management practices.
- budget consideration and approval.
- approval of the division of responsibilities.
- receiving and reviewing regular monitoring reports and acting on recommendations.
- approving the selection of external service providers and agreeing terms of appointment.

(ii) The Treasurer

- reviewing the treasury management policy and procedures and making recommendations to the responsible body.

5.4 THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT ROLE OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER

The S151 (responsible) officer

- recommending clauses, treasury management policy/practices for approval, reviewing the same regularly, and monitoring compliance.
- submitting regular treasury management policy reports.
- submitting budgets and budgets variations.
- receiving and reviewing management information reports.
- reviewing the performance of the treasury management function.
- ensuring the adequacy of treasury management resources and skills, and the effective division of responsibilities within the treasury management function.
- ensuring the adequacy of internal audit and liaising with external audit.
- recommending the appointment of external service providers.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

**South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Strategic Plan 2020-2030
1st April 2024 – Year five update**

Contents

Foreword	3
Independent Culture Review	4
Our Strategic Themes	8
Well-being Statement	9
The Socio-economic Duty 2021	10
Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023	10
Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs)	10
Developing Our Plan	12
The context of this plan	15
Keeping you safe	16
Responding to your emergency	20
Working with partners	24
Involving and communicating	27
Protecting and enhancing our environment	31
Valuing our people	37
Continue to work effectively	40
Strategic Performance Indicators	44
Our Budget 2024-2025	45
Welsh language	46
Alternative versions	46
Have your say	46

Foreword

Welcome to the fifth annual progress update of our Strategic Plan 2020-2030.

The plan communicates how we will ensure we achieve our vision of making South Wales safer, by reducing risk, through actions and delivery against our Strategic Themes and Objectives.

Working in partnership with colleagues in parallel frontline services, and our associates across other sectors, we aim to protect and serve all communities of, and visitors to, South Wales. This year, we will be overseen and assisted by the four Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

This update reflects on the progress the Service has made over the past year, including the findings of the recent Independent Culture Review, and the recommendations made as a result.

The Report clearly sets out the changes which need to be made to make our Service a better and safer place to work. However, we must recognise that for the vast majority of us, we come to work to do a good job and maintain a professional approach to our colleagues and our duties at all times. It has been a difficult year for the Service, through the process of the Review and reflecting on its findings and recommendations, but we recognise and embrace the opportunity it presents to shape our future.

This next chapter will involve accepting the recommendations made in the Review and ensuring a positive implementation of each and every one of them. While acknowledging past transgressions, we must look forward to a brighter, more united future, in which we empower leaders to make decisions at the appropriate level, with a clear, shared understanding of the differences between expected behaviours and those going against the values of the Service. We must recognise and *be recognised* for the positive work that happens at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on a daily basis.

Our work continues to support anybody who has been impacted by the negative behaviours identified in the Report as we focus on ensuring the Service is a safe place, where anyone can feel free to speak up, without fear of reprimand or judgement, and know they will be listened to.

I look forward to seeing the positive changes we can make in line with this year's plan, and being part of shaping a brighter and more positive future for the Service on this journey we undertake together.

Thank you.

Stuart Millington

Chief Fire Officer

Independent Culture Review

At the end of 2022, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service was the subject of intense media scrutiny following press reports of misogyny and ineffective disciplinary procedures. This resulted in the commissioning of an Independent Culture Review Report. Fenella Morris KC and her team were appointed following a process led by an independent panel. The appointment panel consisted of Rachel Williams and Councillor Lis Burnett; who were accompanied by Paula Kathrens, partner at Blake Morgan Solicitors. Chief Fire Officer Huw Jakeway was also available in an advisory capacity only and took no part in the decision-making process, with panel members Rachel Williams and Councillor Lis Burnett having sole responsibility for the appointment of the independent Chairperson.

The scope of the Review was to:

- Assess the existing policies, procedures and systems on bullying, harassment, grievances, whistleblowing concerns, dignity at work, complaints and any other processes for raising concerns, how they are applied and comparing them to best practice;
- Assess existing disciplinary policies and procedures and how they are applied, compared to national terms and conditions of employment and best practice;
- Review the last seven years of historic complaints, including bullying, harassment, whistleblowing concerns, and dignity at work complaints and how they were dealt with;
- Review how historical staff disciplinary cases over the last seven years were dealt with and how that impacts on culture;
- Assess the effectiveness of development programmes and training that support dignity, respect and prevention of inappropriate behaviour;
- Consider and comment on the values, behaviours, standards and decisions of leaders at all levels in the Service, both professional and personal (where relevant), and how they impact and/or influence culture;
- Consider the impact of individual or group behaviour and standards of staff, and how this influences culture;
- Comment on whether there is an open and supportive culture, including support for staff involved in traumatising events and the impact those may have;
- Identify areas of strength, good practice and exemplar behaviours;
- Consider the difference in experiences of staff from an equality and diversity perspective; and
- Make recommendations on findings in the Review.

Current and former employees, managers, and members of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) were invited to engage with the process alongside desktop research and review of documentation.

The [Independent Culture Review Report](#) was published at noon on Wednesday, 3rd January 2024. A number of negative themes were identified:

- Poor culture and inappropriate behaviours
- Standards falling short of that expected and demanded by our communities
- Assault, bullying, harassment, discrimination and other inappropriate behaviours
- Lack of inclusivity and inappropriate conduct
- Negative treatment of female firefighters
- Informal networks – existence of a “boys club”
- Lack of transparency in promotion processes

- A fear of speaking up
- Significant improvements required in policies and procedures
- Improvements required for disciplinary processes
- Inadequate communication at all levels

There was also recognition of positive aspects and activities:

- A universal proud commitment to service of the community
- A usually warm and supportive watch culture
- The dedication, passion and commitment of corporate staff
- An excellent internal occupational health service
- Positive measures to support mental health and the neurodiverse
- The Chief Fire Officer's championing of the prevention of violence against women and girls
- A greater commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

A total of 82 recommendations were made. These were broken down into areas for improvement and timescales, the initial phase identifying actions for the first 1-3 months. The recommendations were accepted in full by the Service's leadership and by the Fire and Rescue Authority at a special meeting on 15th January 2024.

In a statement to the Senedd on 6th February 2024, the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership concluded that the failures of the Service were so serious that she could have no confidence that the recommendations of the Review would be fully implemented. In addition, she stated that recommendations from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's thematic reviews had not been implemented, raising important matters of firefighter and public safety. The Fire and Rescue Authority was disbanded and replaced by four Commissioners, whose terms of reference¹ are to:

- Implement of all the recommendations of the review of SWFRS culture and values within deadlines stipulated in it.
- To establish and oversee a senior management team and related processes that are untainted by the failings identified in the report; and as a first step, to appoint a Chief Fire Officer and, as necessary, other senior staff who appear most likely to contribute fully and effectively to the FRA's recovery.
- Establish and implement a process to identify grievance cases arising during the period covered by the report which may have been improperly and/or unfairly dealt with. They will also ensure those cases are reopened and re-examined, leading to a fair and just outcome.
- Implement all of the recommendations made in the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's thematic reviews on:

Learning from Grenfell Tower Inquiry
Fire and rescue service capacity
Fire and rescue service operational training

- Make arrangements for a significant and sustained reduction in SWFRS's attendance at false alarms.
- Develop proposals for the future governance of FRA to minimise the risk of further such failings.

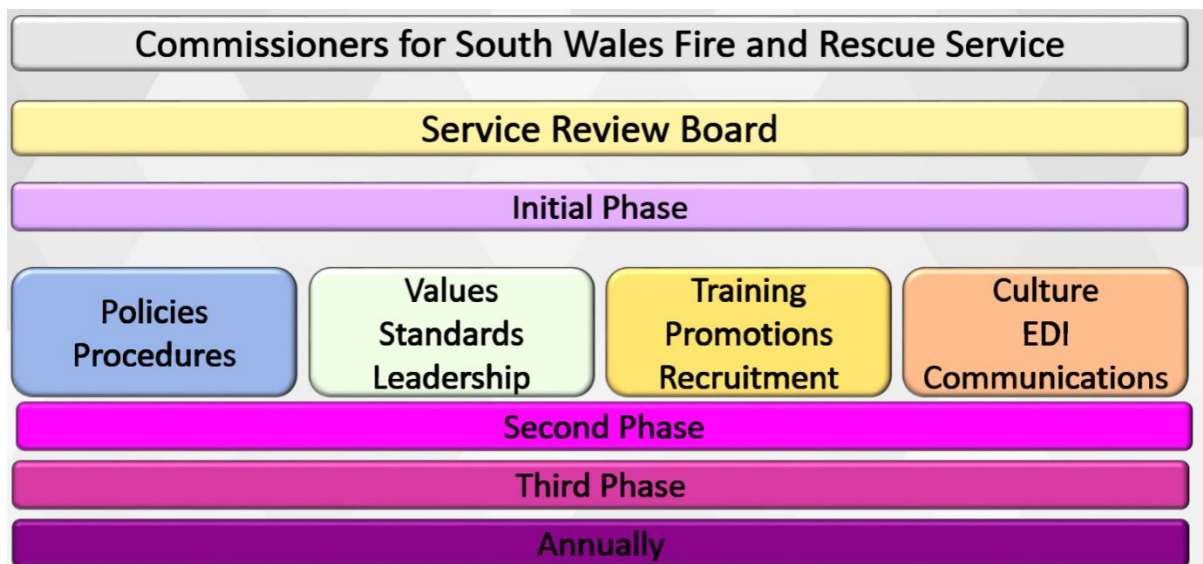
¹ As published by Welsh Government <https://www.gov.wales/south-wales-fire-and-rescue-authority-intervention> Updated 28th February 2024

- g. Discharge other functions of the FRA and its members as set out in statute and the FRA's standing orders.
- h. Advise the Welsh Government on progress with the above, and on the potential for ending intervention.
- i. Undertake all their work in the full spirit of social partnership, and through continual and effective engagement with SWFRS staff and representative bodies.

Details on Welsh Government's intervention and updates can be found [here](#).

The Service's Governance Structure

The following graphic shows the internal development and reporting structure for the initial phase of work on the Review's recommendations. Four working groups have been established, drawing on Senior Middle Leaders and volunteers from all roles and ranks. These working groups will develop action plans and identify resources and ways of working that will ensure change is embedded at all levels.



Our aim is not only to deliver on the recommendations outlined in the Independent Culture Review Report. Our intent is:

To create a safe, modern fire and rescue service in South Wales and to ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect, free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviours.

This will ensure the communities of South Wales have a fire and rescue service they can be proud of.

Progress on implementation of the recommendations will be subject to a dedicated reporting stream.

Thematic Reviews

As already noted, Commissioners appointed by Welsh Government to oversee improvements to the Service have been charged with full implementation of the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor's thematic reviews. This will be developed in close cooperation with the workforce and statutory partners under the terms of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act which promotes well-being through improving public services through social partnership working.

The reviews provide in-depth analysis of specific topics as they relate to the three FRAs for Wales and focus on:

- [Learning from Grenfell](#)

The Review, published in 2021, reports on action taken by the three Welsh FRS against the recommendations contained within the Grenfell Tower Enquiry (GTI) Phase 1 report. A number of operational issues relevant to the Welsh FRS are identified that are not explicitly recognised either within the GTI Phase 1 report or its recommendations, which may not be unique to high rise incidents.

- [Broadening the role of firefighters in Wales](#)

Considering the outline specification developed by the Broadening of the Role Working Group, convened by Welsh Government in 2020, the review considers capacity within the three Welsh FRS to carry out additional work arising from broadening of the role, safely and without detriment to core functions. The specification agreed by the Working Group outlines additional duties in support of Health and Social Care colleagues.

- [Fire and rescue service operational training](#)

Published in 2022, this review considers the amount of time available for skills maintenance training and exercising within the existing station work routines and on the Retained Duty System (RDS), a concern raised in the previous thematic review. The report focuses on core and additional skills for firefighters and supervisory managers.



Our Strategic Themes

The table below sets out the eight Strategic Themes which are the foundation for our Strategic Plan 2020-2030. Our annual improvement objectives are built within these themes, which also structure our priorities and planning as we work to deliver on our mission statement:

To make South Wales safer, by reducing risk.

We have mapped these themes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFGA) to demonstrate how our priorities contribute to the seven well-being goals.

Following consultation, we have renamed two of our strategic themes to better reflect our purpose in these areas:

- **Engaging and communicating** has been changed to **Involving and communicating** This recognises the need to ensure our staff and communities are at the heart of shaping the future development of the Service.
- **Protecting our environment** has been changed to **Protecting and enhancing our environment** Acknowledges the active role we have in ensuring future generations can enjoy the natural environment, through our operational response and our public sector role as a responsible custodian.

[UPDATE VISUAL TO REFLECT NAME CHANGES OF OBJECTIVES]

Strategic Theme	What we will do	Strategic Theme	What we will do
 <p>Keeping you Safe</p>	Focussing on prevention work to help reduce the need for you to call us.	 <p>Engaging and Communicating</p>	Ensuring all our communities and staff are involved in helping us provide an excellent service.
 <p>Responding to your Emergency</p>	Ensuring we respond quickly and effectively when you need us.	 <p>Valuing our People</p>	Supporting a diverse workforce that represents your community, is well trained and motivated to deliver our service.
 <p>Protecting our Environment</p>	Carrying out our activities in a way that helps sustain the planet for our future generations.	 <p>Using Technology Well</p>	Continually look to use the latest technology where it can improve our service to you
 <p>Working with Partners</p>	Working with the nine South Wales PSBs and other partners to deliver a fire and rescue service that meets your needs.	 <p>Continuing to Work Effectively</p>	Ensuring our service provides value for money and is clearly accountable.

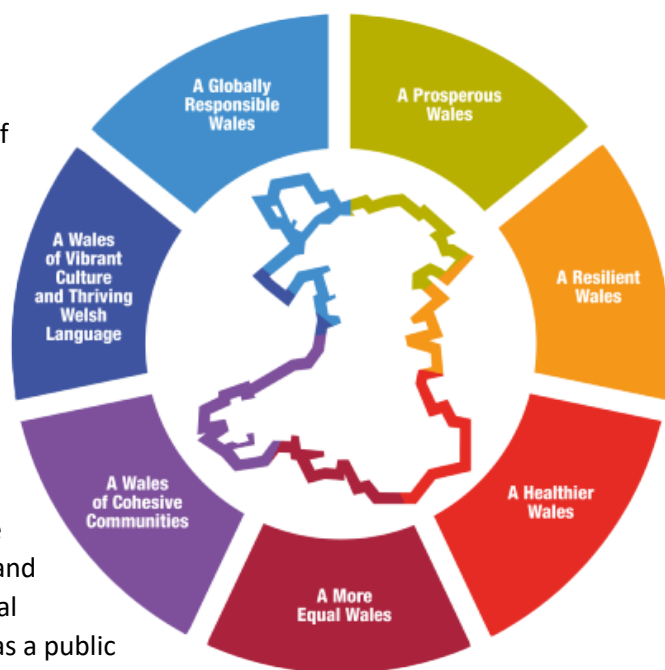
Well-being Statement

The sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act states that:

Public Services bodies should act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

We are committed to meeting our duties under the WFGA.

As we develop our Strategic Themes, which are the high-level priorities shaping our plan, the seven WFGA goals are considered to ensure we contribute to their achievement and our plans are mapped to these. The newly introduced Social Partnership Duty places new focus on our responsibilities as a public sector body in Wales, to our communities, our staff and to future generations.

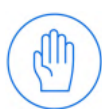


The WFGA also identifies the following five ways of working which we must consider and act in accordance with when planning and making decisions:

- Balancing short term needs with **long-term** needs – Taking a longer-term view in our Strategic Plan 2020-2030 allows us to consider how future trends and changes will impact the public and our services, including climate and demographic change.
- Putting resources into **preventing** problems – Our preventative activity ranges from working with businesses and building owners to make premises safe to working with individuals and groups to change behaviour, all with the aim of preventing the need for an emergency response.
- Using an **integrated** approach by balancing social, economic, and environmental needs – Our planning process is undertaken collectively by involving various stakeholders including our staff, our partners and members of the public, to ensure the impact of proposals are fully explored. This will continue to develop in accordance with the Social Partnership Duty.
- **Collaborating** with others to help meet well-being objectives – We work with a wide range of partners at a strategic and local level.
- **Involving** others to reflect the diversity of an area – Our consultation and engagement activities ensure there are opportunities to contribute views and ideas. The additional duty to work in Social Partnership will place particular focus on our relationships with representative bodies.



Long-term



Preventing



Integration



Collaboration



Involvement

The Socio-economic Duty 2021

Since March 2021, public bodies in Wales have had to consider how strategic decisions affect those who live in less favourable social and economic circumstances, for example, experiencing poverty or unequal access to services such as transport. Such disadvantage can result in inequalities of outcome including poorer health, lower educational attainment, and less favourable work opportunities. We therefore give due regard to socio-economic disadvantage in making strategic decisions, which contributes to the WFGA goals by producing Equality Impact Assessments when developing projects, amending or writing policies, designing initiatives/campaigns, etc. These assessments are kept under review to ensure our activities are truly inclusive. By addressing any barriers to accessing our services, our focus is on the people we serve.

Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

The Act directs public bodies in Wales which are in scope for the Social Partnership Duty to a framework which complements the WFGA and the Socio-economic duty in its four key principles:

- Social Partnership – consulting and working with trade unions or, where there is no recognised trade union, other staff representatives when setting well-being objectives and taking strategic decisions on their delivery.
- Socially Responsible Procurement – requires publication of a procurement strategy that ensures consideration of factors other than cost in public spending, including supply chain management.
- Fair Work – substituting ‘fair work’ for ‘decent work’ in the Prosperous Wales well-being goal focuses on providing conditions that enable a healthy, inclusive environment that is attentive to well-being.
- Sustainable Development – taking account of the impact of decisions taken today for the future.

These responsibilities are recognised in current processes and our plans. We will continue to build on positive relationships with trade unions by introducing dedicated planning sessions and committing to delivering on the recommendation of the Independent Culture Review, with particular focus on well-being. The Wales’s Fire and Rescue Service’s Procurement Strategy 2022-2027 is being reviewed to address the new duty. For our Service, we have developed sustainable development principles which direct our decision-making processes and we will continue to consider immediate need and long-term impact to ensure transparency and accountability.

Community Risk Management Plans (CRMPs)

Our 47 fire and rescue stations produce annual CRMPs based on the needs of the communities they serve, identifying local risks/priorities including building/premises risks, water, and roads. These plans also highlight community activities and initiatives that are planned and delivered locally and support the work of Public Service Boards (PSBs).

In our [Annual Improvement Plan](#), we provided an overview of the area we serve, highlighting some of the specific challenges faced and how they impact our communities. This demonstrates the thread joining our stations’ plans to our strategic priorities, linked by our work with unitary authorities and coordinating bodies, including local PSBs.

Our Public Service Boards

The PSBs report annually on their progress to show how responsibilities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFGA) are being met. They prepare and publish local well-being plans that highlight change needed within each geographical region and what steps are being put in place to achieve this.

To ensure that we are effective members of the PSBs, we always consider the long-term implications of our actions. We look to collaborate and take an integrated approach to deliver a service that will help people feel safe and well in their daily lives.

Our work with the PSBs demonstrates our commitment to improve the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, along with the sustainable development principle of the WFGA, the seven goals of the WFGA and applying the five ways of working.

Following recent changes to the structure of some of our PSBs, we continue to work with and support the PSBs in our area and to engage at a strategic and local level with the new PSB structures.



Developing Our Plan

Development of our plans is a continual process of monitoring and review as we identify opportunities for improvement. We consider progress we are making towards our overarching vision of “Making South Wales safer by reducing risk” and the longer-term impact of our activities for our staff, partners and the communities we serve. In 2023-2024 the publication of the Independent Culture Review (ICR) was an unprecedented event for the Service and its recommendations will influence our plans in the coming months and years. The subsequent decision by Welsh Government to intervene, replacing the Fire and Rescue Authority governance structure by the appointment of four Commissioners, places the Service in a position of extraordinary change. Our Strategic Planning Framework will be reviewed and republished to reflect these changes and the new Social Partnership Duty which sets out expectations for in scope public bodies to consult and work with trade unions in setting well-being goals.

This update has been produced in a period of significant focus on our people and culture. The ICR, led by Fenella Morris KC, was informed by a programme of staff engagement and fact finding. This has produced a clear picture of areas for improvement that were echoed in other staff engagement activities, including the Hydra 10kv Debrief session delivered by the Hydra Foundation in July 2023. This session provided an opportunity to learn the views of 60 staff under a broad heading of “What Matters”, evaluating the Service’s position to identify any gaps in ensuring a safe, fair workplace for all. Separate from the ICR, the word cloud below, generated from all feedback in the session, illustrates synergy of feedback.



We consult with our staff, our communities, and our partners before finalising our objectives. We regularly meet with our Senior Leadership Team to review this feedback and consider all Fire and Rescue related risks that could affect the communities of South Wales to determine ways to effectively work on preventing these risks from harming those within our communities.

We also consider our budgets and the laws that impact us, to make sure that we focus our work in the right areas. We then develop more detailed plans for each year, which support delivery of our

objectives. Progress on our plans was regularly reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority and new mechanisms for reporting to the Commissioners will be developed.

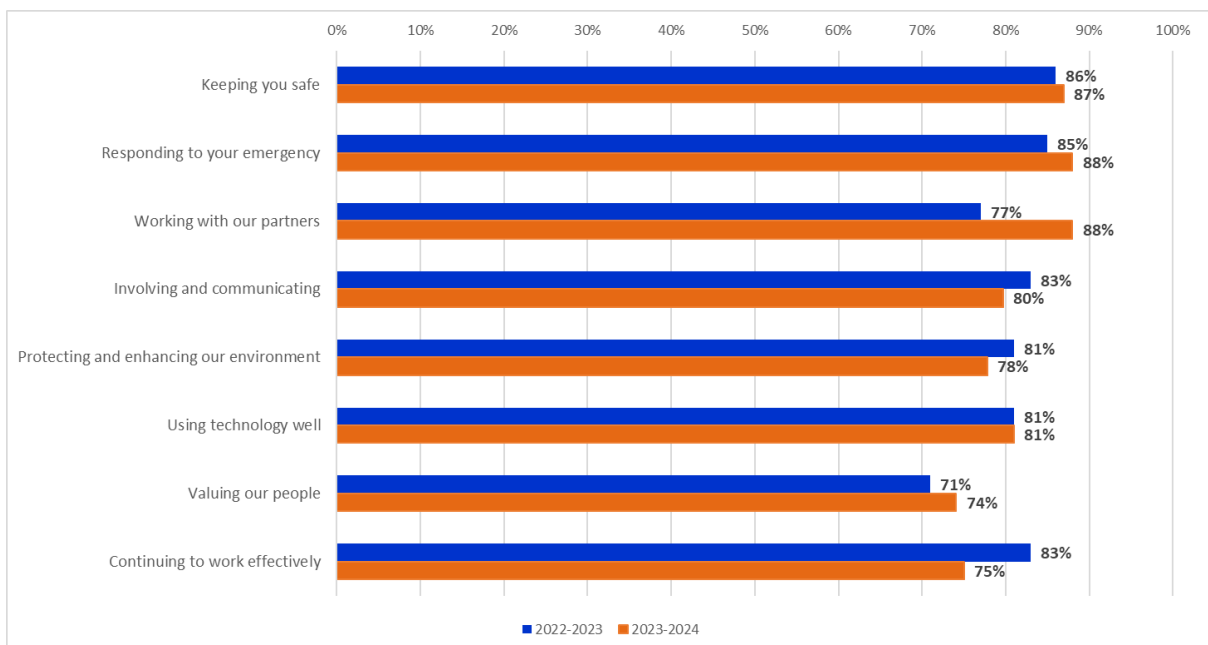
Consultation and other engagement activities

Our consultation activities monitor whether there is consensus on our proposed priorities and any additional concerns from our staff, communities, and partners. We identify key issues and themes raised, producing a response document which is published on our website. From the consultation, priorities may be amended or refocused. Where necessary, we provide additional explanation of the background to and purpose of proposed objectives.

Annual consultation with our staff, the public, and our partners seeks their views on our proposed objectives for the coming financial year. This year’s survey was open from 31st October 2023 to 24th January 2024. We saw lower levels of engagement and feedback, particularly amongst staff groups, possibly due to other consultation activity in relation to the Independent Culture Review, the Hydra 10kv session that was held with a group of 60 staff, and other targeted questionnaires. We also held focus meetings on station with Wholetime and On-Call crews – their feedback is included in our review of key themes.

Overall, 212 people engaged with the survey, a drop of 23.5% from 277 in the previous year. This converted to 108 respondents providing feedback, a fall from 212 or 52.4%. The key results were:

- There was broad agreement with our proposed strategic themes and objectives, with 81% of responses positive (Strongly Agree or Somewhat Agree).
- Core areas of service delivery (Keeping you safe, Responding to your emergency and Working with our partners) saw highest levels of agreement and all increased year on year.
- Lowest levels of agreement were for Valuing our people, Continuing to work effectively, and Protecting and enhancing our environment.



Strategic Themes and Objectives – Comparison of agreement via consultation responses

Key Themes Raised by Consultation

Prioritise areas highlighted in the Independent Culture Review as an opportunity to improve

- **Valuing staff is critical**
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – the Service should become more inclusive**
- **Communication, particularly to stations, should be improved, and feedback should be provided wherever possible**

All these themes relate to issues also raised in other staff engagement sessions, identifying the need for an overarching commitment to delivering in full on the recommendations arising from this landmark assessment of the Service. The importance of our staff in all aspects of the Service, the need to ensure a safe and inclusive environment, while involving and communicating effectively at all times, was underlined throughout our consultations and drives our commitment to change.

Raise awareness of our services and communicate more effectively, both internally and externally, including better targeted communication to those most at risk in our communities

The breadth of services and support we deliver has not been effectively communicated, based on feedback received. We will therefore look at ways to improve this, particularly how we identify and target those most at risk.

Focus on prevention work to reduce risk in our communities

Our commitment to reducing risk continues and will be supported by releasing capacity from other activities, as directed by Welsh Government's directions to the Commissioners.

Review of the On-Call system

Aspects of On-Call systems were questioned in various consultations, including the duty system, recruitment, retention and training. The Retained Management Team will progress a review of On-Call arrangements.

Explore more collaboration opportunities with other organisations

Feedback recognised the importance of partnership working and data sharing. Opportunities will continue to be identified and developed.

ICT should be improved, and the Service should stay innovative by providing all staff cohorts with the best technology available

Ensuring technology provide the best solutions was a recurring comment, for provision of information and recording activities.

More efficient use of vehicles to improve sustainability and reduce cost

Reviewing the use of appliances/pumps when carrying out community safety activities and arrangements for use of electric vehicles for necessary journeys were raised.

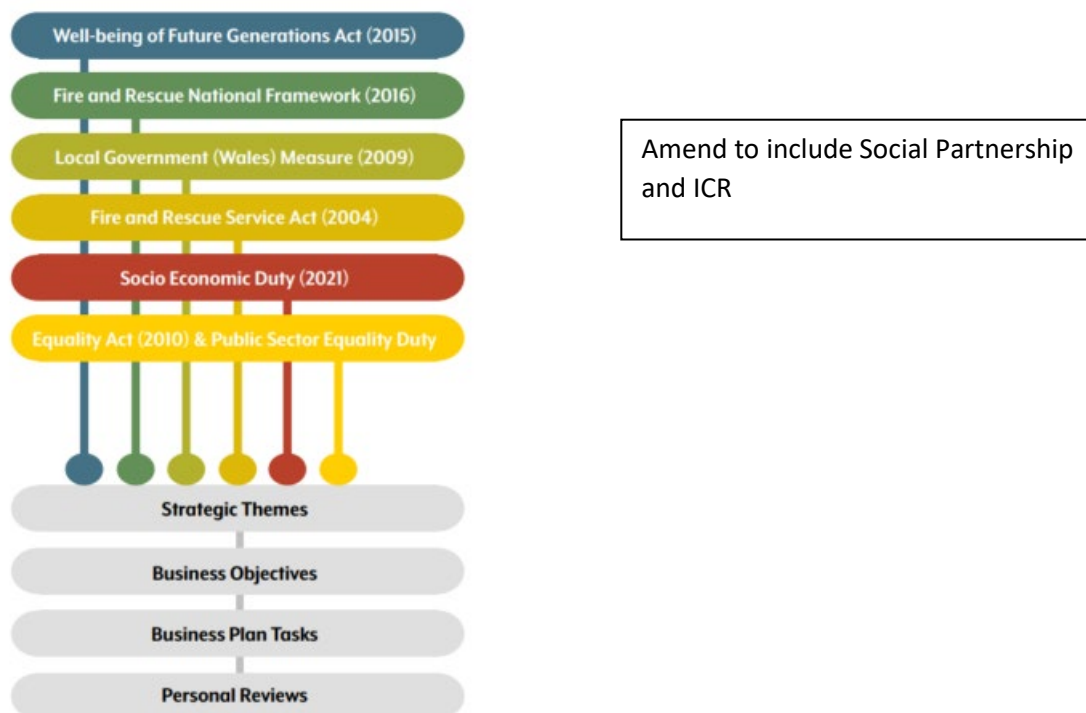
Provide value for money – the Service should be more effective and accountable

Aligned to better communication, the need for transparency was raised, recognising the need for accountability as a public service.

The context of this plan

We are required to comply with a range of legislation relating to public sector bodies and specifically to Fire and Rescue Authorities, the duties of which were conferred to four Commissioners by Welsh Government from 6th February 2024. These legal requirements provide context for our plan for 2024-2025 alongside our overarching mission “To make South Wales safer by reducing risk”.

The Independent Culture Review report and recommendations provide additional context for our plans.



We have developed other strategies and plans that support the achievement of our overall strategic aims including:

Our Strategic Plan 2020-2030 can be found [HERE](#).

This document sets out our longer-term strategy to ensure we deliver an effective and sustainable service. It introduces the eight Strategic Themes covered in this update.

Our Annual Improvement Plan 2023-2024 can be found [HERE](#).

Each year we look back at the previous year to review the impact of our planned improvement activities, and also look forward to the coming year by presenting an outline of proposed actions for public consultation.

Our Strategic Equality Plan 2023-2026 can be found [HERE](#).

Setting out our equality objectives for the next three years, this plan details how we will work toward our commitment to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do.

Our Carbon Reduction Plan 2020-2023 can be found [HERE](#).

This plan sets out how we will continue to improve the ways in which we use our resources to ensure the least harm to our environment.

Our Welsh Language Monitoring Report can be found [HERE](#).

This document sets out our action to comply with our duties under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Our Strategic Themes

Keeping you safe

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible Wales

What does this mean?

By understanding risk in our communities, we can provide advice, direct campaigns, and take informed action that will make South Wales safer. Our work to prevent emergencies is supported by an evidence-led risk reduction programme. Every fire and rescue station develops an annual Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) focussed on community needs and underpinned by local knowledge. This is supported by monitoring of known and emerging risks that enables us to identify the premises and people most at risk.

Our Annual Improvement Plan identified risk factors for dwelling fires, many of which relate to socio-economic disadvantage. We recognise the importance of working with partners to reach those most at risk and to be developing our use of data to produce intelligent targeting of activity. This ensures we are responsive and effective, with many of our risk reduction activities acknowledged as innovative.

We have recognised the impact of attending false alarms on our resources as fire false alarms have accounted for an average of 44.4% of incidents since 2013-2014, peaking at 47.2% of all incidents attended in 2020-2021. Our attendance at these incidents have provided an important route for providing risk reduction advice to households and communities, but we recognise this approach is not sustainable given other increasing demands on the Service and are addressing the recommendations published by Audit Wales². We are planning a programme of education and consultation on proposals to restrict our attendance at fire false alarms focussing on Automatic Fire Alarms in non-domestic settings.

We will keep you safe by:

- Reducing the impact of false alarms on our resources
- Reducing the number of fires in the home and understanding the causes and behaviours of them
- Reducing the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)
- Reducing the number of deliberate fires
- Improving safety in and around water
- Improving fire safety in buildings in our communities

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Incidents attended
- Resource demands
- Risk reduction activities in domestic, business, and other settings

² Audit Wales 'Fire False Alarm Reduction – South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority' Audit year 2022-2023, issued May 2023, Document reference 3570A2023. [Link to document](#)

What we have done in 2023-2024

Continued to work with partners on initiatives to reduce the number of deliberate fires building on already successful partnerships to ensure safety messages achieve the broadest reach across the communities of South Wales.

- Our Fire Crime Unit was re-named as the Arson Reduction Team (ART) to reflect our prevention role and reduce the stigma that can be faced by victims of fire crime. Their work with stations and partners has continued to help reduce deliberate fires and anti-social behaviour, targeting local hotspots.
- Work in communities is a vital element of prevention work and our Youth Team has developed a new 'doorstep intervention' called [Street Firefighter](#) as part of the REFLECT Project. It aims to build and restore relationships within communities by offering local children and young people a safe space to engage, build resilience and life skills and start to create a pathway to positive life choices.
- We are working with PSBs, National Resources Wales (NRW) and Waste Operators on mapping each Unitary Authority to establish if there is a link between the frequency of refuse collections and deliberate fires.

Worked to understand those who are at most risk in our communities so that our risk reduction resources are better targeted and reach those who need our support the most.

- Our Learning Evaluation After Fire (LEAF) project gathers information from those who have experienced an accidental dwelling fire. Community Safety practitioners make contact to better understand the impact of these events. This helps us understand how we can improve our Services, what safety approaches work, and how we can target those most at risk while also providing extra support where needed.

Explored opportunities to improve our capture of information on buildings and other settings, making communities safer and improving firefighter safety by developing our fire investigation capability, high-rise audit programme, land management plans and collection of information by crews at operational incidents.

- Our Business Fire Safety Team have helped to establish a working forum with Welsh Government, fire engineers, and other Welsh FRSs to produce a risk-based inspection programme for high-rise premises.
- We began development of land management information, continuing work on identifying and building relationships with landowners and partners and piloting arrangements for information sharing on high-risk locations. We have made additional data available at incidents via MDTs (Mobile Data Terminals) and continue to develop this capability.

Promoted water safety awareness amongst our communities to ensure our messaging targets locations and groups at greater risk by sharing information with our partners.

- We worked with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) on including drowning prevention messages at Crucial Crew events for Year 6/7 children.
- In July we launched the Waterside Responder initiative in partnership with the RNLI, providing free guidance and throwlines to venue staff of businesses near water to help prevent accidental drownings relating to the night-time economy.

Expanded our road safety 30-20 Options, Seatbelt Options and Domino (aimed at 15–25-year-olds) initiatives, continuing to promote the messages of our [Fatal Five](#) campaign highlighting the main contributory factors that cause serious RTCs.

- A significant change this year has been the introduction of the 30-20mph speed limit reduction across Wales. Our stations and Road Safety Team worked with key partners to deliver educational sessions prior to, and following, the implementation. We have also expanded

delivery of our other Road Safety campaigns. The impact of the road speed changes and our campaigns are being evaluated.

Station personnel and our Risk Reduction Team engage with our communities in a variety of ways, here some examples from 2023-2024:

- Station crews in the Vale of Glamorgan collaborated with South Wales Police and the Vale of Glamorgan Council to secure the derelict area behind Hinds Garages in Barry so public access is not possible. Since this work was completed, there have been zero fire calls to the area, and anti-social behaviour has also significantly reduced.
- In October, Whitchurch Red Watch attended Llanishen Skate Park with the Arson Reduction Team, Skate Academy UK, and South Wales Police to educate a group of young people on the impact of deliberate fire setting within the Llanishen area, prior to Halloween and Bonfire Night.
- Ely station invited Primary school pupils to enter a poster competition. The prize was a visit to Ely Station and having their posters on the dangers of starting fires made into signs.
- In Brynmawr, station crews and our Arson Reduction Team have been working closely with local partners to tackle the growing issue of deliberate fire setting and anti-social behaviour including a fire safety campaign at Lakeside Business Park and supporting the business park management team to implement further security measures.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Develop and implement a revised response policy for Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) including education of building owners and managers about the impact of false alarms on us and their businesses.

Responding to false alarms represents significant opportunity costs for our personnel and resources. The [Welsh Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016](#) identifies the reduction of false alarms as a key efficiency saving and it is one of our key improvement objectives. We will, therefore, be proposing a revised AFA response policy which enable additional work on risk reduction and training to ensure frontline skills are enhanced. This will also reduce the number of fire engines on the roads, reducing our carbon footprint and making roads safer. Focus on non-domestic alarms could see a reduction of up to 40% in AFAs in a full year, or an overall reduction of 25% in fire false alarms.

Improve our use of data and intelligence to target more effectively those most at risk of fire, including expanding our use of partnership and other external data sources.

Ensuring our systems for recording and sharing risk information are effective will improve the accuracy of information available to crews and improve targeting of activity. This will include scoping a new Operational Intelligence System (OIS) which will improve workflow and efficiency for Business Fire Safety.

Further develop our integrated and risk-based approach to the deployment of prevention and protection resources.

Commencing a trial programme of fire safety checks of non-domestic premises by operational crews will improve the ability to capture information on a wider scope of buildings to support firefighter and community safety at operational incidents.

Implementing any changes necessary to our Risk Based Inspection Programme (RBIP) based on [National Fire Chiefs Council](#) (NFCC) recently published draft [Guidance on risk, highest risk occupancies and prioritising fire safety interventions](#). This will enable us to be consistent in defining and prioritising risk including decisions on interventions to reduce the impact of fire, following sector best practice.

Enhance our efforts to communicate water safety messages to those at greatest risk.

Working in partnership with Water Safety Wales and the RNLI will further support our work towards water safety and drowning prevention.

Educate and advise on the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) and the [Fire Safety Act 2021](#).

Ensuring that managers of workplaces or common parts of buildings containing two or more domestic premises are aware of their responsibilities and advise and support them to meet their responsibilities.

Prepare for the impact of climate change on our communities (for example, increased wildfire and flooding) and work with our partners to reduce this.

Invest in training, equipment, education, and community resilience to ensure that we, our partners, and our communities are not only prepared for the increasing risk, due to climate change, of flooding and wildfire but have also done everything possible to mitigate their impacts should they occur.

Responding to your emergency

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient Wales



A healthier Wales

What does this mean?

From Joint Fire Control (JFC) receiving an emergency call through to the action of our crews at an incident to post-incident support advice on reducing risk, we are focussed on ensuring the best outcome both for you and for our personnel.

Ensuring our response is effective depends on our crews being available and appropriately trained so they are ready to deal with the situations they face. Our Training Department ensures that courses are delivered to prepare our crews for current and future demands, using post-incident debriefs to identify good practice and areas for improvement.

This focus on responding efficiently and effectively to any emergency provides assurance that we are ready to meet the changing needs of our communities, from an ageing population to the effects of climate change or the emergence of new technology such as electric vehicles.

Welsh Government's direction on implementation of all the recommendations made in the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's thematic reviews will be developed and taken forward in social partnership to ensure the continued operational effectiveness of the Service. Plans to reduce attendance at False Alarms through a focus on Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response will be developed with implementation providing increased capacity for training and skills development. This change will, however, present challenges in other areas such as JFC where we expect an increase in calls challenged.

For our On-Call firefighters, our continued focus on an effective recruitment and retention programme will ensure we maintain availability and recognise the important contribution made to our communities.

We will respond to your emergency by:

- Responding effectively when you need us
- Doing all we can to make sure that our On-Call crews are available
- Training our firefighters, Joint Fire Control staff, and other staff to respond to current and future risks in our communities

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Calls received and incidents attended
- Recruitment activities
- Training and development activities

What we have done in 2023-2024

Reviewed the structure of JFC and recruitment activities to guarantee an efficient and effective response to emergency calls by our experienced and trained team.

As the first point of contact, and an integral part of our response, increasing the resilience of our JFC has been a priority.

- Seven new recruits joined JFC and completed their competency development this year. Another recruitment campaign is planned for early 2024-2025.
- Minimum crewing on watches increased to seven and we are working towards a further increase to eight and a maximum of 12 crew per watch in 2024.

Ensured our systems for recording and sharing risk information effectively supports our activities so that information is available to those who need it when it is needed.

- The structure for operational working groups was reviewed and revised, clarifying the decision-making processes and identifying workstream leads to maintain effective oversight.
- We have mapped out and improved the flow of reporting for Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI), improving information available to our crews and preparing for work on a new Operational Intelligence System (OIS), to be implemented in the next financial year.
- Risk Reduction teams are developing our Safeguarding database to share information between the Safeguarding and Fire Safety Intervention teams. This will improve our efficiency in identifying and supporting those most in need.
- Our Youth Team has developed a Youth Intervention Enquiry Form which allows parents and professionals to refer a child or young person to the service. Information on this will be published in the new financial year.

Conducted research into emergency response to fires involving electric vehicles supporting our development to meet changing risks and demands.

- We established a working group focussed on our emergency response to fires involving electric vehicles and other lithium battery related incidents. With new and innovative responses emerging, options were scoped and will be trialled in the new financial year.

Ensured our training programmes prepare our staff for future challenges – in addition to considering operational training and future demands on the Service, we support staff in their chosen career development pathways.

- In JFC, eight staff qualified as Airwave Communication Tactical Advisors and four as National Control Liaison Officers. We aim to build on this as we focus on the continuing professional development of JFC staff.
- Our Operational Development and Review Team collaborated with Skills For Justice Awards to become the first Fire and Rescue Service to develop accredited qualifications for Wildfire response. The three levels of training range from awareness to supervisory and tactical managers and comply with National Operational Guidance.
- Using findings from Welsh Government's Thematic Review "Fire and Rescue Services in Wales: Learning from Grenfell" and National Operational Guidance, our High-Rise Working Group have developed a new Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) and Evacuation Guidance. Work with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board has secured a high-rise residential facility where the new guidance and SOP can be taught in real world scenarios. Five exercises have taken place with Operational and JFC staff taking part and 20 dates have been arranged to ensure all Wholetime watches will have received training by the end of next year.
- The High-Rise Working Group also collaborated with our Breathing Apparatus (BA) team in developing a Tactical Officer high-rise course, and a smoke curtain training programme, to be delivered from April 2024.

Explored opportunities to increase delivery of online training to develop operational competence, enabling training to be delivered more flexibly, integrated with operational activities, and reducing the requirement for travel to a central venue.

- The review of our two-year BA course included commencing development of online content for appropriate sections to make the course more accessible and flexible to our staff.

Promoted vacancies through expanded social media use and face-to-face engagement activities - through a calendar of Firefighter Fit sessions and participation in careers fairs, we raised awareness of career opportunities, and recruitment of On-Call firefighters has remained a priority.

- Stations used local community events, including those at station sites, to promote recruitment opportunities. They have continued working with Skills for Justice to identify suitable applicants, inviting people to take part in their drill nights which provides an opportunity to experience some parts of the role and meet the crews.
- We designated August our On-Call month, and Media and Communications colleagues worked with staff across the Service to develop a new recruitment campaign. Using the slogan "Same Skills, different roles, be more with On-Call", they produced several videos to show how skills from other employment can transfer to the On-Call firefighter role. New internet pages with relevant information, social media channel posts, posters and other promotional content was used for maximum reach.

Developed and introduced new specification 4x4 fire appliances – to enhance our response capability with additional agility.

- We purchased seven new Scania fire appliances capable of delivering over 3,000 litres of water a minute and accommodating up to six crew members. Three of the seven chassis ordered for "fit for purpose" 4x4 fire appliances have been delivered to the manufacturers for body builds with completion scheduled for April 2024.

Other examples of work in this area include:

- Joint Fire Control Green Watch was awarded an operational excellence award in June for the fire survival guidance they provided at an incident, alongside a number of other traumatic incidents during one night shift.
- Green Watch Cardiff Central and Roath were awarded an Operational Excellence Award after rescuing three children from a complex high-rise fire in Cardiff.
- Bridgend Extrication Team achieved first place at the Avon UKRO Regional Heavy Rescue Challenge, 3rd in the Standard Extrication Scenario and 3rd in the World Overall at the World Extrication Challenge.
- In October we participated in the multi-agency exercise (Waterworld project) which involved crews attending flooding and water rescue activities across the region, to help provide a consistent approach in the event of widespread flooding.
- We organised a one-day RTC simulation that involved Cardiff University, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST), South Wales Police, and Medserve (BASICS) as well as JFC and Operational personnel, a total of over 100 participants. This included real-life scenarios for medical students to experience and learn about how to work with others in an emergency.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Review our operational training programme in response to the recommendations of the Welsh Government Thematic Review of operational training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

We will continue work on reviewing our training programmes for operational personnel, led by our Effectiveness and Efficiency working group.

Make changes to our driver training courses in response to the introduction of Section 19 of the Road Safety Act (2006).

This legislation covers exemptions from speed limits for emergency service vehicles and we will reflect this in the training for our emergency response drivers and instructors. This, along with the [Fire Standards Board Emergency Response Driver Framework](#), will help maintain and improve upon the high standards we have developed.

Develop collaborative working via the All-Wales Training Managers group, focussing on deliverables and integration with risk based working groups.

The main benefits are the standardisation of training across Wales, identifying any trends in unsuccessful assessment results, and peer assessment of courses and assessors as required.

Implement outcomes of our internal On-Call strategic review.

This will include identification of options and strategies to develop and improve recruitment, retention, training, and contracts of employment.

A new one-week initial course has been designed to be followed by a two-week BA course. This will allow new entrants to increase contracts at point of entry.

Systems update/upgrade for Joint Fire Control

We will work with South Wales Police and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service to ensure compatibility between our systems, install new hardware to ensure JFC systems are resilient and efficient and continue to support Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT) rollout by connecting with WAST.

Working with partners

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of cohesive
communities



A globally
responsible Wales



A prosperous
Wales

What does this mean?

Through our work with partners across the region and within the fire and rescue sector, we deliver service improvements for the communities of South Wales. Collaboration with others means that we avoid duplication of resources, making best use of public money. It also creates a better experience for the public as our understanding of other organisations and services increases – we can signpost to other providers and they can refer to us. Work within the sector ensures we share and adopt best practice, and we are involved with a range of forums and working groups to ensure our operational capability is effective.

Our partnerships and collaborations are regularly reviewed to ensure effective use of resources and maximise benefits achieved. As partnerships progress, we seek opportunities for further cooperation.

As a statutory partner on the Public Service Boards (PSBs) within our service area, we support delivery of Well-being Plans and local priorities to ensure our activities deliver long-term improvements to people in our communities. Many of our fire and rescue stations are a focus for community activity and have valuable relationships with local groups, while our Arson Reduction Team works closely with Community Safety partners to reduce crime and disorder.

Delivering outcomes against this theme will further embed partnership working in our activities.

We will work with our partners by:

- Working with Public Service Boards (PSBs) to support our communities
- Working with our partners to deliver our services where they are needed
- Continually reviewing and building on our existing partnerships, embedding principles of social partnership

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Partnership agreements and activities
- Engagement with PSBs
- Our range of partnerships and collaborations

What we have done in 2023-2024

Mapped our current partnership working activities and data sharing agreements helping us to identify and develop new opportunities for collaboration.

- Community Safety are reviewing their partnership arrangements and recent recruitment of a Partnership Officer will ensure the completion of the review and identification of new partnership opportunities in 2024-2025.
- A referral process for [St John Ambulance Wales](#) has been established and work is continuing with Public Health Wales utilising All-Wales NHS Manual Handling to identify a referral pathway for bariatric patients.

- We have supported the Joint Emergency Services Estates Group (JESEG) in looking at more effective ways of working with other blue light services. Data Map Wales has been identified as a suitable tool for sharing information and we are ready to begin trialling this.
- In collaboration with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) we have identified an effective process and drafted a data sharing agreement to enable sharing of risk information for over the border incidents. We hope to complete this work in 2024 which will enable us to identify, share and access information that will improve our services.

Review and enhance our relationships with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners and National Resilience in Wales - to ensure a cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats, and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks.

LRF groups are multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, and others. These agencies are known as Category 1 Responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act.

- We have ensured we have representation on each group to ensure cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats, and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks.

As PSBs launched their Local Well-being Plans 2023-2028, we ensured our continuing engagement enabling us to better understand the challenges faced by our communities and to support those most in need.

- Our work with Public Service Boards (PSBs) continues to be supported by Group Managers of each Unitary Authority (UA) and, following the restructure of PSB sub-groups, Station Commanders have been allocated to these sub-groups to ensure our representation at all levels.

Reviewing our working arrangements with external agencies to ensure suitable support for our mental health provisions for staff – to ensure we offer our staff an effective range of support.

- We have recently procured a new Employee Assistance Programme to support employees with guidance and counselling, and we continue to work with [Mind](#) Mental health and other agencies.

Some examples of other work involving partners this year includes:

- Cardiff and Vale Community Resource teams hosted [“Stay Steady” clinics](#) in Roath and Barry Fire and Rescue Stations and NHS physiotherapists ran falls clinics from Roath and Whitchurch. The NHS physio staff have been given training by our Community Safety Team on what to look for and how to refer people for Home Safety visits. Next year, Bridgend Falls Team plans to host “Stay Steady” clinics at stations located within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board area.
- Sharing premises, Abercarn has welcomed the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST) to share their station premises so two patient transport vehicles currently work from this site.
- The Service’s Advanced Driver Training Team and South Wales Police have developed integrated training programmes that address the unique challenges faced by both Fire and Rescue Service and Police drivers, with the training curriculum designed to instil a comprehensive understanding of vehicle dynamics, emergency response protocols, and effective communication strategies.
- Blue Watch at Roath Fire Station pioneered a new initiative in 2023, providing blue light awareness to bus drivers at Cardiff Bus Depot. The Watch used information, videos, and advice to help educate drivers on what to do when blue light vehicles are passing/approaching on South Wales roads. These information videos have now been added to Cardiff Bus’s driver

training programmes. Inspired by their success, the Watch is now looking to offer the initiative to other bus companies in Cardiff.

- Our Community Safety Team has developed a new Professional Concerns process which has delivered referrals to our local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH). Training is being updated on our electronic training system (E-hyb) to ensure all staff receive the appropriate level of understanding for their role.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Work in collaboration with partners to identify those most at risk in our communities.

Those most at risk frequently have limited contact with support services. We will therefore work with partner agencies to ensure referral routes are shared and signposted, and we will monitor our onward referrals to other agencies.

To prevent deliberate fire setting, we will work with partners to deliver appropriate, targeted and effective interventions including taking positive action to address insecure, void and derelict buildings which present a risk to both the community and to our firefighters.

Review and enhance relationship with [Gwent Local Resilience Forum](#), [South Wales Local Resilience Forum](#) and [National Resilience in Wales](#) to ensure cohesive and collaborative approach to risks, threats and harm to our communities in line with emerging risks.

Improve our data sharing arrangements to support partnership working.

Working with our partners to share information will maximise the value of our data and enable us to share a richer picture of our communities.

Build on our work with other fire and rescue services to ensure we are making the best use of data to benchmark and monitor our activities, including work with family groups and Welsh FRS.

Develop our arrangements for partnership working to ensure those participating are able to realise maximum benefit from their involvement.

Building on success of work in collaborative training and education on the services we can provide, we will assess the impact of supporting other agencies on our service delivery.

Further develop collaborative working with Health and Safety Peer Group partners, MAWWFRS and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS), ensuring regular communication and promoting shared understandings and benchmarking processes.

Explore potential for enhancing our collaborative work with other fire and rescue services in learning and skills development, developing new opportunities for exchange.

Continue to develop our monitoring of partnership activities to ensure we have maximum reach and support, producing a gap analysis to identify new opportunities.

Maximise opportunities for colocation and flexibility, adapting the property portfolio in line with community risks and new operational requirements.

This will develop our support of the Joint Emergency Services Estates Group (JESSEG) co-location strategy by exploring further co-locations with our emergency service partners.

Involving and communicating

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of cohesive
communities



A Wales of vibrant
culture & thriving
Welsh language



A more equal
Wales

What does this mean?

Our plans are shaped by communication – the feedback we receive, discussions to explore and understand risk, sharing of information and best practice within the sector and with our partners in other areas of activity. Effective communication provides the opportunity for us to shape our future in collaboration with the stakeholders and communities that we serve.

The need for improvements in communication has been regularly highlighted in consultation feedback and is a key theme of the recent Independent Culture Review (ICR). We must improve our communication internally to ensure our staff are better informed and more engaged which will support positive cultural change. We also need to deliver greater transparency in our reporting to provide stakeholders and the public with the information they need, and to raise awareness of our activities and the positive impact we have in the communities of South Wales. This will be a step change in our communication, and we will focus on being proactive in our approach.

A key question for the coming year, in responding to the challenges of the ICR and greater scrutiny from Welsh Government, will be “how does our future look?” A positive future will require clarity and purpose, and much of this will be developed by staff-led working groups, responsible for areas of the ICR recommendations.

We will Involve and Communicate by:

- Involving our communities and making sure they have their say in what we do
- Helping to keep our communities safe by delivering safety education and attending community events
- Ensuring we develop and promote communication channels within the Service
- Recognising the role of social partnership, further developing open and transparent relationships with stakeholders

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Responses received to surveys and engagement initiatives
- Engagement via our Stakeholder Register
- Local community activities
- Social media activity
- Engagement with the Shout forum, our internal staff communication sessions

What we have done in 2023-2024

Expanded and promoted channels that enable our staff and stakeholders to provide feedback and comment on our plans and services to improve our capacity to receive feedback from staff and members of our communities.

We recognise that being able to receive quality feedback starts with the availability of information. We continually review the systems we use and the way we present information to improve accessibility but this year we have:

- Redesigned our Annual Improvement Plan to provide information at a local level and redesigned the survey to help make it easier to complete. This was supported by a “Quick Read” version that received positive feedback.
- Developed and promoted a range of channels, including becoming the first fire and rescue service to introduce the Crimestoppers Speak Up advice line and website, and relaunching the Shout forum, a regular Service-wide opportunity for information sharing and discussion. This format was used to engage with staff in a series of events across the Service for discussion of the ICR and the Draft Action Plan responding to the recommendations made.
- So that we hear from the next generation, we have developed proposals for a Youth Forum for 13-18 year olds to help shape our future plans, including trialling risk reduction initiatives targeted at young people. We will promote and launch this later in 2024.
- Started a review of the accessibility of our website using the Silktide Index (an international standard which evaluates the accessibility of sites based on their level of compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines). This allows us to monitor our score and we continue to work with our website provider to improve functionality.
- Promoted safety messages, events and recruitment opportunities in a range of ways, including digital screens, social media, leaflets, and newspaper and radio advertising.

Improved coordination of our involvement in community events and activities, providing support for fire and rescue stations - to help them in developing their local involvement and role within their communities.

- Stations expanded their involvement in local community events, using these opportunities to promote information about the Service, safety messages and recruitment information.
- In addition to the 999 Emergency Services Day at Cardiff Bay which we coordinate annually, local 999 days were held at Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Ogmere, and Llantwit Major, ensuring the opportunity to attend events was taken into our communities. In collaboration with South Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and other partners, these events were a chance to see live demonstrations, meet our crews and gain safety information in a family-friendly environment.

Launched a standardised engagement toolkit for use across the Service with resources for planning, delivering, and evaluating events and other engagement activities.

To provide consistency in our approach to engagement and allow us to collate data on events and areas for improvement, we have:

- Developed an Engagement Toolkit with guidance for planning, delivering, and evaluating activities, from organising a recruitment event to taking part in a local show or running a Service-wide consultation exercise.
- Updated the Station Event Management Plan which includes templates to complete for all relevant considerations including Health & Safety, site facilities, key contacts, promotion of the event, risks involved, refreshments, cancellation process, etc.

Shared more information on the range of activities undertaken by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service using digital and non-digital methods – the responsibilities of a modern fire and rescue service are wide ranging and, as a public body in Wales, we also have a role in delivering on a broader agenda, particularly in respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

- Two new volunteer roles were created which involve public engagement and promotion of drowning prevention messages in locations with known water hazards as well as raising awareness of our On-Call opportunities.

Other local activities this year included:

- For [International Control Room Week](#) we celebrated our “Heroes in Headsets” by sharing stories from JFC staff about their experiences working for the Service, their visit from London Fire Brigade and the celebration of new starters.
- Firefighters from Maindee Fire and Rescue Station visited the Africa Day event, run by Zimbabwe Newport Volunteering Association and Newport City Council. They engaged with people about recruitment for On-Call and delivered safety messages.
- In June, staff from Caerphilly Fire and Rescue Station supported Caerphilly's first ever Pride event, with nearly 24,000 visitors attending during the day. Several other organisations, including Gwent Police, Caerphilly Runners, and many local businesses were part of the celebrations.
- Firefighters from Cwmbran attended the girls World Cup themed inclusivity football festival organised by Torfaen Sports Development.
- In December, Aberbargoed crew constructed a sleigh, and used it to hand out selection boxes to the children in the community, whilst also offering festive fire safety advice and promoting the Service’s safety messages.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Communicate better information on who we are and what we do.

Design and deliver a communications campaign around the Action Plan for the ICR recommendations.

Plan and undertake a communication campaign around proposed changes to our response to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). This will ensure our communities are aware of our proposals, enabling them to have a say on these proposals.

Produce and publish an external newsletter which will give our communities an insight into what we do, throughout South Wales, but also more locally in the community.

Review our website in terms of content, accessibility and 'back end' changes that can be made to improve functionality. This will provide the best possible user experience and ensure compliance in advance of any further Welsh Government review, until we are able to commission a new website that is built with accessibility as a key priority.

Work with staff, stakeholders, communities, and partners to implement recommendations of the Independent Culture Review, co-creating improvements to the Service.

The report, published on 3rd January 2024, has led to additional scrutiny from the media and various stakeholders. The potential adverse effect that this may have on how we are viewed, and ultimately trusted to deliver our functions effectively means that we must provide reassurance on the changes we are making. A communications plan has been developed to ensure that key information is delivered frequently while we also promote various avenues for stakeholders to provide feedback to us. Our staff-led working groups will continue their work on modelling change. The Service’s Consultation and Engagement Group will ensure that all public facing events and engagement opportunities are effectively planned, managed, and reviewed.

Ask our staff how we can improve communication.

This will be a focus for our working groups. We will also continue to evolve our staff engagement platforms and programme of consultation activities.

Begin work to develop a Citizens Forum, enabling diverse voices to shape the services we provide.

We will implement our planned Youth Forum and explore opportunities to develop further groups or support and engage with existing groups. Effective involvement will help us to shape our plans and identify issues that matter to our communities.

Map out our activities and our stakeholders to ensure we are involving appropriate groups.

To support working in social partnerships and develop our collaboration with other agencies, we will complete and maintain a record of our activities, identifying joint work and identifying future opportunities.

Recognise and promote the work of stations in community support and involvement.

Our work on developing a toolkit for stations will be rolled out and will provide improved recording of our community activities.

Protecting and enhancing our environment

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A globally
Responsible Wales



A healthier
Wales



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of cohesive
communities

What does this mean?

We recognise our activities influence the local and global environment, negatively through the impact of the resources we use and positively in our work to reduce risk and protect the environment. Our Carbon Reduction Plan 2023-2030 sets out our programme to meet Welsh Government's objective of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. This includes consideration of the resources we use – from reducing, reusing and recycling, to evaluating the environmental consequence of our procurement decisions, which are subject to our own Sustainable Procurement Principles and the recently introduced Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act. The impact of climate change is evidenced by changes to the demands we face: more frequent and prolonged periods of extreme weather are expected to increase wildfires and flooding. This can only be tackled by effective partnerships, so we continue to collaborate with key partners to understand and address these challenges.

We have a strong community focus to our work, making the natural environment safe and accessible. Knowledge of protected sites and support for local action is key, from working with schools to supporting local partnerships.

We will protect our environment by:

- Reducing the usage of single use materials
- Expanding the use of electric vehicles
- Reducing our energy use and our carbon footprint
- Considering how our activities impact on the environment
- Reducing the amount of waste produced

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Our Carbon Reduction Plan and progress towards becoming carbon neutral
- Our fleet and provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points
- Business travel miles
- Waste produced

What we have done in 2023-2024

Reviewed developments in fuel and other technologies to identify opportunities that might be beneficial to the Service's fleet asset replacement policy and procurement strategy – to evaluate and progress our aspiration for a greener fleet.

- We are continuing to expand our electric vehicle fleet and supporting infrastructure. We have commenced an evaluation exercise with Mid and West Wales Fire Service to identify alternative sources of fuel such as biodiesel and how they could contribute to our carbon reduction plan.

Implementing an accredited Environmental Management System (EMS) - to gain recognition for our environmental practices and demonstrate our commitments to sustainability, consideration of environmental impacts, compliance with legislation, and environmental protection.

- A gap analysis was completed, identifying the necessary actions to achieve accreditation levels of an EMS. We have begun work on our Initial Environmental Review (IER), Environmental Policy and improvement plan, and have drafted a proposal for an EMS data management system. We are aiming to complete these early in the new financial year, therefore attaining Level 1 of the EMS. Attainment of higher levels has already been mapped out and we will work on this throughout next year.

Developed an open dialogue with staff on our carbon reduction position and the challenges we face

– by engaging and involving colleagues across the Service, we increased awareness of our activities and encourage innovative solutions.

- A new Sustainability page on our staff intranet was developed. This offers a one-stop-shop for information and updates on activity relating to sustainability, with data on carbon emissions and energy currently displayed.
- We promoted Wales Climate Week by sharing the work we have been doing, including building a network of Sustainability Champions across the Service who will help to promote sustainability in their area through training and initiatives.
- As part of our commitment to Healthy Travel Charters, the Sustainability Team carried out a Service-wide commuting survey to learn how our staff travel to and from work. The results of this were published on the staff intranet along with information on more sustainable options.
- We commenced a new waste collection contract to ensure our waste is disposed of in accordance with new recycling legislation.
- To meet our duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of our functions, land management is now part of station plans. This means stations will be involved in assisting with local plans and enable them to understand the risk at sites whilst gaining a greater understanding of their value ecologically and to the community.

Agreed and defined the standard requirements of a sustainable building – in the longer term, this will ensure our buildings are resource-efficient and environmentally responsible throughout their life cycle.

- Our new Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Wales facility at Whitchurch Fire Station opened, representing the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. It was designed with sustainability in mind, and will provide a modern, environmentally considerate, and functioning building. New Photovoltaic (PV) solar panel installations will provide an estimated 10,287 kWh of electricity per year, and annual CO2 savings of 2,184kg. The incorporation of a 400V battery system will also mean any excess energy generated on sunny days can be used at night – making the building ‘self-sufficient’.
- Our planning application for New Inn Fire Station was approved in February 2024. We aim to achieve a net-zero carbon rating by using sustainable materials, solar panels, advanced insulation and ventilation system, rainwater harvesting and efficient irrigation systems for outdoor landscaping, and provision of green spaces to enhance biodiversity and provide habitats for local flora and fauna. The planning and development of this project will inform all our future building developments.

Other local initiatives include:

All stations and work locations continue to develop ways to be more environmentally conscious. In July, our station at Ogmor Vale became the first and only UK Fire Station to receive a Green Flag Community Award from [Keep Wales Tidy](#), for their Well-being and Education Garden. The station is currently engaging with our Community Fire Safety Education Lead, local schools, and Early Years Flying Start Setting to establish a joint engagement package and are further working with Keep Wales

Tidy in the hopes of installing an orchard package at the garden, to help support biodiversity, enhance nature, and support community engagement. They also have a new green living roof which will support and flourish the biodiversity of the station and its nearby habitats encouraging healthy ecosystems for plants, fungi, insects, birds, and other mammals to use.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Continue to develop our response to wildfires.

Working with colleagues in [Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW) to understand local terrain, where the most vulnerable habitats may be or where there could be serious financial or ecological implications from fires. These fires are a drain on emergency service resources and present risk to life and property.

Begin development of our first carbon neutral station.

Replacement of the existing New Inn Fire Station with an updated and sustainable fire station with a new build which will provide the opportunity to design the building with sustainability as a key objective, with the aim to achieve a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) energy rating.

Continue upgrades to our real fire training facility (RFTF) to reduce environmental impact

Our RFTF is fitted with a smoke treatment system called a smoxidiser; smoke produced within the building is captured, extracted and filtered before release to the atmosphere meeting all legal and environmental requirements. However, firefighters' personal protective equipment (PPE) is a potential source of exposure to toxic contaminants commonly released from fires. We will establish a process for handling used PPE which will reduce the health risks of dirty PPE to firefighters.

Improve our waste management using data collected on waste streams.

By engaging with and educating our staff on the requirements of the [Welsh Government workplace recycling legislation](#), we will improve the quality and quantity of recycling from workplaces, taking an important step towards reaching zero waste. We will also implement an audit process as part of the Environmental Management System (EMS) along with benchmarking and target setting. Periodic audits will examine volumes and variations in waste across the Service and physically inspect locations to identify wasteful practices enabling us to reduce waste.

Measure the impact of our actions and report our progress.

Developing a dashboard of metrics to demonstrate change on a granular level will enable monitoring of activity by sites, allowing local action to be taken to reduce energy use, for example. Permission has been granted to re-baseline using Welsh Government reporting methods so that data discrepancies across different mediums internally and externally can be addressed.

Review our fleet management system

To ensure efficiency and longer-term sustainability goals while maintaining record compliance.

Work with partners to protect our environment.

Sharing best practice via the All-Wales FRS Sustainability Group and engaging with partners and other agencies on a collaborative approach to reducing our environmental impact will benefit all sharing knowledge, skills, expertise and resources to find solutions to sustainability issues.

We will continue to review developments and opportunities in fuel and other technologies to identify any with potential benefits to the Service.

Identify ways to enhance and develop our well-being areas and green spaces.

Landscaping proposals for the new build net zero carbon fire station at New Inn will include outdoor amenity space to offer a pleasant environment and provisions for staff well-being.

Using technology well

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A globally responsible Wales



A resilient Wales



A healthier Wales

What does this mean?

Technology supports our work across the Service, from operational firefighting techniques and equipment to the back-office systems that deliver business services and record our activities. Our priority is to use the best technology to record and monitor emergency calls, send the right vehicles and crews to you, and help us at the scene of the emergency incidents.

Improvement in ICT, which is one aspect of our technology use, was raised in consultation, identifying a need for innovation. With the recent transition to Office 365, new systems and ways of working are bedding into our day-to-day activity and development will continue. Systems are continually reviewed to identify potential for improvement in terms of ease of use and/or functionality.

As technology is used everyday across the Service by so many of us, a further point raised in consultation was a conduit for users to provide feedback on system development. We will explore how this can be strengthened in our already rigorous testing and procurement processes, so that we make better use of ICT.

We will use technology well by:

- Using the most suitable technology and equipment to improve our services
- Reviewing the standard and use of technology and equipment across the Service

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Cyber security incidents
- Online meetings
- Helpdesk calls

What we have done in 2023-2024

Explored the use of digital devices to promote new and innovative working practices, improving the recording of information and updating records to deliver sustainable efficiencies in data management.

- Use of our 24/7 helpdesk system has been extended to more departments, enabling them to manage requests and workloads, for example, monitoring of Information Governance requests and their progress.
- We have publicised a QR code for Crimestoppers allowing members of the public to report concerns. We have also added a QR code for the FlyMapper app on our new Arson Reduction Team vans, promoting reporting on fly tipping as part of our work with Fly-tipping Action Wales.
- Most of our recruitment activity is now online, from identification of a vacancy to appointment. This has improved the experience for applicants and is more efficient for recruiters.

Reviewed the Service's Management Information System to ensure data is available for monitoring and planning activities ensuring we are evidence-based in our decision making.

Our Business Management Information System (BMIS) helps us to capture and present data and information about our performance. Improvements we have made include:

- Developing reports for our Training and Development Team for ease of monitoring course registrations and completions.

Used technology to expand our suite of risk reduction activities – use of technology can increase our risk reduction reach through efficiencies and engaging a wider audience.

- Our Youth and Fire Safety Intervention Teams have bought two electronic devices that allow them to download games to help educate children and young people on a range of topics, but specifically around the risks of fire. Research is being undertaken into developing our own games, so we can tailor them more to our service and communities.
- We started development of a “virtual decisions” educational package which will allow children and young people to play out their own story by making different decisions. Using both electronic and virtual reality equipment will make this more engaging and impactful in teaching the importance of positive choices.

Enhance and grow the recently introduced electronic Risk Based Inspection Programme for non-domestic premises, based on the risk to life safety of relevant persons – this will support pre-planned visits to check compliance in accordance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.

- An electronic audit form was developed to enhance the information available on the Risk Based Inspection Programme.
- A review of the current system was completed this year, and a working group has been established to support sourcing a new Risk Based Inspection Programme system provider for the Service.

Continued the programme to upgrade all servers enabling us to review applications and reduce costs while increasing efficiency and security.

- Throughout the year our ICT department have continued their work on the upgrade of all our servers which will ensure we are using technology at its optimum and allow us to review our applications for further improvement.

Plans to develop a messaging system for confirmation of Occupational Health appointments via text messages has been postponed as we are considering an all-encompassing Patient Management System.

We have also used national processes produced by the [Cyber Technical Advisory Group](#) to draft a Cyber and Forensic Readiness policy which, once finalised, will be reviewed and integrated with guidance from [Gwent Local Resilience Forum](#) and the [National Fire Chiefs Council](#), early in the new financial year.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Upgrade appliance communication systems to provide additional applications for real-time use.

Develop additional real-time risk information that can be delivered to mobile data terminals (MDTs) on fire engines and other internet connected devices, providing crews with accurate risk information en-route to and at incidents

Co-ordinate the replacement of main scheme handheld radios which are nearing end of life. This will provide increased resilience and enhanced functionality.

Replace the basic mobile phones on our fire engines with smart devices to provide firefighters access to apps that will enhance service delivery, e.g., FlyMapper App.

Make more efficient use of ICT to engage with our operational workforce.

Increase the use of online video conferencing for meetings and training which will enable real-time collaboration, increase productivity, save time, and help people who are working remotely feel less isolated and more engaged.

Increase the use of mobile technology.

Review and trial digital devices to promote new and innovative working practices that can lead to sustainable efficiencies. A report will be produced providing options and costs. Budget has been built in for 2024-2025 to provide additional ICT equipment for our Operational Risk Management (ORM) department.

Improve digital collaboration and working opportunities.

Set up a new working group to explore the technological requirements necessary to deliver efficiencies on projects such as Commercial Fire Safety Checks, Business Fire Safety Tactical Officer Role and Operational Intelligence Systems.

Provide increased resilience and security to our ICT systems.

Work with the Welsh Government Cymru Security Operations Centre (SOC) initiative to deliver a 'defend as one' approach for a joined up public sector where intelligence is shared.

Replace our existing server infrastructure, storage and networking with a Hyper-converged infrastructure (HCI) that will ensure a more resilient and secure infrastructure to run our desktop and server virtualisation systems.

Plan and run Business Continuity Management (BCM) simulations involving disruptive challenges to test their impact on our service delivery. This will identify improvement opportunities in existing arrangements, develop staff competencies and confidence and test existing procedures, plans and systems to ensure they offer the degree of protection expected.

Provide additional resources to support new and ongoing projects for Joint Fire Control

As from 1st April 2024 a senior ICT Manager will be permanently appointed to JFC as ICT Projects Manager to manage future projects that will impact JFC, liaising on the South Wales Police Control Room System Project as well as looking at the future replacement of Command & Control for Fire & Rescue Service.

Valuing our people

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A more
equal Wales



A healthier
Wales



A prosperous
Wales



A Wales of vibrant
culture & thriving
Welsh language

What does this mean?

The year has had an unprecedented focus on our staff, past and present, through the Independent Culture Review that was announced in January and commenced in April 2023. This has been a significant challenge for everyone involved and we appreciate the courage and candour of those who shared their experiences with Fenella Morris KC and her team. Now that the report and its recommendations have been published, we recognise that as this financial year draws to a close, it is actually the start of our journey to build a culture that is inclusive, supportive and positive for everyone. Our staff-led Working Groups, established to develop proposals in response to the recommendations, draw from all areas of the Service and have been open to all to join. Their work will be informed by, and communicated to, the whole Service. In addition to ensuring maximum staff involvement, we are working with external partners to advise on and review our action plan, ensuring that we remain objective, transparent, and fair.

Feeling valued in the workplace begins with feeling respected and trusted, elements of our core values. If we are to realise our aspiration to be an employer of choice and attract the right people, with the right skills and values, who represent the communities we serve, we must also look at other aspects of employment. This includes the support we provide during sickness or other life challenges, and opportunities for training and development so that all fire and rescue service careers are rewarding.

We will develop a wide-ranging approach to improving employee well-being to reduce sickness absence and focus on health and fitness promotion. Whether an employee or volunteer in the Service, everyone has a key role in keeping our communities safe.

We will value our people by:

- Delivering fundamental change in our culture, responding to the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review
- Attracting a workforce that reflects and represents our communities
- Developing our people by identifying training and development opportunities
- Supporting our people to feel well, healthy and valued at work
- Delivering on the recommendations of the Investors in People (IIP) report
- Encouraging and supporting a bilingual culture across the Service

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Staff turnover, retention and recruitment
- Personal review – engagement scores
- Staff absence
- Attacks on crews and other traumatic incidents

What we have done in 2023-2024

Reviewed and raised awareness of the Service's full range of employee benefits programmes - to ensure support available to all staff is promoted and accessible.

- An All-Wales Service Benefits contract for staff has been launched, which includes a more user-friendly platform and a wider range of benefits than previously available. Information about the new scheme was communicated to staff at the end of 2023-2024 across a range of methods.
- Our Learning, Development and Inclusion (LDI) Team launched the Coaching and Mentoring Plan which is a detailed four-year schedule detailing how the scheme will be developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed. Year One, starting April 2023, included building the foundations such as processes and documentation, training a group of staff to become coaches to a formally recognised standard, and engaging with staff to increase coaching style conversations such as the Personal Review process.

Ensured all staff have access to a learning pathway – so that all employees can build their knowledge and skills to support their career with the Service.

- Our LDI Team launched the Pathways programmes at the start of the year to assist staff in developing skills and working towards progression and promotion. All staff have access to a Pathway with a range of levels available. The Pathways not only support staff to develop within their current role but also provide opportunities to select personalised learning plans to help their prospects for promotion.

Reshape our equality, diversity and inclusion framework to meet the needs and challenges of a modern fire and rescue service – this will ensure our services and processes are fair and accessible.

- We have recently re-written our Strategic Equality Plan and are working on our new Inclusive Action plan for rollout in April 2024.
- The Independent Culture Review included the experiences of staff from an equality and diversity perspective. Implementation of the recommendations will help us to reshape our equality, diversity and inclusion framework.
- In addition to the review, a cultural benchmarking event was held for staff at our Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre. Hydra's 10KV forum allows staff to provide feedback anonymously. The comments and feedback were published on our Culture Dashboard available to all staff.

Other examples of activity include:

- At the end of 2023, JFC recruits took part in a joint passing out parade with their firefighter colleagues at Cardiff Gate. This was the first joint event of this type and will continue in the future.
- The Planning, Performance & Risk and Media & Communications Teams expanded on staff engagement for the Annual Improvement Plan consultation by holding discussion meetings across the Service. This will continue and be expanded to implement a schedule that supports all stations and departments to engage with Service consultation on a regular basis, face-to-face or virtually.
- Media & Communications Team also made changes to internal communications, after reviewing the feedback from a recent survey. The CFO bulletin is now available as a video clip, in addition to the written document on the staff intranet. A focus group will meet to explore feedback on the intranet, Shout forum, newsletter and staff app and discuss how to involve operational staff more.

- The Personal Review process continues to embed across all areas of the Service. This year our HR Department asked staff for feedback and used this to inform a review. There will now be a single annual process which can be better tailored to roles and individual plans.
- In December an updated Exit Interview process was launched, including a new short, anonymous survey for staff to provide initial feedback and, for increased flexibility, options on how to complete the exit interview.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Respond to the findings of the Independent Culture Review Report (ICRR).

Implement the recommendations of the ICRR which will enable a positive working environment for all our staff and hold all to account for maintaining our core values.

Ask our staff how we can communicate better including on decisions made and around the action plan resulting from the ICRR. This will ensure all employees have the information they need and help to build relationships between teams.

Explore the development of an apprenticeship academy to facilitate our ambition to diversify.

Develop a strategic lead role within our People Services directorate on outreach activities to underrepresented groups.

Transform our People Services functions to provide optimum operational support and put people at the heart of everything we do.

The work to review the structure of People Services is coming to fruition with a view to approval for implementation from April 2024.

Review our On-Call firefighter retention rates.

After the success of the On-Call recruitment month held in August 2023, we want to repeat the campaign and enhance it, to generate interest in and promote the On-Call role.

Our Retained Management Team are working with Skills for Justice (SFJ) to embed a newly designed qualification. This will also dovetail with the new trial 1-week initial course.

Develop and monitor training for all staff to deliver development of foundation skills, e.g., ICT.

Research new ways to train and re-engineer current courses to best utilise our online technology including exploring opportunities to increase the delivery of online training to develop operational competence, achieved through virtual sessions and Micro-Teaching.

Continue to work effectively

Supporting the following Well-being Goals:



A prosperous
Wales



A Wales of vibrant
culture & thriving
Welsh language



A healthier
Wales

What does this mean?

Demonstrating our effectiveness demands transparency and accountability across the full spectrum of our activities, as a fire and rescue service and all related business activities. This includes producing plans that are accessible and informative, providing performance information on a regular basis and using measures that are meaningful.

It also means using feedback for improvement, from activities such as consultation, audits and reviews. This evidence is considered and acted upon where opportunities for improvement can be identified. In the last year, Audit Wales published their report on [Fire False Alarm Reduction](#) in South Wales and this has been reviewed by a workgroup focussed on managing the impact of false alarms on the Service. Reducing attendance at Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) actuations would provide capacity to increase training hours and risk reduction activity, and a model for this will be considered in the coming year. As outlined in the Commissioners' brief from Welsh Government, recommendations of recent Welsh Government Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) Thematic Reviews will also be implemented alongside the recommendations of the Independent Culture Review. Work on delivering these improvements will be achieved in social partnership, working with staff, representative bodies and other stakeholders.

This year has been challenging in terms of the scrutiny directed on the Service, and we will use this to identify new ways of measuring our performance that go beyond the incidents we attend to look at how effective we understand the Service and the people integral to its success. Developing metrics that enable us to measure progress on our journey in building an inclusive, fair culture will be a priority, and we will work with and learn from other Services on this.

We will also be clearly accountable to the public by making sure that our communities understand the risks in their area. We will inform communities what we are responsible for delivering, how this will be supported by our partnership arrangements, and what our plans are.

Our aim is to maximise value for money while improving our service. Recently introduced duties on Procurement and Social Partnership will ensure this delivers benefits to the communities we serve.

We will continue to work effectively by:

- Being clear and publicly accountable
- Maximising value for money while improving our service
- Developing new ways of working

We measure our progress by monitoring:

- Outcomes of internal and external audit programmes
- Benchmarking against other fire and rescue services
- Audit Wales opinion on financial statements
- The number of complaints received

What we have done in 2023-2024

Prepare and plan for the impact of The Procurement Bill and the Public Procurement & Social Partnership Bill – to ensure compliance with public procurement regulations to ensure efficiency, transparency, and flexibility.

- Our Procurement team has developed Sustainable Procurement Principles to ensure our work with contractors includes and promotes environmental considerations. They also developed a Sustainable Toolkit that takes procurement leads through a series of questions relating to environmental sustainability, ensuring informed decisions are taken in their procurement of goods and services.
- We participated in Welsh Government's consultation of the regulation for the Procurement Bill and members of our Procurement Team are registered for Welsh Government's training for this, due to start in May 2024.

Review and amend procedures following any future legislative changes in Wales - to ensure we can discharge our duties as a regulatory body.

- We have continued our work to implement the national McCloud Pension Reform Exercise, the data remedy exercise has commenced, and we are prioritising cases, as recommended in legislation.
- For the Matthews Pension Remedy, we have sent letters to people who are eligible and those who do not meet the criteria. The legislation was enacted by Welsh Government on 1st February 2024, so we have 18 months to complete this.

Review our disposal procedures – to ensure our assets, from vehicles to furniture, are managed throughout their lifecycle. Our Procurement Policy and process already promotes consideration of disposal when procuring items but this year we have been reviewing our existing processes for disposal of items:

- We ensure re-usable items such as furniture is kept in storage to be re-used by others upon request.
- We have implemented new processes for old uniforms - textiles are recycled where possible and where this is not possible, they will be destroyed and incinerated to produce energy for the National Grid (refuse derived fuel).
- A Waste Stream process document has been developed to advise staff how to correctly dispose of waste or unwanted items - it is due to be published early in the financial year.

Other examples of work in this area include:

- Our Information Governance (IG) Team have developed a site security questionnaire which will inform a future IG audit programme.
- The website pages for IG have been redesigned and are currently being updated. This will provide an updated Disclosure Log for publication of information requests within the Publications Library. This updated version will make our Freedom of Information requests more accessible to the public.
- Operational Risk Management (ORM) produced a new Accidents and Near Misses reporting process and are currently providing training on it to different areas of the Service.
- Research into age-appropriate evaluation tools has been carried out and the Youth Team are drafting ideas for their own evaluation form to be used when engaging with children and young people. This will allow us to identify which practices are most engaging and effective.

What we will do in 2024-2025

Explore ways to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of our activities, including prevention activities to ensure they continue to make people safer.

Develop Community Safety and Partnerships data quality assurance guidance and procedures.

Develop and implement quality assurance processes within our JFC involving inspection and audit of areas including call handling and incident logs. This will ensure the required standard of work and consistency of processes.

Ensure transparency and accountability by producing accessible, clear information for the public.

Map out and publish our decision-making groups and processes.

Introduce proactive reporting of information most frequently requested via Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, ensuring transparency and accountability by producing accessible, clear information for the public. It will also contribute to efficiency.

Assure best value to the public through fair and robust procurement procedures, collaboration, partnership working and with due regard to the Service's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Train our Contracting Team on the requirements of new Public Procurement Regulations which will become UK Law in October 2024. This will minimise the risk of challenge from suppliers and help to protect us against any contractual non-compliance.

Collect data in line with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 to capture well-being outcomes included in the procurement processes. The Act provides a framework for improving well-being in Wales through social partnership working, promoting fair work, changes to how public spending in Wales is allocated and the way goods and services are procured through socially responsible public procurement. Discussion with Welsh Government has indicated that this will be required by 2025.

Formulate an action plan for meeting the Commitments in the Welsh Governments' [Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains](#).

2022-2023 Statistics Overview



34,682 calls received by Joint Fire Control for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service area, including:

1,052 calls referred to other agencies.

2,500 did not require emergency response and were dealt with by Joint Fire Control.

10,413 repeat calls relating to incidents already in progress.



18,705 incidents attended.



6,031 fires including:

623 accidental dwelling fires **1,228** grass/wildfires **2,706** refuse fires

71.0% of fires attended were deliberate



8,746 false alarms in response to:

5,419 automatic fire alarms

3,023 calls made with good intent

304 malicious calls



3,928 Special Service calls including:

848 road traffic collisions

47 water rescues

3,033 other emergency incidents*

Risk reduction activity included:



1,014 school visits



12,308 home safety checks










655 fire safety audits

* Other non-fire incidents requiring attendance of an appliance or officer

Strategic Performance Indicators

It is important that we evaluate our performance to ensure that we are as efficient and effective as possible. We monitor a range of indicators across the Service, reporting on which will be developed in the coming year. We also set annual targets against Welsh Government's Strategic Indicators and monitor our performance against these as an element of our assurance processes. **Our targets for 2024-2025, detailed below, were agreed by xxxxxx.**

	FY19/20	FY20/21	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24*	5 Year Trend	FY24/25 Target
The total number of fires attended	5,482	5,481	5,565	6,031	5,074		5,743
The total number of false alarms attended	7,858	8,324	8,367	8,746	8,598		8,660
The total number of road traffic collisions attended	995	643	859	848	777		838
The total number of other special service calls attended	2,569	2,275	2,711	3,080	2,921		2,906
The total number of deaths and injuries arising from all fires	84	49	62	63	31		55
The total number of deaths and injuries arising from accidental fires	64	42	53	52	26		46
The percentage of dwelling fires which were contained in the room in which they originated	84.20%	82.23%	83.81%	82.65%	84.10%		83.59%
Home Fire Safety Checks carried out **	15,837	6,549	8,123	12,308	13,741		17,500

* Data Extracted 27/02/2024

** Includes modified HFSCs carried out by phone from April 2020

Our Budget 2024-2025

Our Service is funded by the 10 unitary authorities we serve, based on the population of each area. In 2024-2025 the budget cost is equivalent to £1.20 per person per week. This is an increase from the 2023-2024 budgeted cost of £1.11 per person per week. The main drivers for this increase were inflationary pressures, pension changes and pay awards. We will continue to identify efficiencies but remain subject to inflationary pressures in all areas of business.

TOTAL BUDGET 2024-2025	£95,840,240
Employees	59,401,610
Pensions	14,267,503
Premises	7,174,457
Supplies and Services	5,845,524
Support	5,305,190
Training	1,834,599
Transport	1,724,590
Contracted Services	1,352,970
Income	-1,066,203

Around two-thirds of our budget is assigned to staff and related costs, excluding pensions.

EMPLOYEE BUDGET	£59,401,610
Operational staff	43,953,388
Support staff	10,668,165
Control staff	1,593,613
Other staff costs Includes overtime, travel and other staff related costs.	3,186,444

With 47 fire and rescue stations and over 1,600 staff, we are there in an emergency for:

- 10 unitary authorities covering 2,800 sq km with 3.7 sq km of inland water
- Over 650,000 households and more than 1.5 million people
- Businesses in South Wales, including over 36,000 businesses already in contact with us

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – costs £1.20 per person per week

Welsh language

We are committed to effectively serving those who choose to communicate via the medium of the Welsh language. In our commitment to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambition of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, we promote opportunities for bilingualism and development of Welsh language skills for our staff. In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards 2015, the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has received a Compliance Notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner setting out the Welsh Language Standards that apply to the Authority. This [Compliance Notice](#) is published on our website and gives details about what services people can expect to receive in Welsh. We seek to engage with Welsh speakers and learners to improve the overall standard of our service provision.

Alternative versions

We publish a "quick read" version of this plan and both versions are available on our website with "Speak the website" audio facility. If you would like this information in another format, please contact us.

Have your say

We are always looking for ways to improve our services and to present information that is meaningful. In doing this, we want to ensure that your views are considered when delivering our activities and reporting on them. For regular updates and invitations to take part in future consultations and surveys, contact us to join our Stakeholder Register.



Write to us

Service Performance and Communications
South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Forest View Business Park, Llantrisant, CF72 8LX



Website

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk



Email us to "Have Your Say"

hys@southwales-fire.gov.uk



Call us

01443 232000



@SWFireandrescue



@SWFireandrescue



@sw_fire_and_rescue

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.

We will respond equally to both and will reply in your language of choice without delay.

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 6.vi
28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER OF SERVICE DELIVERY

REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TARGETS 2024/2025**THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER OF SERVICE DELIVERY

REPORT PRESENTED BY DEAN LOADER, ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER OF SERVICE DELIVERY

SUMMARY

To consider the Strategic Performance Indicator Targets for 2024/2025

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners note the Performance Indicator Targets for 2024/2025.
2. That Commissioners approve delegation to ACFO for Service Delivery to review Quarter 4 2023/2024 data and planned reduction strategies and refine targets as necessary.
3. That Commissioners approve publication of targets onto the SWFRS internet site.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To support performance monitoring within the Service, previous performance is reviewed to inform targets set for the forthcoming year. These indicator targets are made available to the public via our internet site and are referenced within corporate documents produced and published by the Service. They provide a benchmark of expected demand against which actual incident data can be compared.
- 1.2 There is a requirement under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to report annually to Welsh Government (WG) on seven Strategic Performance Indicators. There are four incident-based indicators, two fatality and injury indicators and one effective response indicator.

- 1.3 The targets for 2024/2025 are proposed prior to the start of the reporting year, utilising a profiling process that considered nine months of 2023/2024 actual incident data and a further four years of historic incident data to provide a baseline target figure.
- 1.4 Other factors that may influence our ability to meet targets are also considered such as planned reduction strategies and changes in legislation that may change the call profile for the service.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The purpose of these indicators is to measure activity that has a direct or significant impact on desired outcomes.

The indicators are:

- The number of incidents attended (made up of four separate indicators which are for Total fires, Total false alarms, Total Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) and Other Special Service Calls (SSCs) attended).
 - The number of deaths and injuries caused by all fires and accidental fires (two indicators).
 - The percentage of dwelling fires which were contained in the room in which they originated (one indicator).
- 2.2 The baseline figures are to be further reviewed by the ACFO for Service Delivery with due consideration given to changing call profiles, ongoing risk reduction activities and public safety campaigns planned for 2024/2025.
 - 2.3 The number of fires attended in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be lower than the number attended during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 5,743.
 - 2.4 The number of false alarms attended in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be higher than the number attended during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 8,660.
 - 2.5 The number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be higher than the number attended during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 838.
 - 2.6 The number of Other Special Service Calls (SSCs) attended in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be higher than the number attended during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 2,906.

- 2.7 The number of Deaths and Injuries as a result of fire in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be lower than the number recorded during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 55, based on prediction of seven deaths and 48 serious or slight injuries where the victim went to hospital. It must be noted that, in setting this target for performance monitoring, our aspiration remains to eliminate all deaths and injuries as a result of fire.
- 2.8 The number of Deaths and Injuries as a result of an accidental fire in 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be lower than the number attended during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 46, comprising five deaths and 41 serious or slight injuries requiring hospital treatment.
- 2.9 The % of dwelling fires confined to the room the fire originated in for 2023/2024 is currently predicted to be lower than during the previous reporting year. The provisional target for 2024/2025 is forecasted to be 83.6%.
- 2.10 The Background Paper (Appendix 1) provides full details of the five-year trend performance based on the Strategic Indicators.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

There are no specific implications relating to Community and Environment as a result of target setting, although consideration will be taken in benchmarking exercises of the impact of incidents on specific communities and groups, including consideration of socio-economic factors and vulnerabilities. This extends to environmental considerations where relevant.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

We have an obligation under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to report annually to Welsh Government (WG) on seven Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs). Setting targets against these SPIs allows us to benchmark our performance against previous years.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

There are no specific implications relating to Resources, Assets and Delivery as a result of target setting, although SPI targets recommended by this report provide and indicator of demand that can inform planning in these areas.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 These targets have been set with the assistance of our Statistics and Risk team utilising a profiling process that considered nine months of 2023/2024 incident data and a further four years of historic incident data to provide a projection for target setting.
- 4.2 Adjustments to these targets may be necessary at the end of the financial year once the volume of incidents attended during Quarter 4 is known and included in the profile.
- 4.3 Whilst this set of performance indicators satisfies the statutory reporting requirements on the Service there is a future aspiration to set a broader suite of indicators under the new governance and assurance framework of the organisation.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Commissioners note the Performance Indicator Targets proposed for 2024/2025.
- 5.2 That Commissioners approve delegation to ACFO for Service Delivery to review Quarter 4 2023/2024 data and planned reduction strategies and refine targets as necessary.
- 5.3 That Commissioners approve publication of targets onto the SWFRS internet site.

Contact Officer:	Wayne Thomas Head of Service Performance and Communications	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Target Setting Analysis 2024/2025

Appendix 1:

Target Setting Analysis 2024-2025

Target Setting 2024-2025

Total Incidents

All Fires Attended

Actual 2022-2023	6,031	Target:	5,601	Description: All fires attended by SWFRS. A reportable fire means an event of uncontrolled burning involving flames, heat or smoke and which the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) attended.	Direction of Travel: 
Prediction 2023-2024	5,664	Target:	5,889		
Projected 2024-2025	5,743				

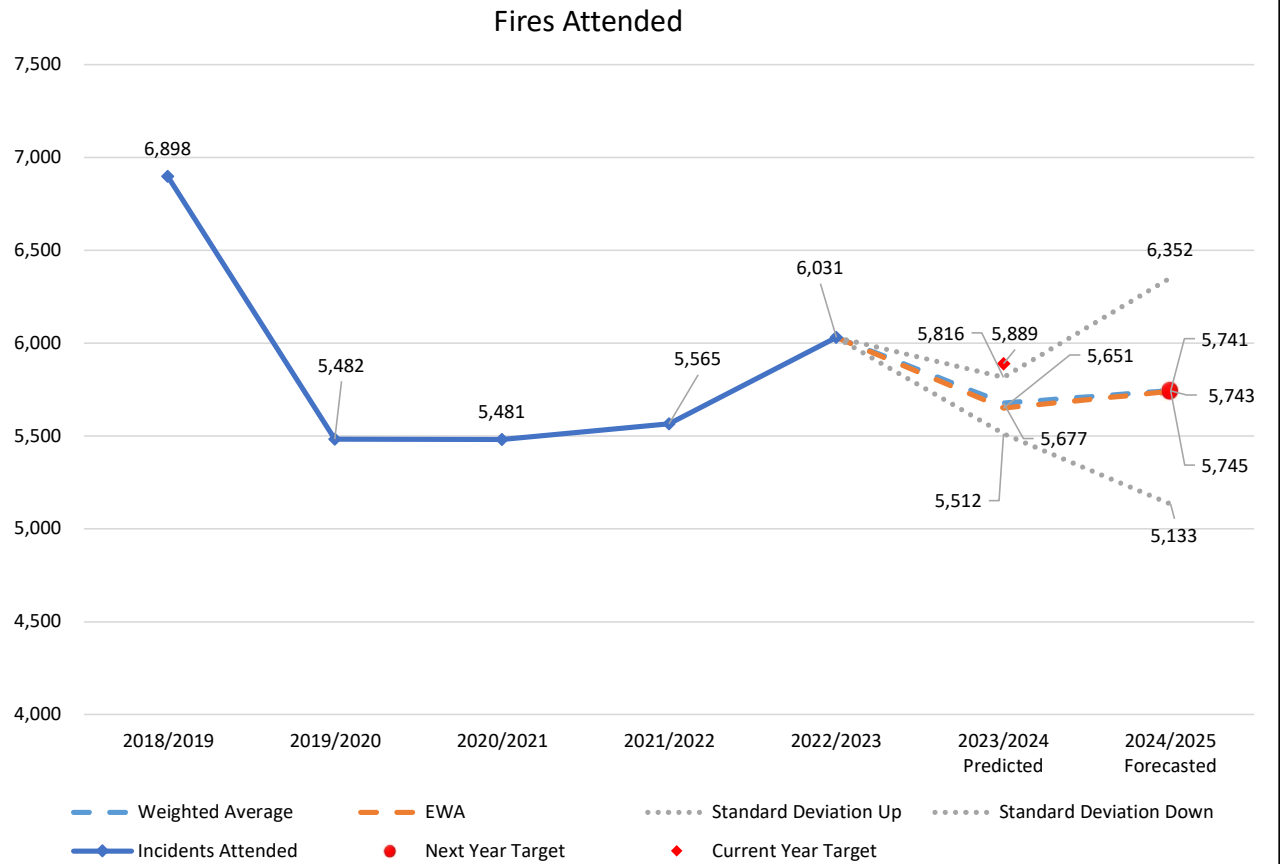
Target Setting Rationale

Total fires attended by the end of the current financial year, based on incidents recorded in Q1-3, is predicted to be lower than last year by 6.1% (-367). This is below the target projected for the year of 5,889 and driven by Q1-3 falls in the number of deliberate refuse fires (from 2,068 to 1,703, -18%) and grass fires (from 1,004 to 747, -26%). Overall, deliberate fires have reduced by 13% (3,625 to 3,162) and accidental fires by 3% (1,384 to 1,350).

Proportionally, refuse fires have accounted for 42% of all fires compared with 45% in the previous year and grass fires for 20% compared to 23%. Vehicle fires have risen from 492 to 544 in Q1-3, increasing as a proportion of all fires from 10% to 12%.

Annually, there is an increase in grass fires from Easter and, depending on weather conditions, there may be a further spike in Summer months. In Q1 of 2023-2024, fire incidents were following a pattern similar to 2018-2019 but were limited from the end of June by a change in weather conditions. In 2018, a prolonged period of very hot, dry weather led to spate conditions during which 1,040 grass fires were attended in July (for comparison, the average for July over subsequent years is 106). In the last two years, we have seen similar but lower summer increases driven by periods of extreme hot weather and expect this pattern to continue.

The projection of 5,743 fires in 2024-2025 anticipates a marginal increase on the current year. Setting a target for 2024-2025 at this level confirms the Service's aspiration to limit deliberate fires, working in partnership with stakeholders and local communities.



All False Alarms Attended

Actual 2022-2023	8,746	Target:	8,114	Description:	Attendance at fire or other incident that did not exist, including False Alarms due to Apparatus, Malicious False Alarms and Good Intent False Alarms.	Direction of Travel:
Prediction 2023-2024	8,982	Target:	8,315			
Projected 2024-2025	8,660					

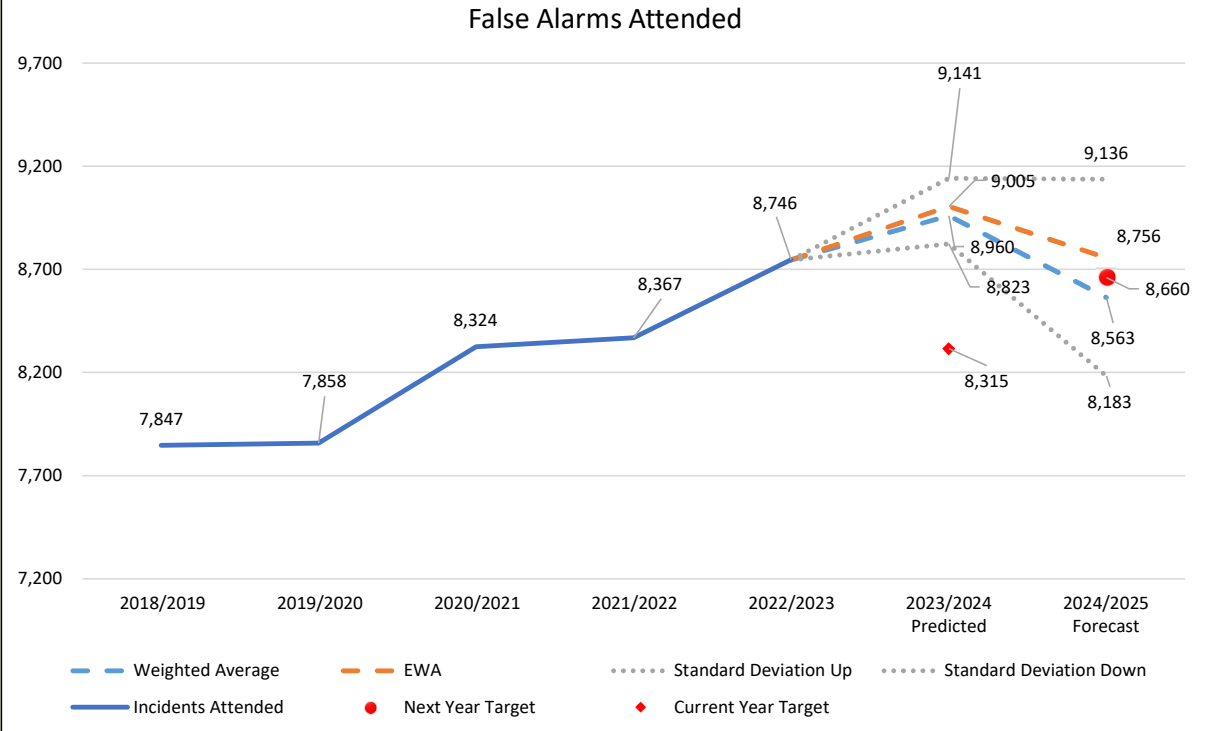
Target Setting Rationale

Based on Q1-3 incidents, the prediction for total false alarms attended in 2023-2024 is 2.7% higher than the previous year's actual total, increasing from 8,746 to 8,982 (+236). However, this prediction is based on taking a mid-point estimate for year end and is likely to approach or exceed the upper estimate of 9,141 given recent monthly increases. The Q1-3 total false alarms attended in 2023-2024 is 7,084, an increase of 4.6% from the same period total of 6,774 in 2022-2023. False Alarms now account for 48% of all calls attended.

Underlying this increase is a 6% increase in False Alarms due to Apparatus (AFAs), from 4,095 to 4,353 in Q1-3, representing a marginal increase as a proportion of all false alarms from 60.4% to 61.4%, and 60.5% of all false alarms in the last 10 years. The projected figure for 2024-2025 is based on no change to the Service's policy on attendance at AFAs. Pending confirmation of the scope of any revision, the following calculation is based on AFA attendance restricted to Dwellings and specific Other Residential Premises (Residential Homes, Other Residential Homes and Sheltered Housing (not self-contained)) only, which represent 39.2% of all AFA incidents attended in the last 10 years. Applying this restriction would reduce the projection for 2024-2025 from 8,660 to 5,516 (3,144 fewer incidents, reduction of 36.3%). Introducing this restriction after six months would see a reduction from 8,660 to 7,088 (1,572 fewer incidents, reduction of 18.2%). It should be noted that the proportion of AFAs attended at the specified property types has recorded annual increases in the last five years, therefore it is expected that AFA attendances would increase from a lower base. There should also be consideration of the scope of premises continuing to be attended, eg, heritage buildings of cultural significance and schools which are of community importance.

False Alarm Good Intent incidents have fallen by 1% (2,452 to 2,431), mirroring the reduction in grass and refuse fire incidents in Q1-3 2023-2024. False Alarm Malicious calls have decreased by 9% compared to last year (227 to 207).

As a Service we are attempting to drive down these incidents, implementing the recommendations of the recent Audit Wales Report on Reducing Fire False Alarms. The provisional projection for 2024-2025 is forecast to be 8,660 using a mid-point estimate but this may be revised using further data collected for Q4 of 2023-2024.



Road Traffic Collisions Attended

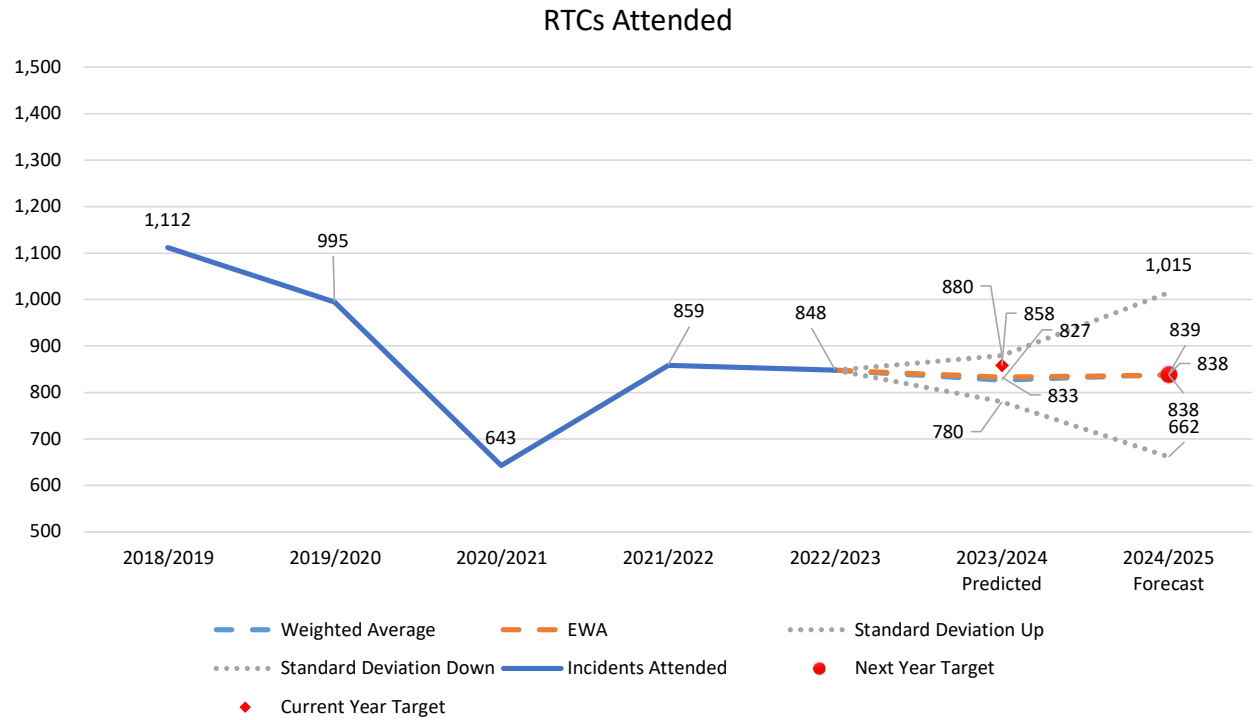
Actual 2022-2023	848	Target:	870	Description: Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs): where a mechanically propelled vehicle (eg a car, lorry or motorbike) on a public road or other public place causes damage to someone else's property or vehicle, or any other person or animal is injured.	Direction of Travel: 
Prediction 2023-2024	830	Target:	858		
Projected 2024-2025	838				

Target Setting Rationale

While the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) attended in 2023-2024 is predicted to be 830 which is a year-on-year reduction of 18 incidents (-2.1%), there has been a 2% increase in recorded incidents compared to last year in Q1-Q3 (614 to 624). This is due to monthly increases during Q1-2 but there was a fall in monthly incidents during Q3. It is therefore expected that year-end will be below the expected total of 848 incidents.

The percentage of extrication and release of persons has reduced slightly to 18% (112 of 624 incidents). Last year it was 19% with 114 of 614 incidents. While the impact of 30/20 road speed reductions has yet to be fully evaluated, we continue to support the change and monitor our demand profile.

The provisional projection for 2024-2025 is forecast at 838. However, road traffic volumes and patterns continue to be monitored post-pandemic restrictions and with speed changes on local roads.



Other Special Service Calls Attended

Actual 2022-2023	3,080	Target:	2,467	Description:	Includes Special Service Incidents to which the FRS provides an emergency response, with the exception of RTCs	Direction of Travel:
Prediction 2023-2024	3,146	Target:	2,698			
Projected 2024-2025	2,906					

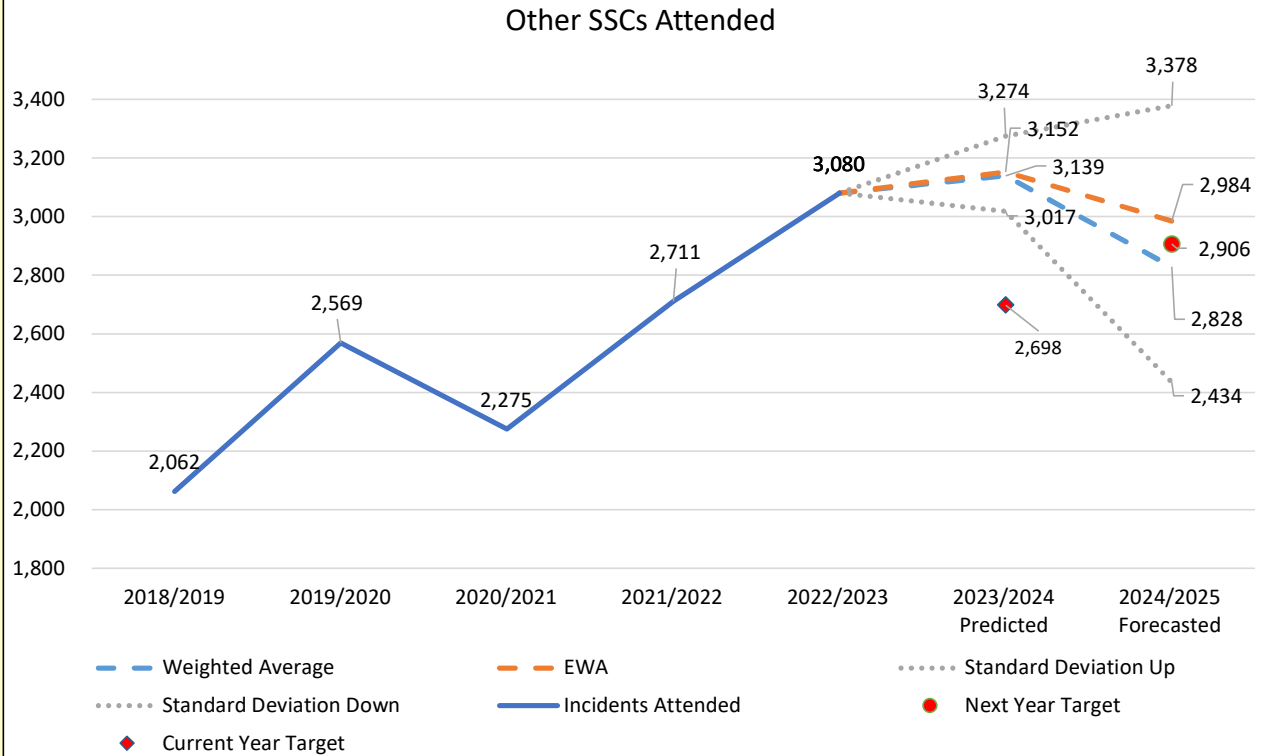
Target Setting Rationale

Other Special Service Calls (SSCs) attended have risen steadily since 2021-2022 and the predicted total for 2023-2024 based on Q1-3 would see a further annual increase, from 3,080 in 2022-2023 to 3,146 in 2023-2024 (+2.1%). Note, however, that comparison of Q1-3 indicates an annual increase of 4.4%. At the lower prediction for year end, the target for 2023-2024 of 2,698 would be exceeded by 16.6%.

In Q1-3, Assist other agencies incidents have increased from 510 to 657 (+29%) compared to last year with the sub-set of Bariatric incidents attended increasing from 158 to 221 (+40%). From 2020-2021 to 2022-2023, full year totals rose from 391 to 666 for Assist other agencies incidents and from 137 to 221 for Bariatric incidents.

Effecting entry/exit incidents rose from 210 in 2020-2021 to 412 in total for 2022-2023 (+96%), with current year expected to be similar to last year. Assistance at suicides has also increased from 41 to 66 (+61%). Water rescues increased from 24 to 50 comparing Q1-3 in the current year with 2022-2023.

Given the changing demand profile in relation to SSCs and related considerations regarding the changing role of the firefighter, the projection of 2,906 incidents in 2024-2025 warrants review in light of final year incident statistics.



Target Setting 2024-2025

Deaths and Injuries

Deaths and Injuries in Fires

Actual 2022-2023	63	Target:	59	Description:	Fire Death – means a person who has died as a direct or indirect result of injuries received at the fire. Injury – Non-fatal casualty means a person injured as a direct result of the fire (but not fatally injured) - includes victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious and victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight	Direction of Travel:
Prediction 2023-2024	44	Target:	62			
Projected 2024-2025	55					

Target Setting Rationale

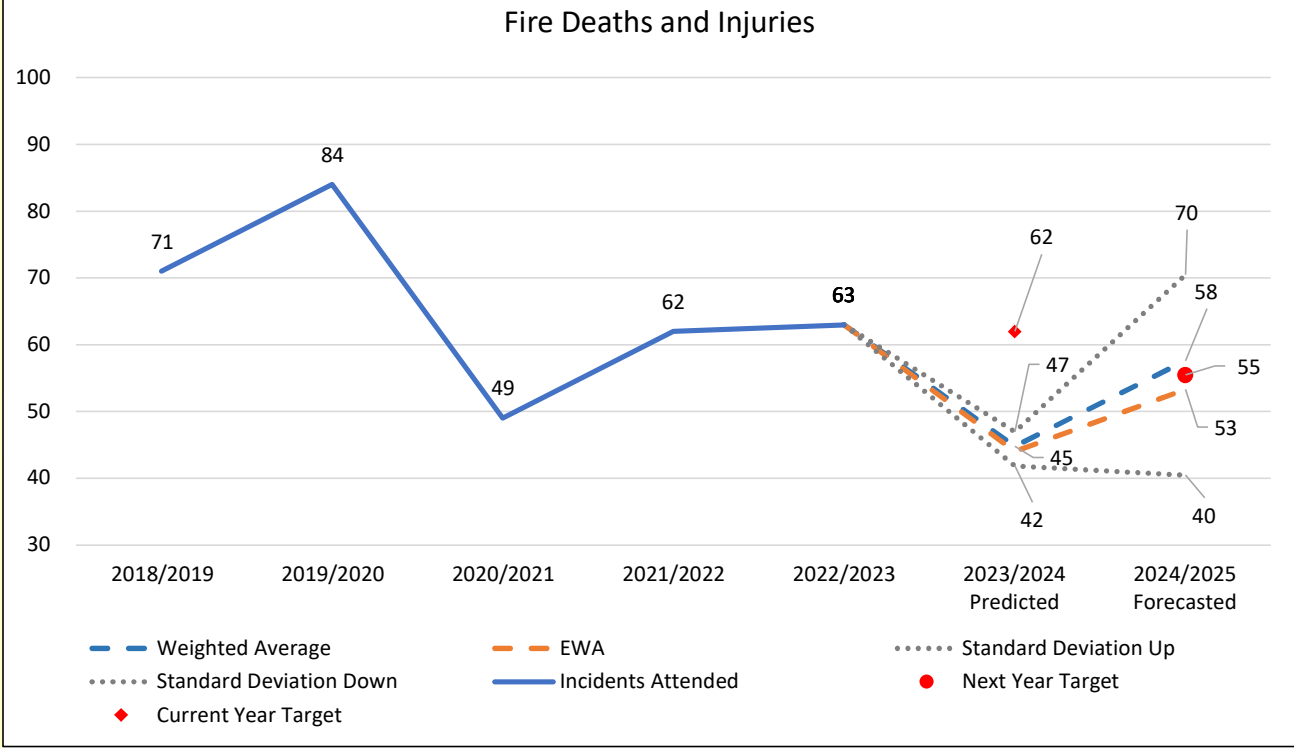
The total number of Deaths and Injuries as a result of fire in 2023-2024 is currently predicted to be 44, which is lower than last year (63) and below the target of 62. However, please note that this figure is subject to change, pending validation of incident records.

Data for Q1-3 indicates a 43% reduction compared to last year in Q1-Q3 (49 to 28). Deaths from fires are the same as last year with three in Q1-Q3. Two of the three fatalities this year have been in accidental dwelling fires and the other was in a vehicle fire.

Serious injuries requiring hospital treatment have reduced from 14 last year to 9 (-36%) this year while slight injuries have fallen from 32 last year to 19 (-41%) this year.

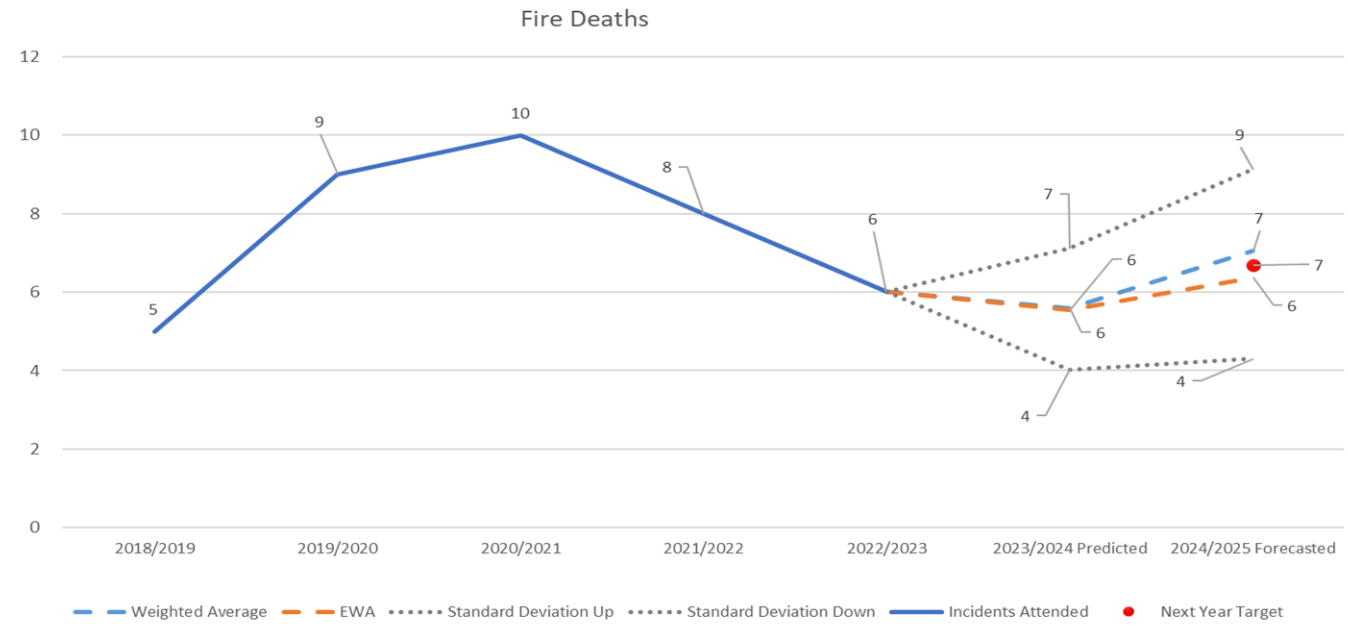
As illustrated in the chart, there was a notable drop in fire related deaths and injuries in 2020-2021, coinciding with pandemic restrictions, and numbers have risen since, but remaining below pre-pandemic levels. Our aspiration is to eradicate deaths and injuries, hence targeting of risk reduction activities at those most vulnerable.

The provisional target for this indicator in 2024-2025 is forecast to be 55, comprising 48 predicted injuries and seven predicted deaths. Charts on the following page provide further breakdown, showing the projection for 2024-2025 comprises prediction of seven deaths and 48 non-fatal casualties

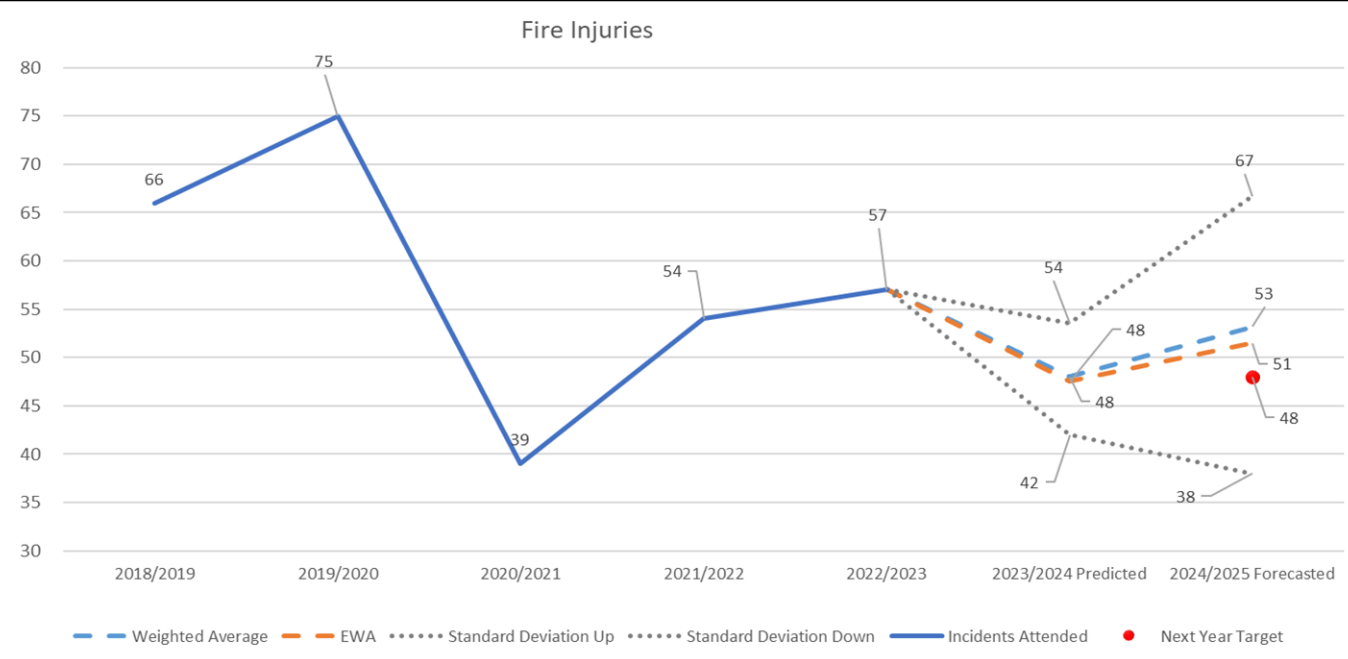


Deaths and Injuries in Fires

Breakdown of historical records and projections



Although overall total deaths and injuries in fires fell in 2020-2021, there was an increase in Deaths due to fire. Subsequently, there have been consistent reductions. However, this prediction relates to very low numbers and may therefore be significantly impacted by a small number of incidents. Projection for 2024-2025 is for seven fire related deaths.



While the last two years have seen increases in the number of fire related injuries, this was from a very low base of 39 injuries in 2020-2021. At present, 2023-2024 projection is expected to be below the target set for the year and a similar figure predicted for 2024-2025. Projection for 2024-2025 is for 48 serious or slight injuries requiring hospital treatment.

Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires

Actual 2022-2023	52	Target:	48	Description: Fire Death – means a person who has died as a direct or indirect result of injuries received at the fire. Injury – Non-fatal casualty means a person injured as a direct result of the fire (but not fatally injured) - victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be serious and victim went to hospital, injuries appear to be slight	Direction of Travel:
Prediction 2023-2024	37	Target:	47		
Projected 2024-2025	46				

Target Setting Rationale

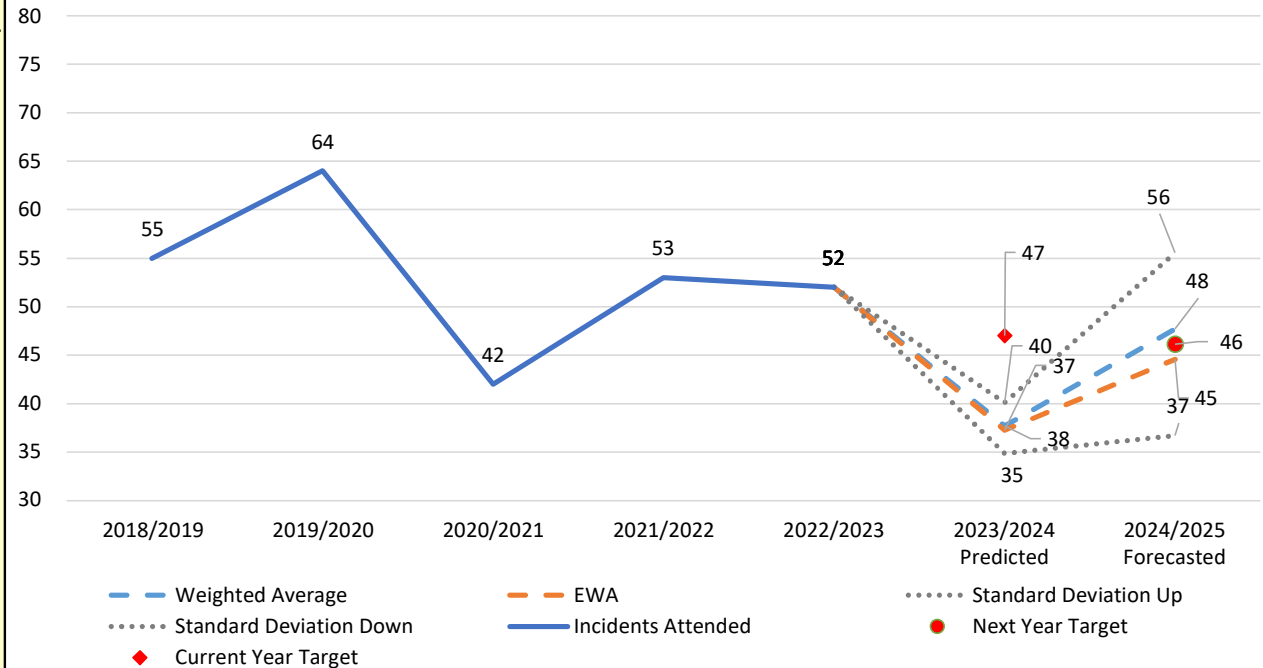
The number of Deaths and Injuries as a result of an accidental fire in 2023-2024 is currently predicted to be 37, which is lower than the number attended during the previous reporting year (52) and below the target of 47.

Accidental Deaths and Injuries attended have reduced by seven (-29%) from 24 to 17 compared to Q1-Q3 last year. Accidental Deaths from fires have reduced from three last year in Q1-Q3 to two this year. Both accidental deaths from fires were in dwelling fires.

Serious injuries have decreased from 13 last year to three this year and slight injuries have fallen from 25 to 19. The Service continues to prioritise risk reduction activities, targeting those at greatest risk in our communities, to achieve our aspiration of zero fire related deaths.

The projected figure for 2024-2025 is forecast to be 46 but should be reviewed based on finalised incident records at year end. Following page provides a breakdown of this projection, comprising five deaths and 41 serious or slight injuries requiring hospital treatment.

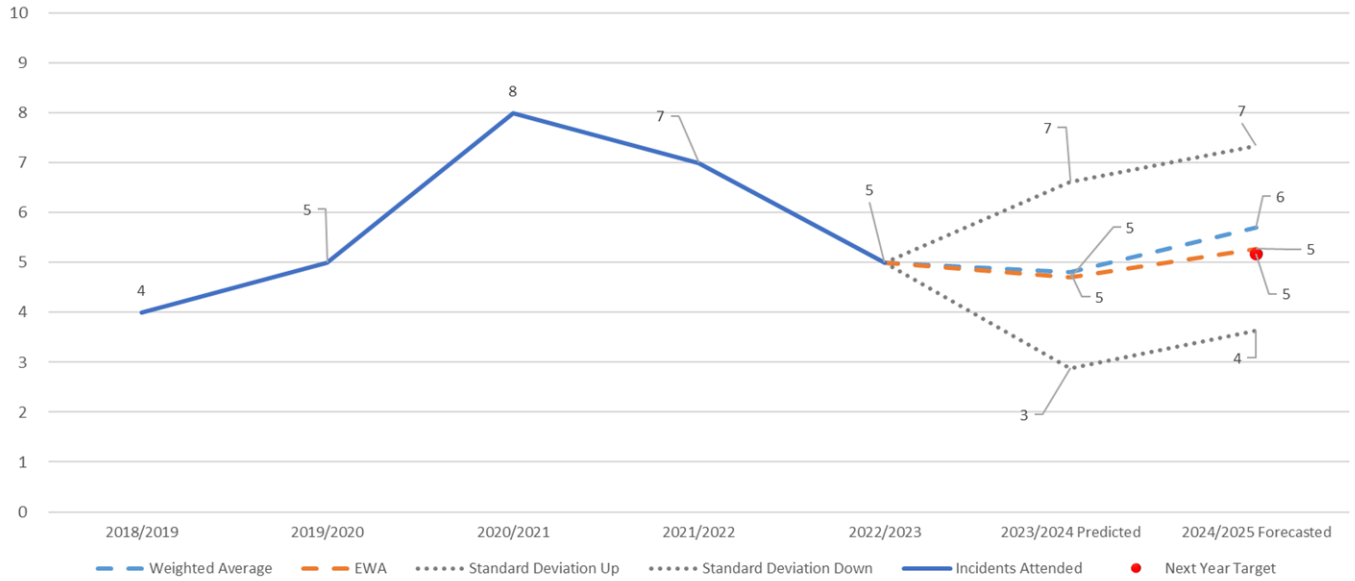
Accidental Fire Deaths and Injuries



Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires

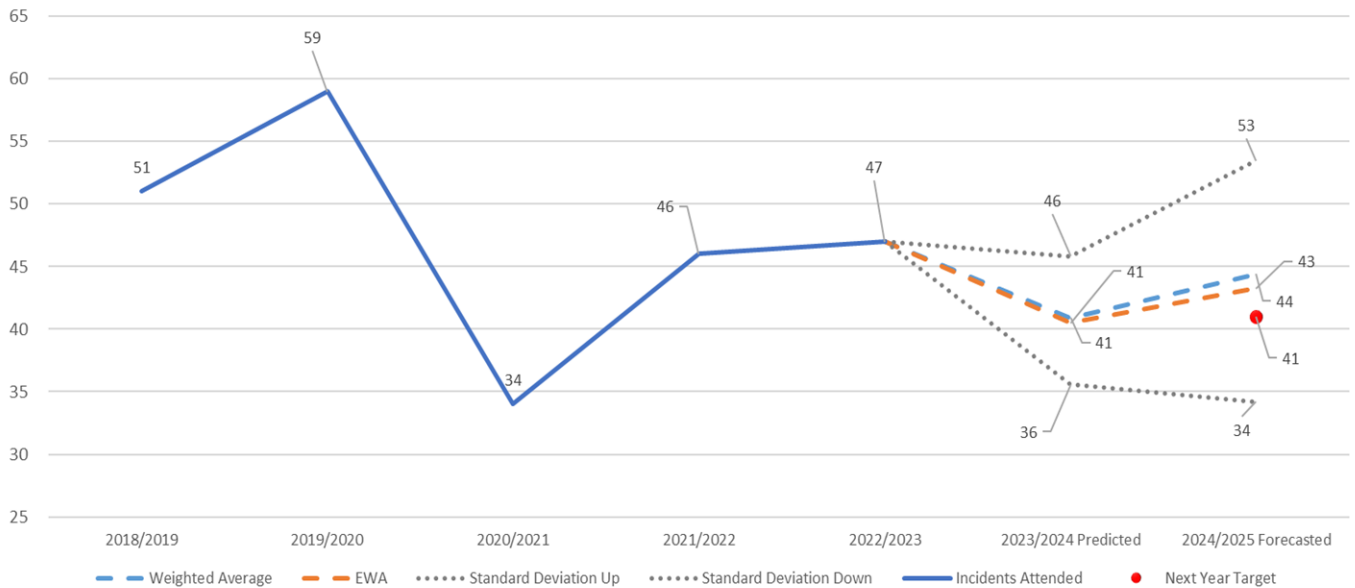
Breakdown of historical records and projections

Accidental Fire Deaths



The downward trend in deaths in accidental fires is expected to level out in the current and coming year. However, this prediction relates to very low numbers and may therefore be significantly impacted by a small number of incidents. Our aspiration remains to deliver risk reduction advice to those most at risk in order to eliminate deaths due to accidental fires. The projection for 2024-2025 is five accidental fire-related deaths.

Accidental Fire Injuries



Data for Q1-3 in 2023-2024 suggests a reduction in injuries due to accidental fires in the current year, which is expected to sustain into next year. This is subject to change, pending validation of incident records. The projection for 2024-2025 is 41 serious or slight injuries requiring hospital treatment as a result of accidental fires.

Target Setting 2024-2025

Effective Response

Effective Response

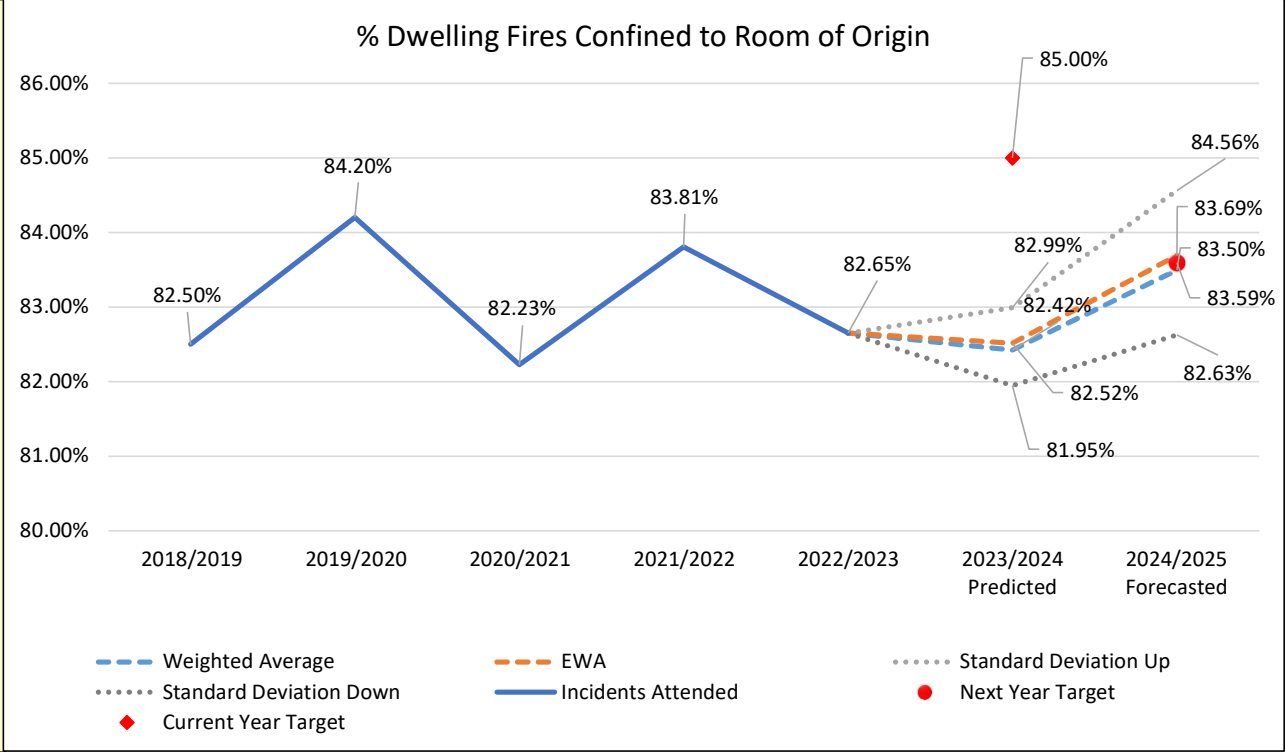
Actual 2022-2023	82.65%	Target:	85%	Description: The Percentage of dwelling fires which were contained in the room in which they originated. Note: for this indicator, higher is better.	Direction of Travel: 
Prediction 2023-2024	82.50%	Target:	85%		
Projected 2024-2025	83.59%				

Target Setting Rationale

The percentage of dwelling fires confined to the room of origin in 2023-2024 is currently predicted to be 82.5%, which is slightly lower than the previous reporting year (82.6%) and below the target of 85%.

In Q1-Q3 of the current year, 418 of 500 dwelling fires have been confined to the room of origin (83.6%) compared with 424 of 518 dwelling fires that were confined to the room of origin in the same period last year (81.9%). Work is ongoing to identify factors contributing to variance in this indicator, including travel times, impact of alarms and/or sprinkler systems and firefighting action taken.

The provisional target for 2024-2025 is forecast to be 83.59%.



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

AGENDA ITEM NO 6.vii

28 MARCH 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND
RESCUE SERVICEREPORT OF THE ACO CORPORATE SERVICES & THE INTERNAL
AUDITORS**INTERNAL AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT 31 MARCH 2024 & INTERNAL
AUDIT PLAN 2024/25****THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**REPORT APPROVED BY ACO CORPORATE SERVICES & THE INTERNAL
AUDITORSREPORT PRESENTED BY ACO CORPORATE SERVICES & THE
INTERNAL AUDITORS**SUMMARY**

This report summarises the Internal Audit work that has been undertaken during this financial year and presents the 2024/25 plan for internal audit.

RECOMMENDATION

1. To note the work and overall opinion of the Internal Auditors for the financial year 2023/24.
2. To approve the draft annual Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 TIAA Limited are the appointed Internal Auditors who undertake work as outlined in the annual Internal Audit Plan. For the benefit of the Commissioners this report provides a summary of the internal audit findings for years 2022/23 and 2023/24 at appendix 1.
- 1.2 Commissioners are asked to note the work and overall opinions of the Internal Auditors for both 2022/23 and 2023/24. Enclosed at appendix 2 is the finalised Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23 (as some work was finalised after the report to the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee of SWFRA on 13 March 2023. At that time there were four assurance assessments pending those being:

- Collaboration – Co-location
- Payroll
- Contract Management
- Sustainable Procurement

- 1.3 Appendix 3 then contains the Indicative Internal Audit Report 2023/24. There are currently four assurance assessments pending for 2023/24 those being:
- Estates Strategy – Property Compliance -
 - Sustainability
 - Health and Safety Management
 - Payroll – Core HR Pay Award and Month-end Payroll Processing
- 1.4 Commissioners are requested to agree the enclosed plan for the advancing year of 2024/25, this is presented together with an indicative, 3-year strategy at appendix 4.

2. ISSUE

- 2.1 During the previous months the Fire Authority received regular reports providing updates against the Plan and this report summarises the outcomes of all the audits undertaken.
- 2.2 Throughout the Financial Years 2022/23 and 2023/24, 24 audits were planned, 19 were completed and 5 are outstanding at the time of reporting and are due to be completed by 31 March.
- 2.3 Based on the evidence provided, the Internal Auditor can draw a reasonable conclusion as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Service's risk management, control, and governance processes. 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.
- 2.4 The Internal Auditor's opinion for the year will support the Annual Governance Statement, which will be considered by Commissioners prior to inclusion in the Annual Statement of Accounts.
- 2.5 The 2024/25 plan is part of a rolling strategy to ensure periodic coverage of key areas and aspects of the Service although is not inflexible and has ability to address emerging risks arising in the period and is substantively set through this reporting mechanism.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 In regard to implications for community and environment the processes and work assessed during the internal audit process have no adverse impact on protected characteristics as these would have been considered during the initial activity and also the individual audit process. Similarly, the Services responsibilities under the Socio-economic duty are supported in a wider sense by the audit process. The audit process also contributes to WFG Act by supporting a more resilient and globally responsible. The systems tested during the audit process supports both carbon reduction and sustainability which are priorities for the Service.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 The Internal Auditor's opinion will support the Annual Governance Statement and be included in the Annual Statement of Accounts. In year reporting to Commissioners will provide progress updates and information of the Services performance and position. Regulatory responsibilities, strategic planning and performance of the Service and the policies of the organisation as well as the Services response to Welsh and UK wide policies are directly tested throughout the internal audit programme with improvement actions and advice acted upon.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 The audit process, report and challenge reviews resources of both our structures and the ability to deliver services. A view on the Services assets (in terms of finance, property, fleet, ICT and equipment) is developed through the internal audit process with observations and recommendations considered in future planning and action.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Appendix 1 provides a high-level view of the recommendations from the audit programme for the 2022/23 and 2023/24. The table below is a summary:

Assurance Assessments	Number of Reviews (2023/24)	Number of Reviews (2022/23)	Number of Reviews (2021/2022)
Substantial Assurance	2	4	5
Reasonable Assurance	4	8	4
Limited Assurance	1	-	-
No Assurance	-	-	-
Awaiting Conclusion	5		

- 4.2 For the 2023/24 year there are 5 Audits awaiting conclusion those being:
- Estates Strategy – Property Compliance - Scheduled date: 25/03/2024
 - Sustainability - Scheduled date: 05/02/2024
 - Health and Safety Management - Scheduled date: 26/02/2024
 - Payroll – Core HR Pay Award and Month-end Payroll Processing - Fieldwork completed – draft report pending
 - Core HR - Scheduled date: 25/03/2024

- 4.3 The draft opinion of the Head of Internal Audit in the draft report issued 5th February 2024 is:

“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.

An update of the annual report will be completed at year end when all reviews are completed.”

- 4.4 The 2024/25 annual plan detailed in pages 3-7 of Appendix 4 is summarised as follows:

Quarter	Review	Type
1	ICT and Digital Strategy	Assurance
1	Fleet Strategy	Assurance
2	Communications	Assurance
2	Station Visits	Compliance
2	Procurement Cards	Compliance
2	Capital Planning	Assurance
3	Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance
3	Governance	Assurance
3	Estates Strategy – Planned and Preventative Maintenance	Assurance
4	Anti-Fraud	Compliance
4	Airwave / Emergency Services Network (Deferred from 2023/24)	Assurance
4	Follow Up	Follow Up
1	Annual Planning	Management
4	Annual Report	Management
1-4	Audit Management	Management

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 To note the work and overall opinion of the Internal Auditors for the financial year 2023/2024.
- 5.2 To approve the draft annual Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25

Contact Officer:	ACO Geraint Thomas
Background Papers	Appendix 1 – Summary of Internal Audit Findings 2022/23 and 2023/24 Appendix 2 - Internal Audit Annual Report 2022/23 Appendix 3 – Indicative Internal Audit Report 2023/24 Appendix 4 – Indicative Audit Strategy 2023/26 and Annual Audit Plan 2024/25

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Appendix 1: Summary of the internal audit findings for years 2022/23 and 2023/24

Internal Annual Audit Report 2022/23 - Final report Issued 5th February 2024

HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT'S ANNUAL OPINION 2022/2023

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.

Assurance Assessments	Number of Reviews (2022/23)	Previous Year (2021/2022)
Substantial Assurance	4	5
Reasonable Assurance	8	4
Limited Assurance	-	-
No Assurance	-	-

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2022/23	Action Points
Rosters	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>1 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of Crew Manager and Watch Manager over and under availability be developed and provided to management alongside the existing performance data. <p>4 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All policies and procedures relating to rostering arrangements be reviewed and updated in line with prescribed timescales. All such policies should clearly state review dates. Access privileges to the Kronos system be periodically verified to ensure that they remain appropriate to current job roles. The establishment of the Flexible Rostering Working Group should be put on a more formal basis, with a terms of reference covering the following: * composition / representation on the group; * meeting timetable; *

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2022/23	Action Points
			<p>communication / reporting arrangements; * output of meetings e.g. minutes / action logs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal minutes should be produced at meetings of the Flexible Rostering Working Group in order to allow tracking of issues over time.
Collaboration – Co-location	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>1 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to finalise the current lease agreement template and standardised cost recovery mechanism.
Human Resources Management – Wellbeing	Assurance	Substantial	<p>1x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The review of the suite of documents relating to health and wellbeing be completed as planned.
Station Visits	Compliance	Reasonable	<p>2 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Events Risk - Management policy be updated to include the correct procedure for the banking of income raised during fundraising events. Following this, a bulletin be issued to notify all members of staff of the change to the policy. • Clarification be given on the purpose of the asset inventories and subsequently all asset inventories be updated to include all assets and all assets be labelled correctly. <p>2 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assets held at Merthyr Tydfil Fire Station, Pontypridd Fire Station and Abertillery Fire Station be reconciled to asset inventories and the records be updated to reflect the assets present. • PAT inspection be undertaken at Merthyr Tydfil Fire Station, Pontypridd Fire Station and Abertillery Fire Station to ensure electrical items are within the two-year limit.
Payroll	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>1 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff be reminded to notify HR of changes before the monthly Payroll run to avoid overpayments. <p>2 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Travelling, Subsistence, and Travel Time Claims procedures be updated in line with the review timetable.

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2022/23	Action Points
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR staff be reminded to include salaries on the Request to Submit Contract forms.
Contract Management	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>1 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal periodic contract management meetings take place for all term contracts. <p>2 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrangements be put in place to ensure that the responsibility for obtaining contractor insurances are the start of each contract and concurrently throughout its term is formally communicated and understood by the officer assigned responsibility for management of contracts. Arrangements be put in place to ensure where contracts include provisions for service credits and associated performance monitoring, these are identified and agreed at the outset of the contract and reported and acted upon concurrently throughout the term of the contract.
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Assurance	Substantial	<p>3 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Data protection and Information Governance policies and procedures review dates be updated. A Records Management Policy be put in place. The CCTV and Image Recording Systems Procedure review date be updated. The Managing Information Security Incidents Procedure review date be updated.
ICT Network Security	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>3 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management to oversee the replacement of any firewalls that are no longer supported. Management to ensure that all legacy systems are segregated from the network until all risks have been mitigated. Management to ensure that external facing penetration testing is completed at least annually. <p>1 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All ISMS policies be regularly reviewed, updated and appropriately authorised.

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2022/23	Action Points
Key Financial Controls	Assurance	Reasonable	1 x Important <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of Purchasing Card Agreement forms be completed for all cardholders to ensure all cardholders have signed a form to evidence their agreement to comply with the terms of the agreement.
Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	Substantial	1 x Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions arising from the Risk Reduction Business Plan be added to BMIS to enable oversight and monitoring.
Human Resources Management – Training	Assurance	Substantial	1 x Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedural documents be updated in accordance with agreed frequencies.
Sustainable Procurement	Assurance	Reasonable	2 x Routine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to sign up to the Emergency Services Environment and Sustainability Group (EESG). Content be developed on the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service website to provide potential suppliers with information procurement processes within the organisation.

Internal Annual Audit Report 2023/24 - Indicative Draft Report issued: 5th February 2024

HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT'S ANNUAL OPINION 2023/2024

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.

An update of the annual report will be completed at year end when all reviews are completed.

Assurance Assessments	Number of Reviews (2023/24)	Previous Year (2022/23)
Substantial Assurance	2	4
Reasonable Assurance	4	8
Limited Assurance	1	-
No Assurance	-	-

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2023/24	Action Points
Electric Vehicle Charging	Assurance	Limited	<p>DRAFT REPORT</p> <p>1 x Urgent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An Electric Vehicle Charging Policy be developed and be communicated and made available to all staff. <p>1 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EV Charge Card Sign Out List spreadsheet be kept up to date fully completed with date of issue and to whom the card was issued and their department. <p>3 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant managers be reminded to check and disconnect vehicles that are left unnecessarily on charge at Electric Vehicle Charging Points. The four anomalies identified where the charging end date is prior to the start date be investigated with BP Pulse. Resilience be identified for the ongoing analysing and monitoring of the data on the BP Pulse system. <p>1 x Operational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration be given to the possible increase in the electrical grid capacity as an emerging risk within the Departmental Risk Register.
Assets - Mobile Phones	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>3 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The next ICT Plan be drafted and approved to ensure continuity in strategic direction for ICT. Smartphone agreements be completed for all phones currently issued to users in compliance with A&E Note 52. An ICT Asset Management Policy and procedures be drafted and approved as planned. All assets be added to the Asset Management

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2023/24	Action Points
			<p>System, House on the Hill, at the point of purchase to comply with the Service's policy of maintaining a central asset inventory. This will facilitate sharing of information, monitoring, and ensure the consistency of data across platforms.</p> <p>5 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governance section in the new ICT plan be updated to reflect current governance arrangements. • A contract be awarded via the appropriate procurement process for the disposal of mobile phones. • A complete record of all phones ready for disposal be created. • Reports be run from UEM on a regular basis to identify any phones that are inactive and need to be returned to ICT because they are no longer needed or relate to leavers equipment held in departments but have not yet been returned. • The report on station manager use of iPhones be completed and submitted for review, and a decision reached on assigning smartphones to station managers.
ICT Data Assurance	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>2 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update and authorise changes to the Information Security Management System (ISMS) policies and communicate the changes as appropriate. • Update, approve and publish the Privacy Policy on the internet. <p>4 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review procedures to ensure data that must be permanently deleted is completely removed. • Implement independent reviews of • CCTV and other video footage such as drones and body worn cameras which are managed locally to ensure data is stored and managed in accordance with information governance policies. • Develop an information classification policy and procedure and guidelines on approved methods of securely sharing data.
Station Visits	Compliance	Reasonable	1 x Important

System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2023/24	Action Points
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assets held at all Fire Stations be periodically reconciled to asset inventories.
Estates Strategy – Property Compliance	Assurance	TBC	
Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	N/A	
O365 Implementation	Assurance	Reasonable	<p>3 x Important</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a project management policy to provide guidelines that outline processes, procedures, and principles that an organisation follows to manage its future projects effectively. Formally document the approval / sign-off of the project activities and transfer to business-as-usual position by the strategic project board. Formal risk assessments are to be established for all projects to evaluate project risks and implement mitigating measures in line with the organisation's risk appetite. <p>2 x Routine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that a log of risks and issues is maintained for all projects to facilitate lessons learnt process. Carry out a review of the project to learn lessons from mistakes and to encourage good practice.
Airwave / Emergency Services Network	Assurance	N/A	
Budgetary Control	Assurance	Substantial	No action points identified
Pensions	Assurance	Substantial	No action points identified
Sustainability	Assurance	TBC	
Health and Safety Management	Assurance	TBC	
Payroll – Core HR Pay Award and Month-end Payroll Processing	Assurance	TBC	

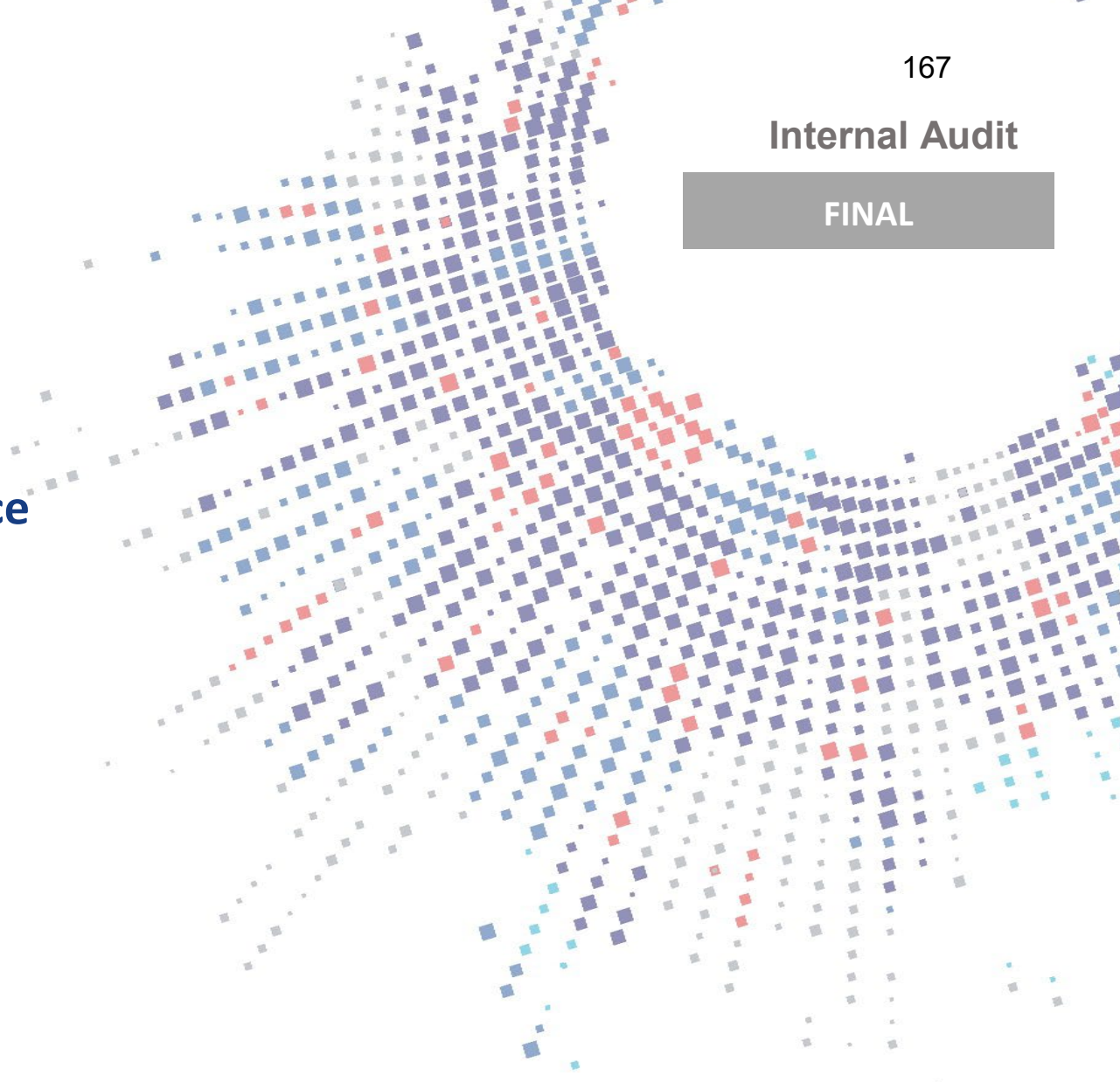
System	Type	Assurance Assessment 2023/24	Action Points
Core HR		Scheduled date: 25/03/2024	

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Internal Audit Annual Report

2022/23

February 2024



Internal Audit Annual Report

Introduction

This is the 2022/23 Annual Report by TIAA on the internal control environment at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The annual internal audit report summarises the outcomes of the reviews we have carried out on the organisation’s framework of governance, risk management and control. This report is designed to assist the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in making its annual governance statement.

Our approach is based on the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing which have been developed by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and incorporate the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). In 2022, TIAA commissioned an External Quality Assessment (EQA) of its internal audit service. The independent EQA assessor was able to conclude that TIAA ‘generally conforms to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF)’. ‘Generally conforms’ is the highest rating that can be achieved using the IIA’s EQA assessment model.

Ongoing quality assurance work was carried out throughout the year and we continue to comply with ISO 9001:2015 standards. Our work also complies with the IIA-UK Professional Standards.

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.

Internal Audit Planned Coverage and Output

The 2022/23 Annual Audit Plan approved by the Finance and Performance Management Committee was for 70 days of internal audit coverage in the year.

During the year there were no changes to the Audit Plan.

The planned work that has been carried out against the plan and the status of work not completed is set out at Annex A.

No extra work was carried out which was in addition to that set out in the Annual Audit Plan.

Assurance

TIAA carried out 12 reviews, which were designed to ascertain the extent to which the internal controls in the system are adequate to ensure that activities and procedures are operating to achieve South Wales Fire and Rescue Service’s objectives. For each assurance review an assessment of the combined effectiveness of the controls in mitigating the key control risks was provided. Details of these are provided in Annex A and a summary is set out below.

Assurance Assessments	Number of Reviews	Previous Year
Substantial Assurance	4	5
Reasonable Assurance	8	4
Limited Assurance	-	-
No Assurance	-	-

The areas on which the assurance assessments have been provided can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against misstatement or loss and their effectiveness is reduced if the internal audit recommendations made during the year have not been fully implemented.

We made the following total number of recommendations on our audit work carried out to date in 2022/23. The numbers in brackets relate to 2021/22 recommendations.

Urgent	Important	Routine
0 (0)	10 (6)	19 (10)

Audit Summary

Control weaknesses: There were no areas reviewed by internal audit where it was assessed that the effectiveness of some of the internal control arrangements provided 'limited' or 'no assurance'.

Recommendations Made: We have analysed our findings/ recommendations by risk area and these are summarised below.

Risk Area	Urgent	Important	Routine
Directed			
Governance Framework	-	2	13
Risk Mitigation	-	2	1
Compliance	-	6	3
Delivery			
Performance Monitoring	-	-	-
Sustainability	-	-	-
Resilience	-	-	2

Operational Effectiveness Opportunities: One of the roles of internal audit is to add value and during the financial year we provided advice on opportunities to enhance the operational effectiveness of the areas reviewed and the number of these opportunities is summarised below.

Operational
14 (5)

Independence and Objectivity of Internal Audit

There were no limitations or restrictions placed on the internal audit service which impaired either the independence or objectivity of the service provided.

Performance and Quality Assurance

The following Performance Targets were used to measure the performance of internal audit in delivering the Annual Plan.

Performance Measure	Target	Attained
Completion of Planned Audits	100%	100%
Audits Completed in Time Allocation	100%	100%
Final report issued within 10 working days of receipt of responses	95%	92%
Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	100%	100%

Release of Report

The table below sets out the history of this Annual Report.

Date Indicative Draft Report issued:	21 st February 2023
Date revised Indicative Draft Report issued:	2 nd March 2023
Date Final Report issued:	5 th February 2024

Annexes

Annex A

Actual against planned Internal Audit Work 2022/23

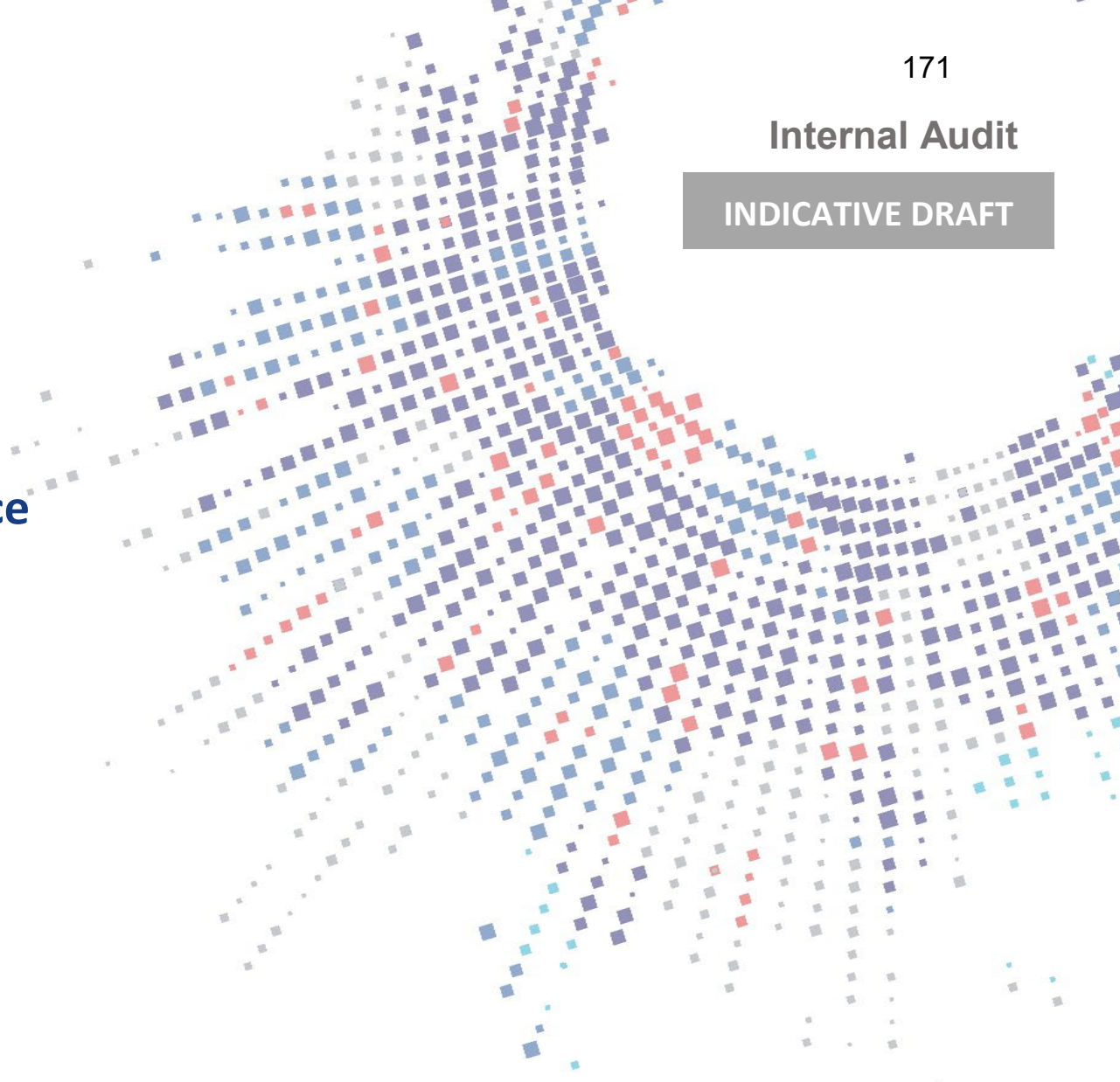
System	Type	Planned Days	Actual Days	Assurance Assessment	Comments
Collaboration – Co-location	Assurance	6	6	Reasonable	
Rosters	Assurance	6	6	Reasonable	
Human Resources Management – Wellbeing	Assurance	6	6	Substantial	
Station Visits	Compliance	4	4	Reasonable	
Payroll	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	
Contract Management	Assurance	6	6	Reasonable	
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Assurance	4	4	Substantial	
ICT Network Security	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	
Key Financial Controls	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	
Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	4	4	Substantial	
Human Resources Management – Training	Assurance	6	6	Substantial	
Sustainable Procurement	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	
Follow Up	Follow Up	2	2	N/A	
Annual Planning	-	2	2		
Annual Report	-	1	1		
Audit Management	-	7	7		
	Total Days	70	70		

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Indicative Internal Audit Annual Report

2023/24

February 2024



Internal Audit Annual Report

Introduction

This is the 2023/24 Annual Report by TIAA on the internal control environment at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The annual internal audit report summarises the outcomes of the reviews we have carried out on the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control. This report is designed to assist the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service in making its annual governance statement.

Our approach is based on the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing which have been developed by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and incorporate the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). In 2022, TIAA commissioned an External Quality Assessment (EQA) of its internal audit service. The independent EQA assessor was able to conclude that TIAA 'generally conforms to the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards and the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF).' 'Generally conforms' is the highest rating that can be achieved using the IIA's EQA assessment model. Ongoing quality assurance work was carried out throughout the year and we continue to comply with ISO 9001:2015 standards. Our work also complies with the IIA-UK Professional Standards.

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.

An update of the annual report will be completed at year end when all reviews are completed.

Internal Audit Planned Coverage and Output

The 2023/24 Annual Audit Plan approved by the Finance and Performance Management Committee was for 70 days of internal audit coverage in the year.

During the year there was one change to the Audit Plan. The planned audit of Risk Management – Mitigating Controls was replaced by a review of CoreHR at management's request.

The planned work that has been carried out against the plan and the status of work not completed is set out at Annex A.

No extra work was carried out which was in addition to that set out in the Annual Audit Plan.

Assurance

TIAA have to date carried out seven reviews, which were designed to ascertain the extent to which the internal controls in the system are adequate to ensure that activities and procedures are operating to achieve South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's objectives. For each assurance review an assessment of the combined effectiveness of the controls in mitigating the key control risks was provided. Details of these are provided in Annex A and a summary is set out below.

Assurance Assessments	Number of Reviews	Previous Year
Substantial Assurance	2	4
Reasonable Assurance	4	8
Limited Assurance	1	-
No Assurance	-	-

The assurance assessment for four reviews is to be confirmed at year end – see Annex A.

The areas on which the assurance assessments have been provided can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against misstatement or loss and their effectiveness is reduced if the internal audit recommendations made during the year have not been fully implemented.

We made the following total number of recommendations on our audit work carried out in 2023/24. The numbers will be updated for the remaining audit work following the year-end. The numbers in brackets relate to 2022/23 recommendations.

Urgent	Important	Routine
1 (0)	11 (10)	13 (19)

Audit Summary

Control weaknesses: There was one area reviewed by internal audit where it was assessed that the effectiveness of some of the internal control arrangements provided 'limited' or 'no assurance.' This was the review of Electric Charging, which remains is currently in draft awaiting management comment.

Recommendations Made: We have analysed our findings/recommendations by risk area and these are summarised below. The table will be updated at the year-end.

Risk Area	Urgent	Important	Routine
Directed			
Governance Framework	1	5	3
Risk Mitigation	0	1	2
Compliance	0	4	4
Delivery			
Performance Monitoring	0	1	2
Sustainability	0	0	0
Resilience	0	0	2

Operational Effectiveness Opportunities: One of the roles of internal audit is to add value and during the financial year we provided advice on opportunities to enhance the operational effectiveness of the areas reviewed and the number of these opportunities is summarised below.

Operational
2 (14)

Independence and Objectivity of Internal Audit

There were no limitations or restrictions placed on the internal audit service which impaired either the independence or objectivity of the service provided.

Performance and Quality Assurance

The following Performance Targets were used to measure the performance of internal audit in delivering the Annual Plan.

Performance Measure	Target	Attained
Completion of Planned Audits	100%	100%
Audits Completed in Time Allocation	100%	100%
Final report issued within 10 working days of receipt of responses	95%	100%
Compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards	100%	100%

Release of Report

The table below sets out the history of this Annual Report.

Date Indicative Draft Report issued:	5 th February 2024
--------------------------------------	-------------------------------

Annexes

Annex A

Actual against planned Internal Audit Work 2023/24

System	Type	Planned Days	Actual Days	Assurance Assessment	Comments
Electric Vehicle Charging	Assurance	4	4	Limited	Draft Report Issued: 30/05/2023
Assets - Mobile Phones	Assurance	6	6	Reasonable	Final report issued: 21/08/2023
ICT Data Assurance	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	Draft Report Issued: 29/01/2024
Station Visits	Compliance	4	4	Reasonable	Final Report Issued: 08/11/2023
Estates Strategy – Property Compliance	Assurance	6	6	TBC	Scheduled date: 25/03/2024
Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	4	0	N/A	Replaced by review of Core HR
O365 Implementation	Assurance	4	4	Reasonable	Draft Report issued: 29/01/2024
Airwave / Emergency Services Network	Assurance	6	0	N/A	Deferred to 2024/25
Budgetary Control	Assurance	5	5	Substantial	Final Report Issued: 08/11/2023
Pensions	Assurance	5	5	Substantial	Final Report Issued: 06/11/2023
Sustainability	Assurance	6	6	TBC	Scheduled date: 05/02/2024
Health and Safety Management	Assurance	4	4	TBC	Scheduled date: 26/02/2024
Payroll – Core HR Pay Award and Month-end Payroll Processing	Assurance	0	6	TBC	Fieldwork completed – draft report pending
Core HR		0	4	TBC	Scheduled date: 25/03/2024
Follow Up	Follow Up	2	2	N/A	Scheduled date: 13/02/2024
Annual Planning	-	2	2	-	
Annual Report	-	1	1	-	
Audit Management	-	7	7	-	
	Total Days	70	70		



South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Indicative Audit Strategy 2023/26 and Annual Plan 2024/25

February 2024

Draft



Executive Summary

Introduction

The Audit Plan for 2024/25 has been informed by a risk assessment carried out across our clients in the sector and by an updated audit risk assessment to ensure that planned coverage for the year is focussed on the key audit risks. This coverage will enable a robust annual Head of Internal Audit Opinion to be provided.

Key Risk Considerations

We have identified a number of key areas which require consideration when planning internal audit coverage.

Macroeconomic and financial environment: The UK economy continues to be impacted by a sequence of significant events including fluctuating interest rates, higher than target inflation, post-pandemic recovery and the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Shortages in the labour market and continuing supply chain disruption lead to increased costs and a challenging financial situation for many.

Cyber security: This continues to be one of the highest ranked risks for organisations and shows no sign of going away. More remote and hybrid working and increased online service delivery increases vulnerability to phishing, malware, and ransomware attacks, particularly where there has been a lack of investment in infrastructure.

Climate change: Global warming can lead to physical, operational, financial and reputational risks arising. 'Loss and damage' - the phrase used to describe the destruction being wrought by the climate crisis - will remain high on the agenda. Sustainability is now a high agenda item with South Wales Fire and Rescue Services further developing their sustainability goals.

Culture: High profile incidences of improper conduct within the emergency services and the wider public sector have emphasised the need for organisations to have effective and robust governance arrangements and policies and procedures in place to guide behaviours and act where standards are deemed not to have been upheld.

Audit Strategy Methodology

In producing this audit strategy and annual plan, we have sought to build on our understanding of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's operating environment and risk profile through a review of key documentation and discussions with key staff. We have taken into account:

- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's business strategy and corporate objectives;
- The regulatory and legislative framework;
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's risk register;
- External Audit recommendations;
- Previous Internal Audit coverage.

We take in to account any emerging or heightened risks that are facing the sector, to ensure that the work of internal audit remains appropriately prioritised and focused. Links to specific strategic risks are also contained in the Internal Audit Strategy.

Our approach complies with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing which have been developed by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).

Internal Audit Strategy and Plan

The Audit Strategy at Appendix A incorporates the proposed annual plan for 2024/25 and the indicative coverage for the following two years.

The Annual Plan at Appendix B sets out the assignments that will be carried out in 2024/25, the planned times and the high-level scopes for each of these assignments.

The Annual Plan will be subject to ongoing review and could change as the risks change for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service; this will be formally reviewed with senior

management and the Finance and Performance Management Committee mid-way through the financial year or should a significant issue arise.

The overall agreed time for the delivery of each assignment within the Annual Plan includes: research; preparation and issue of terms of reference; site work; production and review of working papers; and reporting.

The Annual Plan has been prepared on the assumption that the expected controls will be in place.

The total number of days required to deliver the Audit Plan is as agreed in the contract between TIAA and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. This number of days is fixed and it is TIAA’s responsibility to deliver the Audit Plan for this number of days. Where South Wales Fire and Rescue Service agrees additional work the required number of days and the aggregate day rate will be agreed in advance with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and will be clearly set out in the terms of reference for the additional review(s).

Adequacy of the planned audit coverage

The reviews identified in the audit plan for 2024/25 support the Head of Internal Audit’s annual opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service’s framework of governance, risk management and control as

required by TIAA’s charter. The reviews have been identified from your assurance framework, risk registers and key emerging themes.

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared solely for management's use and must not be recited or referred to in whole or in part to third parties without our prior written consent.

No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the document has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. TIAA neither owes nor accepts any duty of care to any other party who may receive this document and specifically disclaims any liability for loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature, which is caused by their reliance on our document.

Release of Report

The table below sets out the history of this plan.

Draft Strategy and Plan:	5 th February 2024
Final Strategy and Plan:	

Appendix A: Rolling Strategic Plan

Review Area	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Governance				
Governance	Assurance	✓		
Strategic Planning and Control	Assurance			✓
Complaints	Assurance		✓	
Risk				
Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	✓		✓
ICT				
ICT Strategy	Assurance	✓		
Airwave / Emergency Services Network (Deferred from 2023/24)	Assurance	✓		
Freedom of Information (FOI) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)	Assurance		✓	
Website Accessibility Compliance	Compliance		✓	
ICT Cyber Security	Assurance			✓
Finance				
Procurement Cards	Compliance	✓		
Capital Planning	Assurance	✓		
Anti-Fraud	Compliance	✓		
Key Financial Controls	Assurance		✓	
Contract Management	Assurance		✓	
Procurement Strategy	Assurance		✓	
Sustainable Procurement	Assurance			✓
Payroll	Assurance			✓

Review Area	Type	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Workforce				
Communications	Assurance	✓		
Disciplinary Procedures	Assurance		✓	
Promotion	Assurance		✓	
Performance Review	Assurance		✓	
Grievance Procedures	Assurance			✓
Recruitment	Assurance			✓
Secondary Employment	Assurance			✓
Employment Checks and Vetting	Compliance			✓
Estates and Fleet				
Station Visits	Compliance	✓	✓	✓
Estates Strategy – Planned and Preventative Maintenance	Assurance	✓		
Fleet Strategy	Assurance	✓		
Fleet Management - Delivery	Assurance		✓	
Estates Strategy – Property Compliance	Assurance			✓
Follow Up				
Follow Up	Follow Up	✓	✓	✓
Management and Planning				
Annual Planning	Management	✓	✓	✓
Annual Report	Management	✓	✓	✓
Audit Management	Management	✓	✓	✓
Total Days		70	70	70

Appendix B: Annual Plan – 2024/25

Quarter	Review	Type	Days	High-level Scope
1	ICT and Digital Strategy	Assurance	4	The review considers the Service's ICT and digital strategy and the arrangements in place to identify and meet the organisation's future ICT and digital requirements and internal and external stakeholder needs. This includes the arrangements for devising and approval of the ICT and digital strategies and plans for improvement in terms of hardware and software and other resources.
1	Fleet Strategy	Assurance	5	The review considers the arrangements in place for determining the fleet requirements, sourcing and procurement of fleet items and management of replacement programmes. The audit also includes a high-level review of the arrangements in place for carrying out planned and preventative repairs programmes and reactive repairs. The scope of the review does not include verification that the most economic and appropriate vehicles are being used or arrangements for recovery of broken-down vehicles.
2	Communications	Assurance	5	The review considers the arrangements in place to ensure the effective management of internal and external communications and public relations strategies including the communications strategy, operational planning, project management and delivery of key documents, messages and campaigns and the arrangements in place to promote and ensure collaboration between communications teams and senior management teams and departments.
2	Station Visits	Compliance	4	The review considers the arrangements for complying with the organisation's financial procedures at two whole-time stations and one retained duty system station. The sample includes stations that are co-located with other emergency services.
2	Procurement Cards	Compliance	6	The review considers the arrangements for determining those authorised to receive cards, the issuing of cards, authorising and paying costs incurred by the Service through payment cards and arrangements to ensure statement reconciliations are completed effectively and in a timely manner. Through sample testing the review also considers the appropriateness of the procurement route followed for transactions and whether alternative routes could or should have been followed in line with the Service's procurement policies and related travel, subsistence and expense policies. The scope does not include providing an assurance that the expenditure was necessary.

Quarter	Review	Type	Days	High-level Scope
2	Capital Planning	Assurance	4	The review considers the arrangements for development and approval of the Service's capital programme, long-term planning and monitoring and reporting on delivery of the programme. The scope of the review does not include consideration of the funding arrangements or the delivery of individual projects.
3	Risk Management – Mitigating Controls	Assurance	4	The review assesses the quality and accuracy of the information provided to the Authority for providing assurance. Four risks will be selected from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's strategic risks and business plan risks and the effectiveness of the identified assurance will be reviewed. The scope of the review does not include consideration of all potential mitigating arrangements or their effectiveness in minimising the opportunities for the identified risks to occur.
3	Governance	Assurance	10	The review considers the extent to which the Service's governance arrangements reflect good practice guidance in the public sector and ensure clear definitions of the purpose and desired outcomes of the various groups within the governance structure, have well-defined functions and responsibilities through those groups and its governance documents, including scheme of delegation, promotes an appropriate corporate culture and transparent decision making and enables accountability by stakeholders.
3	Estates Strategy – Planned and Preventative Maintenance	Assurance	4	The review considers the arrangements for development and delivery of the Service's planned and preventative maintenance programmes including the identification of needs and priorities, delivery of programmes including selection of contractors, planning and scheduling of work, monitoring and reporting, and checking and authorisation payments to contractors. The scope of the review does not include tendering arrangements, the appropriateness of the forms of contract, payment, Health and Safety, the specification of works or the contractor's insurance cover.
4	Anti-Fraud	Compliance	6	The review considers the robustness of the organisation's internal Anti-Fraud policy and other associated policies in providing mitigation against fraud and/or the impact of fraud, including whistleblowing policies. A high-level review with limited sample testing will also be undertaken of the arrangements in place for recording and acting upon staff declarations such as conflicts of interest secondary employment. The scope of the review will not include identification of all potential fraudulent transactions.
4	Airwave / Emergency Services Network (Deferred from 2023/24)	Assurance	6	The review considers the arrangements to identify and mitigate against the risks associated with continuation of Airwave and the delayed Emergency Services Network programme.

Quarter	Review	Type	Days	High-level Scope
4	Follow Up	Follow Up	2	Follow-up of implementation actions from internal audit reports, ensuring South Wales Fire and Rescue Service are implementing recommendations, and providing reports to the Finance and Performance Management Committee.
1	Annual Planning	Management	2	Assessing the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's annual audit needs.
4	Annual Report	Management	1	Reporting on the overall conclusions and opinion based on the year's audits and other information and providing input to the Annual Governance Statement.
1-4	Audit Management	Management	7	This time includes meeting client management, overseeing the audit plan, reporting, and supporting the Finance and Performance Management Committee, liaising with External Audit and Client briefings (including fraud alerts, fraud digests and committee briefings).
Total days			70	

Internal Audit Charter

The Need for a Charter

The Audit Charter formally defines internal audit's purpose, authority and responsibility. It establishes internal audit's position within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and defines the scope of internal audit activities. The establishment of the Audit Charter is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) and approval of the charter is the responsibility of the Finance and Performance Management Committee.

The Role of Internal Audit

The main objective of the internal audit activity carried out by TIAA is to provide, in an economical, efficient and timely manner, an objective evaluation of, and opinion on, the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control. TIAA is responsible for providing assurance to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's governing body (being the body with overall responsibility for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service) on the adequacy and effectiveness of the risk management, control and governance processes.

Standards and Approach

TIAA's work will be performed with due professional care, in accordance with the requirements of the PSIAS and the IIA standards which are articulated in the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF).

Scope

All South Wales Fire and Rescue Service activities fall within the remit of TIAA. TIAA may consider the adequacy of controls necessary to secure propriety, economy, efficiency and effectiveness in all areas. It will seek to confirm that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service management has taken the necessary steps to achieve these objectives and manage the associated risks. It is not within the remit of TIAA to question the appropriateness of policy decisions; however, TIAA is required to examine the arrangements by which such decisions are made, monitored and reviewed.

TIAA may also conduct any special reviews requested by the board, Finance and Performance Management Committee or the nominated officer (being the post responsible for the day-to-day

liaison with TIAA), provided such reviews do not compromise the audit service's objectivity or independence, or the achievement of the approved audit plan.

Access

TIAA has unrestricted access to all documents, records, assets, personnel and premises of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and is authorised to obtain such information and explanations as they consider necessary to form their opinion. The collection of data for this purpose will be carried out in a manner prescribed by TIAA's professional standards, Information Security and Information Governance policies.

Independence

TIAA has no executive role, nor does it have any responsibility for the development, implementation or operation of systems; however, it may provide independent and objective advice on risk management, control, governance processes and related matters, subject to resource constraints. For day-to-day administrative purposes only, TIAA reports to a nominated officer within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and the reporting arrangements must take account of the nature of audit work undertaken. TIAA has a right of direct access to the chair of the board, the chair of the Finance and Performance Management Committee and the responsible accounting officer (being the post charged with financial responsibility).

To preserve the objectivity and impartiality of TIAA's professional judgement, responsibility for implementing audit recommendations rests with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service management.

Conflict of Interest

Consultancy activities are only undertaken with distinct regard for potential conflict of interest. In this role we will act in an advisory capacity and the nature and scope of the work will be agreed in advance and strictly adhered to.

We are not aware of any conflicts of interest and should any arise we will manage them in line with TIAA's audit charter and internal policies, the PSIAS/IIA standards and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's requirements.

Irregularities, Including Fraud and Corruption

TIAA will without delay report to the appropriate regulator, serious weaknesses, significant fraud, major accounting and other breakdowns subject to the requirements of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

TIAA will be informed when evidence of potential irregularity, including fraud, corruption or any impropriety, is discovered so that TIAA can consider the adequacy of the relevant controls, evaluate the implication of the fraud on the risk management, control and governance processes and consider making recommendations as appropriate. The role of TIAA is not to investigate the irregularity unless commissioned to do so.

Limitations and Responsibility

Substantive testing will only be carried out where a review assesses the internal controls to be providing 'limited' or 'no' assurance with the prior approval of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and additional time will be required to carry out such testing. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for taking appropriate action to establish whether any loss or impropriety has arisen as a result of the control weaknesses.

Internal controls can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance against misstatement or loss. The limitations on assurance include the possibility of one or more of the following situations, control activities being circumvented by the collusion of two or more persons, human error, or the overriding of controls by management. Additionally, no assurance can be provided that the internal controls will continue to operate effectively in future periods or that the controls will be adequate to mitigate all significant risks that may arise in future.

The responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and work performed by internal audit should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should internal audit work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud or irregularity, should there be any, although the audit procedures have been designed so that any material

irregularity has a reasonable probability of discovery. Even sound systems of internal control may not be proof against collusive fraud.

Reliance will be placed on management to provide internal audit with full access to staff and to accounting records and transactions and to ensure the authenticity of these documents.

The matters raised in the audit reports will be only those that come to the attention of the auditor during the course of the internal audit reviews and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all the improvements that might be made. The audit reports are prepared solely for management's use and are not prepared for any other purpose.

Liaison with the External Auditor

We will liaise with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's External Auditor. Any matters in the areas included in the Annual Plan that are identified by the external auditor in their audit management letters will be included in the scope of the appropriate review.

Reporting

Assignment Reports: A separate report will be prepared for each review carried out. Each report will be prepared in accordance with the arrangements contained in the Terms of Reference agreed with TIAA and which accord with the requirements of TIAA's audit charter and PSIAS/IIA standards.

Progress Reports: Progress reports will be prepared for each Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting. Each report will detail progress achieved to date against the agreed annual plan.

Follow-Up Reports: We will provide an independent assessment as to the extent that priority 1 and 2 recommendations have been implemented. Priority 3 recommendations are low-level/housekeeping in nature and it is expected that management will monitor and report on implementation as considered appropriate.

Annual Report: An Annual Report will be prepared for each year in accordance with the requirements set out in TIAA's audit charter and PSIAS/IIA standards. The Annual Report will include a summary opinion of the effectiveness of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's governance, risk management and operational control processes based on the work completed during the year.

Other Briefings: During the year Client Briefing Notes, Benchmarking and lessons learned digests will be provided. These are designed to keep the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

abreast of in-year developments which may impact on the governance, risk and control assurance framework.

Assurance Assessment Gradings

We use four levels of assurance assessments as set out below.

Substantial Assurance	There is a robust system of internal controls operating effectively to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
Reasonable Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally adequate and operating effectively but some improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
Limited Assurance	The system of internal controls is generally inadequate or not operating effectively and significant improvements are required to ensure that risks are managed and process objectives achieved.
No Assurance	There is a fundamental breakdown or absence of core internal controls requiring immediate action.

Data Protection

TIAA has policies, procedures and processes in place to comply with all associated regulation and legislation on information security, which is underpinned by mandatory annual awareness training for all staff. To carry out our role effectively, we need to obtain information that is reliable, relevant and sufficient to support our findings and recommendations. The collection of data, particularly sensitive personal data, is minimised and is not shared with unauthorised persons unless there is a valid and legal requirement to do so. We have clear policies on the retention of data and its appropriate, controlled disposal. TIAA has a fully robust Information Security Management System that meets all the requirements of ISO27001:2013.

Quality Assurance

TIAA recognises the importance of Internal Audit being controlled at each stage to ensure that we deliver a consistent and efficient Internal Audit service that is fully compliant with professional standards and also the conditions of contract. We operate a comprehensive internal operational quality review process to ensure that all Internal Audit work is carried out in accordance with

these standards. These quarterly reviews are part of our quality management system which has ISO 9001:2015 accreditation.

Finance and Performance Management Committee Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to determine that the number of audit days to be provided and the planned audit coverage are sufficient to meet the Committee's requirements and the areas selected for review are appropriate to provide assurance against the key risks within the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

By approving this document, the Finance and Performance Management Committee is also approving the Internal Audit Charter.

Disclaimer

The matters raised in this planning report, along with those raised in our audit and annual reports, are only those that came to the attention of the auditor during the course of our work and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all the improvements that might be made. This report has been prepared solely for management's use and must not be recited or referred to in whole or in part to third parties without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared, and is not intended, for any other purpose. TIAA neither owes nor accepts any duty of care to any other party who may receive this report and specifically disclaims any liability for loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature, which is caused by their reliance on our report.

Performance Standards

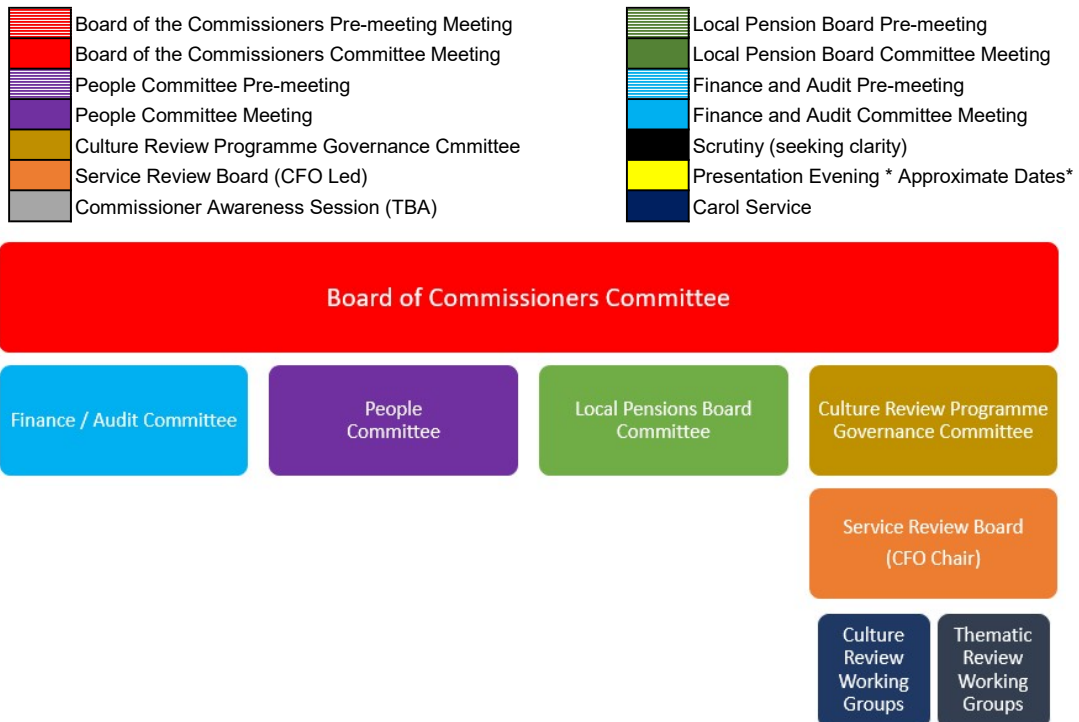
The following Performance Targets will be used to measure the performance of internal audit in delivering the Annual Plan:

Performance Measure	Target
Completion of planned audits.	100%
Audits completed in time allocation.	100%
Final report issued within 10 working days of receipt of responses.	100%
Compliance with TIAA's audit charter and PSIAS/IIA Standards.	100%



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Potential Governance Structure 2023-2025



Assumptions:

All Commissioners are members of the Board.
Lead Commissioners may be allocated for Committees.

Forward work programmes have been drafted by the Monitoring Officer for each of the following:
Board of Commissioners Committee
Finance / Audit Committee
People Committee

Forward Work Programmes are to be developed for:
Local Pensions Board Committee
Culture Review Programme Board

Quorum would be 2 commissioners.

Independent members of for appropriate Committees to be determined.
Scrutiny Functions to be determined








Governance Arrangements meeting to be scheduled with the Commissioners, the Monitoring Officer(MO) and Deputy (MO) to discuss governance arrangements may result in changes to this calendar.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Commissioners for South Wales Fire
and Rescue Service
Pre-meeting and Committee
Calendar 2023-2024

-  Board of the Commissioners Pre-meeting Meeting
-  Board of the Commissioners Committee Meeting
-  People Committee Pre-meeting
-  People Committee Meeting
-  Culture Review Programme Governance
-  Service Review Board (CFO Led)
-  Commissioner Awareness Session (TBA)

-  Local Pension Board Pre-meeting
-  Local Pension Board Meeting
-  Finance and Audit Pre-meeting
-  Finance and Audit Committee
-  Scrutiny (seeking clarity)
-  Presentation Evening * Approximate Dates*
-  Carol Service

	January 2024						February 2024						March 2024					
Mon	<u>1</u>	8	15	22	29			5	12	19	26			4	11	18	25	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tues	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-	-	5	12	19	26	-
Wed	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	6	13	20	27	-
Thurs	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	7	14	21	28	-
Fri	5	12	19	26	-	-	2	9	16	23	-	-	1	8	15	22	<u>29</u>	-
Sat	6	13	20	27	-	-	3	10	17	24	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-
Sun	7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-	-		10	17	24	31	-



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Commissioners for South Wales Fire
and Rescue Service
Pre-meeting and Committee
Calendar 2024-2025

	Board of the Commissioners Pre-meeting Meeting		Local Pension Board Pre-meeting
	Board of the Commissioners Committee Meeting		Local Pension Board Meeting
	People Committee Pre-meeting		Finance and Audit Pre-meeting
	People Committee Meeting		Finance and Audit Committee
	Culture Review Programme Governance		Scrutiny (seeking clarity)
	Service Review Board (CFO Led)		Presentation Evening * Approximate Dates*
	Commissioner Awareness Session (TBA)		Carol Service

	April 2024						May 2024						JUNE 2024					
Mon	<u>1</u>	8	15	22	29	-	-	<u>6</u>	13	20	<u>27</u>	-	-	3	10	17	24	-
Tues	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-
Wed	3	10	17	24	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	5	12	19	26	-
Thurs	4	11	18	25	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-
Fri	5	12	19	26	-	-	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-
Sat	6	13	20	27	-	-	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-
Sun	17	14	21	28	-	-	5	12	19	26	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-
	JULY 2024						AUGUST 2024						SEPTEMBER 2024					
Mon	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	5	12	19	<u>26</u>	-	-	2	9	16	23	30
Tue	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-	-	3	10	17	24	-
Wed	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-
Thu	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	5	12	<u>19</u>	26	-
Fri	5	12	19	26	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-
Sat	6	13	20	27	-	-	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-
Sun	7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-
	OCTOBER 2024						NOVEMBER 2024						DECEMBER 2024					
Mon	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-	-	2	9	16	23	30
Tue	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	5	12	19	26	-	-	3	10	17	24	31
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-	-	4	11	18	<u>25</u>	-
Thu	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	5	12	19	<u>26</u>	-
Fri	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-	-	6	13	20	27	-
Sat	5	12	19	26	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	7	14	21	28	-
Sun	6	13	20	27	-	-	3	10	17	24	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-
	JANUARY 2025						FEBRUARY 2025						MARCH 2025					
Mon	-	6	13	20	27	-	-	3	10	17	24	-	-	3	10	17	24	31
Tue		7	14	21	28	-	-	4	11	18	25	-	-	4	11	18	25	-
Wed	<u>1</u>	8	15	22	29	-	-	5	12	19	26	-	-	5	12	19	26	-
Thu	2	9	16	23	30	-	-	6	13	20	27	-	-	6	13	20	27	-
Fri	3	10	17	24	31	-	-	7	14	21	28	-	-	7	14	21	28	-
Sat	4	11	18	25	-	-	1	8	15	22	-	-	1	8	15	22	29	-
Sun	5	12	19	26	-	-	2	9	16	23	-	-	2	9	16	23	30	-

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

AGENDA ITEM NO 7

Reports for Information

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 7.i
28 MARCH 2024THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE
SERVICE

REPORT OF THE ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

PEOPLE SERVICES RESTRUCTURE**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**

REPORT APPROVED BY CFO STUART MILLINGTON

REPORT PRESENTED BY ACO PEOPLE SERVICES, ALISON REED

SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of the restructure of the Human Resources department to a Business Partnering – People Services model, following initial work undertaken over the last year and developed further by the recent appointment of a new Head of People Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners note the content of the report and approve the implementation of the new business model.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to formally document the plans to transition from the traditional transactional Human Resources department to a transformational People Services department.
- 1.2 Following on from a 12-month project to evaluate the structure of the Human Resources Directorate, a review of the functions commenced in July 2023, following the external appointment of a Head of People Services; recruited to support the Director of People Services with transformational change.

- 1.3 People Services needs to be structured to effectively and efficiently deliver on their key priorities:



- 1.4 The recently published Morris Report validates these plans, with a specific recommendation to restructure HR.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The traditional Human Resources (HR) structure in SWFRS has been 'transactional' in nature, focused on enforcing compliance, responsive to issues with staff working in silos and often operating separately from other departments, Meanwhile the 'People Services' model is more holistic, helps build positive professional relationships where HR Business Partners can provide local line managers with expert advice so as to allow managers to make safe and effective decisions and address behavioural problems in their early stages. The transformational model also ensures that there are transparent processes for the entire employee journey from selection to onboarding, Personal Reviews, promotions, and reward. By building a positive support network for managers it will be possible for low level issues to be addressed more swiftly and prevent issues from escalating, all in a bid to improve culture.

2.2

Currently sub teams within the wider Directorate deliver on core services such as recruitment, training, performance management, payroll, and record keeping with minimal metrics, limited influence and with limited visibility in the Service. This traditional structure

presents single points of failure, little succession planning and poor job enrichment, with unequal workloads leading to conflict and a poor customer experience.

- 2.3 The Directorate must restructure, moving to a Business Partnership model, using technology to provide proactive solutions based on data and analytics, driving innovation, culture and performance.
- 2.4 The directorate needs a year of restructuring resource, systems, processes, and data collection; a multi skilling program in order to realise efficiencies in the longer term and improved service delivery – to enable future progression from a solid foundation.
- 2.5 Based on three thematic workstreams, the disciplines will be managed by three People Services Managers (PSMs) for:
- People Support.
Culture and Engagement; and
Organisational Growth.
- 2.6 The PSMs will be supported by Business Partners across the following specialisms/ disciplines:
- People Support:
Reward and Benefits; Pensions; Systems, Management Information (MI) and Quality Assurance (QA).
- Culture and Engagement:
Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity; Employee Relations; Welfare and Wellbeing.
- Organisational Growth:
Learning and Development; Recruitment and Retention.
- 2.7 Matrix management will apply across the new structure (removing silos). The directorate will adopt project management principles in the delivery of much of our activity.
- 2.8 The restructure plans are cost and headcount neutral in relation to Business-as-Usual activities, there will be no redundancies.
- 2.9 Every Grade 12 Business Partner will also be a Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity champion.

- 2.10 The new structure aligns to the NFCC Leadership Framework and adopts the same model of Leading the Function, Leading Others and Leading Yourself.
- 2.11 The new structure will provide resilience and accountability, allowing us to respond to customer needs more effectively and overall improve productivity, efficiency, and service delivery.
- 2.12 Appendix 1 provides the detailed current siloed and transactional functional team model and Appendix 2 shows the high-level proposed Business Partnering transformational model.
- 2.13 The Occupational Health Team are also part of the People Services Directorate and will be reviewed separately.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The restructure refocuses EDI to include Cohesion, (DICE = Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity).

In support of the Business Partner that specialises in EDI strategies, each of the other Business Partner specialist roles in the team will be “DICE Champions,” having supporting responsibilities for promoting and supporting EDI awareness, behaviours, activities, and strategies.

The Service has also appointed twenty further DICE champions from across the organisation who will work alongside this team and an Equity Pledge will be developed that each of the Champions sign up to.

3.1.2 Welsh Language

The restructure provides for a dedicated Welsh Language Officer.

3.1.3 Safeguarding

The restructure provides for a dedicated safeguarding officer.

3.1.4 Consultation and Communications

Staff engagement activities and consultation has been and will continue to be undertaken as the plan progresses through each phase.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 Legal

This is opportunity-based restructuring, having not replaced like for like leavers; therefore, there are no redundancies foreseen for Business-as-Usual activity, this restructure is within headcount.

3.2.2 Financial

This is opportunity-based restructuring, having not replaced like for like leavers; therefore, there are no financial implications foreseen other than the temporary resource as the team transitions over the coming 12 months.

3.2.3 Information Management

The restructure improves information management with the appropriate members of the team having timely and appropriate access to relevant information to enhance service delivery and ultimately the employee experience.

3.2.4 Morris Report

This restructuring plan was subsequently ratified by the findings of the Morris report and a HR Structure review was a recommendation arising.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 Human Resources / People Development

The restructure provides matrix management opportunities for development across a number of disciplines or specialisms, with cross functional team working and projects providing job enrichment and experiential learning, and self-development, whereas the current structure is siloed and self-limiting to individuals in the team with little chance of progression or innovation.

To support the transition phase, the directorate anticipates requiring temporary resource for 12 months (c£140K) as follows:

- administrative resource as efficiencies are generated and utilise technology more effectively (x3 FTE),
- process and compliance resource to document new processes and procedures, whilst developing an internal audit plan (x1 FTE)
- investigative resource as the service handles additional and historical allegations resulting from the Morris review (x1 FTE)

3.3.2 Service Delivery

Removal of siloed transactional working and developing into a transformational business partnering model will improve the service provided, facilitate innovative and proactive solutions rather than reactive solutions to support SWFRS and its people.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

The directorate needs a year of restructuring resource, systems, processes, and data collection; a multi skilling program to realise efficiencies in the longer term and improved service delivery – to enable future progression from a solid foundation.

This restructuring will require some temporary resource to support the programme as identified in section 3.3.1.

Successful outcomes will include positive improvements when evaluating directorate and organisational maturity.

The new structure will provide resilience and accountability, allowing the service to respond to customer needs more effectively and overall improve productivity, efficiency, and service delivery.

The new structure removes transactional based interactions, with a much more holistic approach to providing a service to our people; whilst removing conflict and providing a more effective utilisation of resources to support the wider organisation and its leaders in people management best practices.

The new structure provides motivation, organisational awareness, job enrichment and development opportunities.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

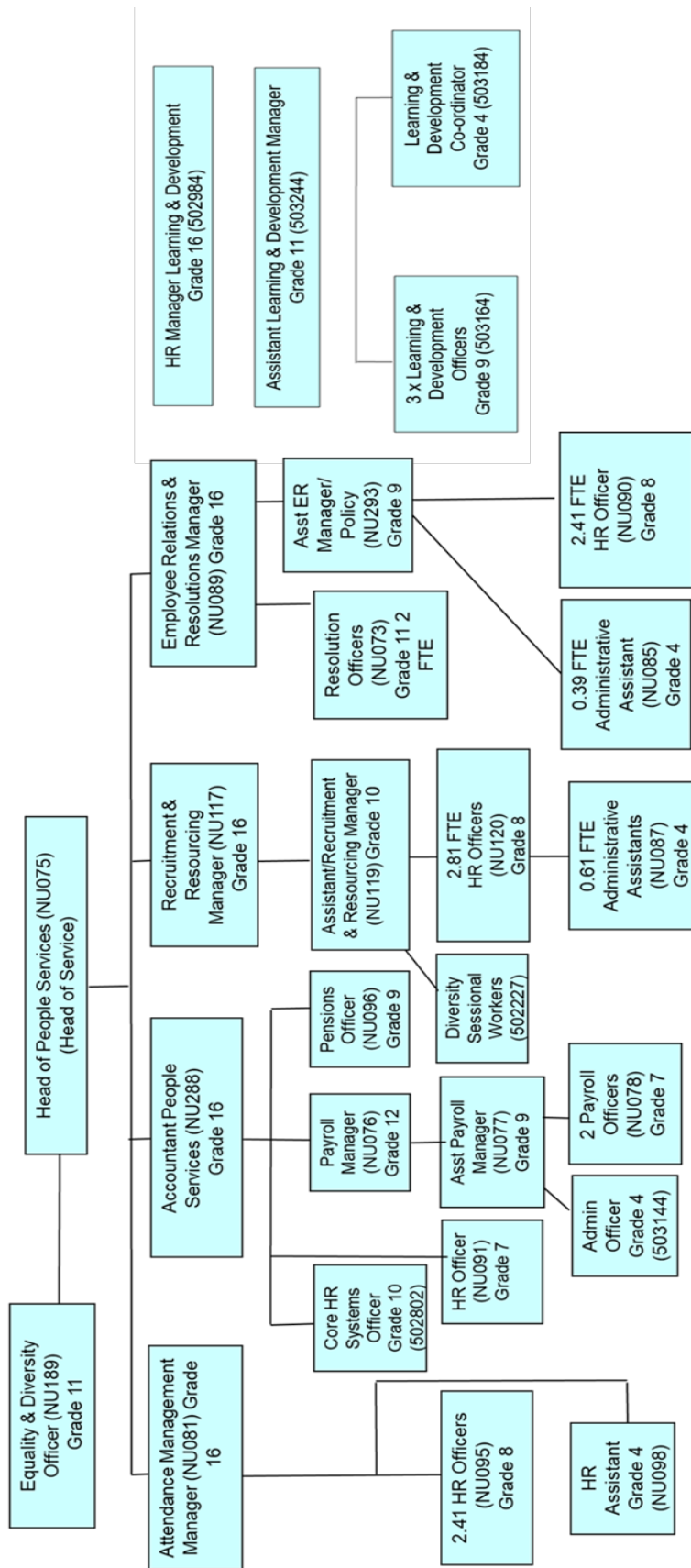
- 5.1 That Commissioners note the content of the report and approve the implementation of the new business model.

Contact Officer:	Lisa Shroll Head of People Services	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Title		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Existing HR 'Transactional' Structure
Appendix 2	People Services Transformational 'Business Partnering'

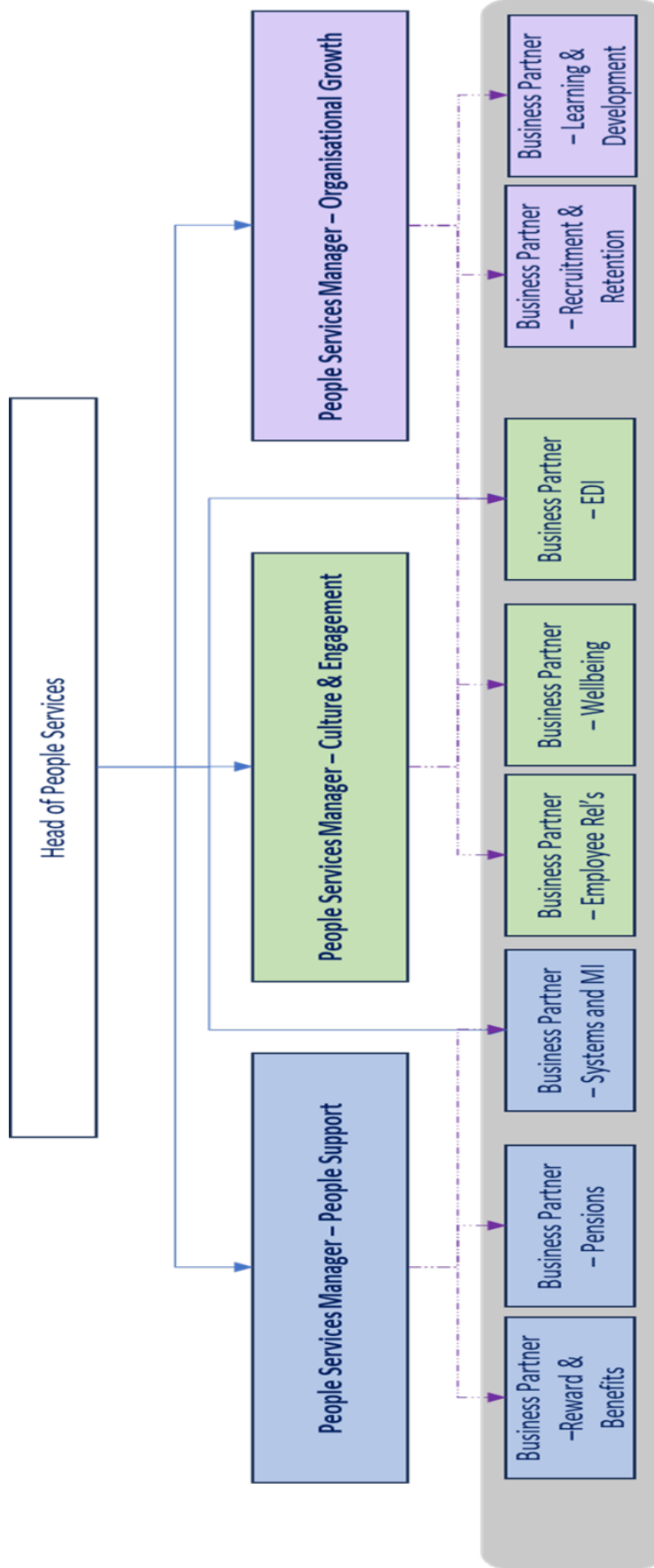
THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Appendix 1: Existing HR 'Transactional' Structure



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Appendix 2: People Services Transformational 'Business Partnering'



THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Mar 2024	Internal Audit Annual Report	To provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes based on the internal audit work undertaken during the financial year. This will support the statement of internal control.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Mar 2024	Pay Policy Statement 2022/23	To consider the Service's Pay Policy Statement in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
Mar 2024	Gender Pay Gap Statement	To update on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
Mar 2024	Treasury Management Strategy Report	To secure Commissioners' approval to the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy for the following financial year	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Mar 2024	Strategic Themes and Objectives for 2024/25 – Plan Publication	Commissioners to approve the proposed strategic themes and objectives for 2024/25	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Mar 2024	Setting Statutory Strategic Performance Indicators and Strategic Objectives	To set the targets for the following financial year.	D	T/ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	
Mar 2024	Calendar of Meetings for next municipal year	To present Commissioners proposed dates of Board & Committee meetings for the next municipal year.	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	
May 2024	Unwanted Fire Signal Response Proposal	To present the proposals for consideration of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	D	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Dean Loader	
May 2024	Audit Wales Audit Plan 2024	To advise Commissioners of the work set out by Audit Wales to be undertaken during 2024.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
May 2024	Strategic Equality Plan	To provide Commissioners with the current Strategic Equality Plan.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
Aug 2024	Welsh Language Standards	To update Commissioners on compliance against the Welsh Language Standards.	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Aug 2024	Health & Safety Annual Report 2022/23	To advise Commissioners of Health & Safety performance of the organisation.	I	T/ACFO TS Contact Officer: Brian Thompson	
Aug 2024	Review Strategic Risk	To advise Commissioners of the Strategic Risks of the organisation and how these are being treated, managed or reduced.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
Sep 2024	MTFS and Reserves Strategy	To update Commissioners on the Financial Strategy and Reserves Strategy of the Service prior to considering the report on the 2024/25 Budget Setting Strategy.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Sep 2024	Budget Strategy	To obtain clarification upon the political steer for the Budget Strategy for 2024/25 budget setting process.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Sep 2024	Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance	To receive Audit Wales' certificate of audit of the Service's 2024/25 Improvement Plan.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	
Sep 2024	Carbon Reduction Plan and Progress Reports	To advise Commissioners on the progress towards the actions set out in the Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Plans	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Sep 2024	Treasury Management Outturn 2023/24	To advise Commissioners of the year end treasury management position.	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Sep 2024	Audit Wales Final Audit Letter	To advise on conclusion of financial audit	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Dec 2024	Budget Setting Proposal for Consultation 2025/26	To assist in determining the appropriate revenue & capital budget required to meet the Service's requirements for the financial year	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Dec 2024	Treasury Management Mid Term Report 2024/25	To advise Commissioners of the mid-year position in relation to our treasury management.	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Dec 2024	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Draft Report	To consider the IRPW's draft Annual Report and enable comments to be submitted to the Panel within required timescales.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Dec 2024	Audit Wales Thematic Reviews Report (24/25 Targeted High Risk Prevention)	To consider the recommendations made by Audit Wales following their review of targeted high risk prevention.	I	T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Dean Loader	
Mar 2024	PSB Well-being Plans	To consider and accept the Well-being Plans of each of the PSBs	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	

Finance/Audit Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Apr 2024	Annual Governance Statement	To consider the draft Annual Governance Statement and associated governance improvement plan for 2024/25 prior to inclusion in the annual statement of accounts.	D	ACO CS Contact Officer Sarah Watkins	
Apr 2024	Community Safety Funding 2024/25	To provide an overview of the approved Welsh Government grant funding for Community Safety workstreams in 2024/25 and the implications from reduced revenue and capital funds.	D	T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Dean Loader	
Apr 2024	Internal Audit Annual plan	To provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes based on the internal audit work undertaken during the financial year. This will support the statement of internal control.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

Finance/Audit Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Apr 2024	Register of Gifts and Hospitality	To advise Commissioners of gifts and hospitality accepted and declined during the year	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
Jul 2024	Audited Statement of Accounts / Audit Wales ISA 260 Report	To advise Commissioners of the content of the Auditor General's ISA 260 report including the final letter of representation, proposed audit opinion and corrections/recommendations	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Jul 2024	Treasury Management Monitoring Report	To update Commissioners on progress against Treasury Management activities of the first quarter of the financial year.	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Jul2024	Proposed Priority Actions 2025/26	To advise Commissioners of the proposed Priority Actions 2024/25 and to seek authority to enter into public consultation on these.	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
Jul 2024	Revenue Outturn	To advise on total revenue expenditure for the year against the set revenue budget following the year end and to explain variations and impact on reserves.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

Finance/Audit Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Jul 2024	Capital Outturn	To advise on total capital expenditure for the year against the set capital budget following the year end and to explain variations	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Jul 2024	Departmental Risk Register	To seek Commissioners' views upon the Corporate Departmental Risk Register	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
Apr / Jul / Sept / Dec / Feb	Revenue Budget Monitoring Reports	To provide an update on revenue expenditure against the revenue budget for the year	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Apr / Jul / Sept / Dec / Feb	Capital Programme Monitoring Reports	To provide an update on capital expenditure against the capital budget for the year	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Apr / Jul / Sept / Dec / Feb	Internal Audit Update Reports	To provide an updated position of work performed against the internal audit plan and to highlight any significant issues arising from the internal audit work performed	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

Finance/Audit Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Apr / Jul / Sept / Dec / Feb	Performance Reports – Statutory PI's (Quarterly)	To scrutinise progress of the Service's Priority Actions and statutory PI's as at the end of Q1	I	ACO CS & T/ACFO SD Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	

DRAFT

People Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
May 2024 Jun 2024	Recruitment & Attraction Annual Report	To update Commissioners	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Head of HR	
May 2024 Jun 2024	Occupational Health Activity / Sickness Report	Purpose is to update Commissioners on Occupational Health Activity and sickness absence	I	ACO PS Contact Officers: Serena Ford, Ruth Hazell	
May 2024 Jun 2024	Grievance / Discipline Cases Overview	Purpose is to update Commissioners on disciplinary and grievance cases that have occurred through the Service	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Head of HR	
May 2024 Jun 2024	Whistleblowing / Complaints / Compliments Report	To update Commissioners	I	ACO PS Contact officer: Sarah Watkins	
Aug 2024 Nov 2024	Training Activity Annual Report	To update Commissioners	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	

Aug 2024 Nov 2024	Performance Reviews Annual Report	To update Commissioners on the Performance Review Process	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
Aug 2024 Nov 2024	Investors in People (Iip) Update Report	To update Commissioners	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
Aug 2024 Nov 2024	Job Evaluation	To update Commissioners on the Job Evaluation Process	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Lisa Shroll	
Mar 2025	Pay Policy Statement 2022/23	To consider the Service's Pay Policy Statement in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
Mar 2025	Gender Pay Gap Statement	To update on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	

Local Pension Board Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
TO BE DEVELOPED					

Culture Review Programme Governance Committee

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
TO BE DEVELOPED					

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

**To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent
(Part 1 or 2)**