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

FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY SUMMONS

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

You are required to attend a meeting of the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority to be held on:

Monday, 18 December 2023 at 1030 hours

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

or

Remotely via Microsoft Teams - https://bit.ly/FireAuthority-18-12-23

<u>Please ensure you join the meeting 15 minutes prior to meeting time</u>

<u>Any issues please contact</u>
<u>01443 232000 and ask for Member Services</u>

A G E N D A

1.   Apologies for Absence

2.   Declarations of Interest

    Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority 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 Local Government Act 2000, the Fire & Rescue Authority's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct.

3.   Chairperson's Announcements

10.   Exempt minutes   179

Signature of Monitoring Officer:

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors:

J	Morgan	Blaenau Gwent
P	Ford	Bridgend
M	Hughes	Bridgend
C	Elsbury	Caerphilly
A	Hussey	Caerphilly
C	Wright	Caerphilly
D	Ali	Cardiff
K	Carr	Cardiff
S	Melbourne	Cardiff
D	Naughton	Cardiff
B	Proctor	Cardiff
D	Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil
M	Powell	Monmouthshire
L	Wright	Monmouthshire
T	Harvey	Newport
T	Watkins	Newport
S	Bradwick	Rhondda Cynon Taff
G	Holmes	Rhondda Cynon Taff
A	Roberts MBE	Rhondda Cynon Taff
G	Williams	Rhondda Cynon Taff
A	Best	Torfaen
S	Evans	Torfaen
I	Buckley	Vale of Glamorgan
P	Drake	Vale of Glamorgan

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 1030 HRS
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

30.   PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
S Bradwick (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
P Drake (Deputy Chair)		Vale of Glamorgan
D Ali		Cardiff
A Best		Torfaen
I Buckley		Vale of Glamorgan
K Carr		Cardiff
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
S Evans		Torfaen
P Ford		Bridgend
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
M Hughes		Bridgend
A Hussey		Caerphilly
J Morgan		Blaenau Gwent
M Al-Nuaimi		Newport
D Naughton		Cardiff
M Powell		Monmouthshire
B Proctor		Cardiff
A Roberts MBE		Rhondda Cynon-Taff
G Williams		Rhondda Cynon Taff
C Wright		Caerphilly

APOLOGIES:

D Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil
S-E Melbourne	Cardiff

ABSENT:

T Watkins	Newport

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO H Jakeway, T/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, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mrs L Mullan – Temp Head of Finance, Procurement and Property, Mr M Fry – Independent Pay Consultant, Watch Manager M Nash – Health & Safety & Wellbeing Officer

31.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

Councillor Evans declared a personal interest in any items which related to New Inn Fire Station.

32.   CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **PASSING OF FIREFIGHTER STUART DAVIES**

The Chairperson was saddened to announce the sudden and sad passing of Firefighter Stuart Davies of Green Watch Maindee. Stuart was a popular and well regarded professional firefighter, friend and colleague.

The Chairperson asked members to take a moments silence to reflect and remember Firefighter Stuart Davies.

- **WDS PASS OUT PARADE – 31 AUGUST 2023**

The Chairperson advised of his attendance with other Members of the Authority the pass out parade of the latest WDS course on 31st August when 22 firefighters passed out in front of their families and loved ones. The Chairperson extended their congratulations to firefighter Jenni Scoble on being awarded the Silver Axe, an accolade awarded to the top recruit.

- **FIREFIGHTERS'   MEMORIAL   SERVICE   -   NATIONAL ARBORETUM**

On Monday 4th September the Chairperson and Chief Fire Officer represented the Service and the Authority at the Firefighters Memorial Service at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. This was the first time this event was held at the National Arboretum and were asked by the Trust to lead the wreath laying on behalf of the UK fire and rescue services. It was also a proud moment for the Chief Fire Officer to lay a wreath on behalf of Welsh Government.

- **999 DAY – CARDIFF BAY**

On Saturday 9th September the Chairperson attended the 999 Day at Cardiff Bay, he described it as a fantastic event that showed to the thousands that attended the broad width of services we provide. The

Chairperson thanked everyone that made this day so special and engaging.

- **MOROCCAN EARTHQUAKE**

On 8th September Morocco was struck by a 6.8 magnitude earthquake, which regrettably killed over 3,000 people and left thousands injured and homeless. In response, the UK Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council have provided search and rescue support through the UK International Search and Rescue capability. The Chairperson thanked Firefighters Bland and Buckley that deployed from the Service with UKISAR. Their deployment was safe and successful and they have recently returned home.

- **FESITVAL OF RESCUE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

This month Lincolnshire fire and rescue service hosted the Festival of Rescue, we were well represented with teams in all rescue challenges. As always our teams represented the Service with professional and pride. Bridgend won best technical team, they were third in the medical discipline and our fire cadets from Tonypandy and Abergavenny came second in their trauma challenge. The Chairperson expressed their thanks for the dedication and commitment to learn and improve your skills and knowledge.

- **REVIEW OF MATERNITY PROVISIONS**

The Chairperson advised he had recently received correspondence from the General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union asking Fire Authority's to review and consider their existing maternity provisions for staff. The Chairperson has asked officers to review this through our HR& Equalities Committee.

33. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The following minutes were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings:-

- Fire & Rescue Authority meeting held on Monday, 17 July 2023

- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on Monday, 13 March, 2023

- Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Monday, 17 April, 2023

- HR & Equalities Committee meeting held on Monday, 10 July, 2023

- Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee meeting held on 24 July, 2023

34. UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The ACO People Services provided a brief overview and update on the following outstanding actions:- 21/22-17.3.2, 21/22-17.3.3, 23/24-25, 23/24-27.5

The ACO Corporate Services provided a brief overview and update on the following outstanding actions:- 23/24-26.1.2 and 23/24-26.3.

35. REPORTS FOR DECISION

35.1. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Treasurer informed Members that the presented report provided an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27 for approval. It included budget projections based on the Authority's plans and strategies informed by the general financial and operational environment in which services were provided.

The Strategy indicated that the Authority's cost base would continue to increase over the currently approved budget in response to the general inflationary pressures in the UK economy. These cost pressures were compounded by unforeseen under-provision in the current financial year. This would present a challenge to the Fire Authority and potentially to the Service's funding councils next year.

The Strategy was drawn up in the light of rapidly changing economic projections and few firm resource commitments beyond the current year. This background introduced significant financial risks to the Strategy. Whilst it was tempting to consider the information in the report a worst-case scenario, this was far from reality given the current volatility in the UK economy and public finances.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the risks and uncertainties within the projections and approved the Strategy as the basis for financial planning over the Strategy period.

35.2 PRINCIPAL OFFICER VACANCY – APPOINTMENT AUTHORISATION OF ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that the Fire Authority Constitution determined that a request to fill a post at Principal Officer level on a permanent basis had to be brought before the Fire & Rescue Authority for approval.

The report sought approval to recruit, on a permanent basis, an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) – Technical Services. Subject to Fire Authority approval it was proposed to commence the recruitment process at the earliest opportunity with the aim of making a permanent appointment before the end of December 2023.

Following a lengthy discussion it was suggested awaiting the outcome of the cultural review prior to commencing the appointment process.

Members were then asked to vote on whether they wished for the recruitment process for the appointment of Assistant Chief Fire Officer – Technical Services to commence at the earliest opportunity or to await the outcome of the cultural review in the first instance.

The majority of Members voted for the appointment process to await the outcome of the culture review.

RESOLVED THAT

35.2.1   Members agreed to approve the filling of the post of the role of ACFO – Technical Services on a permanent basis.

35.2.2   Members agreed to approve postpone the recruitment and selection process until after the outcome of the independent culture review.

35.3 **HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES' REPORT – VALUES AND CULTURE IN FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES (SPOTLIGHT REPORT)**

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that on Thursday, 30 March, 2023, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFS) for England published Values and Culture in Fire & Rescue Services. The report had nine themes supported by 35 recommendations for all English Fire & Rescue Services, alongside the government and national fire bodies, were urged to implement them as a matter of urgency.

Although the report covers English Fire & Rescue Services, the Welsh Government had communicated its expectation for Fire & Rescue Services in Wales to fully comply with all the recommendations appertaining to the Service and Chief Fire Officers. Welsh Government had requested progress reports back to the Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor.

South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire & Rescue Service welcomed the report and the recommendations within it.

RESOLVED THAT

35.3.1   Members agreed that the Fire & Rescue Authority should accept the recommendations allocated to the Chief Fire Officer.

35.3.2   Members agreed that South Wales Fire & Rescue to fully engage and support the delivery of the remaining recommendations.

35.3.3   Members agreed that the actions and progress against the HMICFS recommendations were to be presented to November's Scrutiny Committee.

Each officer left the meeting at 11:21hrs for the following item to be reported by Mr Fry who joined the meeting.

35.4   INDEPENDENT PAY REVIEW – PRINCIPAL OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The report informed Members that in September 2022 the Fire & Rescue Authority received a report from external consultants 'The Resource Partners Limited' (TRP) on a review of Brigade Manager/Principal Officers' remuneration that had been requested by Fire Authority

Members following the completion of the Job Evaluation exercise for Green Book employees. An uplift of 4.5% was agreed and it was also resolved that a further piece of work would be commissioned immediately on Principal Officer pay, and that a review on Principal Officers' pay would be carried out on a yearly basis by an external consultant for a period of two years, followed by a review thereafter.

It was noted that the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) Pay Policy document stated that Principal Officers' remuneration should be reviewed annually by the local Fire & Rescue Authority and that the HR & Equalities Committee was assigned to consider PO remuneration and report findings to the Fire & Rescue Authority. The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services, Constitution and Scheme of Conditions of Service states there is a two-track approach to determining PO remuneration, as outlined above, one of these is a local review undertaken the by the Fire & Rescue Authority.

Mr Fry left the meeting at 12:00hrs to allow Members to discuss the report in further detail.

Mr Fry returned to the meeting to answer questions and left at 12:31hrs

Following detailed discussion, Members were asked to vote on whether they agreed to the increase in pay for Senior Officers as outlined within the report. The majority of Members voted in favour of the recommendations set out in the independent pay review report.

RESOLVED THAT

35.4.1   Members agreed to Increase pay of the Chief Fire Officer to £169,574 per annum.

35.4.2   To adopt the new and simplified pay matrix.

35.4.3   To align and link base pay of Corporate Heads of Service to base pay of Area Managers.

35.4.4   To increase the pay of the Treasurer to **£79,788** (FTE).
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37. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

37.1 2022/2023 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The temporary Head of Finance & Procurement presented a report for Members to review the treasury management activities for the year ending 31 March 2023, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the annual treasury management review data for 2022/2023 and approved the actual prudential and treasury indicators set therein.

37.2 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

The Health & Safety Officer informed Members that the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report for 2022/2023 provided a summary of the key activities undertaken, and the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the areas of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

RESOLVED THAT

37.2.1   Members agreed to accept the report on the performance of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service in the areas of Health, Safety and Wellbeing.

37.2.2   Members agreed to note the overall success achieved during 2022/2023 in the delivery of an environment that was supportive of the Health, Safety and Welfare of staff.

37.2.3   Members agreed to endorse and support the range of initiatives underway to proactively and reactively support the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of staff employed by South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

37.3 CARBON REDUCTION PLAN ANNUAL UPDATE

The T/Head of Finance & Procurement informed Members that the presented report set out the progress made in the third year of the Carbon Reduction Plan (CRP) 2020-2023 and Biodiversity Forward Plan (BFP).

RESOLVED THAT

37.3.1   Members agreed to note the year 3 progress.

37.3.2   The T/Head of Finance & Procurement to provide a further update on progress in 6 months' time.

37.4 CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE FOR THE AUDIT OF SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2023-2024

The Monitoring Officer reported on the Certificate of Compliance for the audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Improvement Plan 2023-2024 for information purposes.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the report on the Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority's Improvement Plan 2023-2024.

37.5 EXEMPTIONS FROM CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that exemptions to contract standing orders may be granted by the Monitoring Officer in exceptional circumstances and where the value exceeds £25,000 a report must be presented to the Fire & Rescue Authority.

The presented report set out exemptions granted during the current financial year to date.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the exemption granted by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Authority's contract standing orders.

38.   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The Monitoring Officer provided a brief overview of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2023 and outlined that an additional meeting would likely be added to the programme in January 2024 to consider the recommendations made by the independent culture review.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

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

There were no items of business to discuss that the Chair deemed urgent.

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 2023 AT
SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS**

121. PRESENT:

Mr R Alexander (Chair)	Independent Lay Member
Mr S Barnes (Deputy Chair)	Independent Lay Member
Dr M Kerbey	Independent Lay Member
Councillor G Holmes	SWF&R Authority
Councillor S Melbourne	SWF&R Authority

APOLOGIES:

Mr D Fussell	Independent Lay Member
Ms K Thorogood	Independent Lay Member
Councillor A Roberts MBE	SWF& R Authority
ACO Geraint Thomas	Monitoring Officer

OFFICERS PRESENT: - Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mrs L Mullan – Temp Head of Finance & Procurement (Observer), Ms G Greathead – Legal Services Manager (Observer)

122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

As a matter of transparency, the Chair took the opportunity to inform Members that he was also a member of the Vale of Glamorgan County Council Standards Committee, as well as the Blaenau Gwent Council Standards Committee,

123. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **FEEDBACK FROM THE NATIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE FORUM FOR WALES**

The Chair advised Members that he recently attended the National Standards Committee Forum for Wales. He provided a brief overview of the structure of the meeting and confirmed that 28 separate bodies had attended the meeting on a voluntary basis.

He advised that the Ombudsman had attended part of the meeting and confirmed that 300 complaints had been received throughout the year, with many referring to lack of respect and behavioural issues.

With reference to the 12 week consultation on the Richard Penn report which related to how Standards Committees operated, and following a request by the Chair, Officers agreed to provide an update on the Penn report and its origins at the next meeting.

124. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 3 October 2022, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

125. REPORTS FOR DECISION

125.1   APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer requested nominations for Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee. Simon Barnes was nominated and seconded. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED THAT

Simon Barnes was duly elected Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/2023.

125.2   DRAFT STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised Members that as a matter of good governance, an action was included in the 2020/2021 Annual Governance Statement to introduce an annual report on the work of the Standards Committee to provide the Authority with an update on its activities during each financial year.

RESOLVED THAT

125.2.1   Members agreed to note the contents of the Standards Committee Annual Report 2022/2023.

125.2.2   Following discussion on observations and feedback on the Standards Committee Annual report, Officers agreed to include start and end dates of Members terms in office.

126. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

126.1   PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – CODE OF CONDUCT CASEBOOK

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report to Members advising them of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Code of Conduct Casebook.

RESOLVED THAT

126.1.1 Following discussion on individual cases, Members agreed to note the content extracted from the 'Our Findings Section' of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales website, concerning complaints against the Code of Conduct for the period August 2022 to 29 December 2022.

126.1.2 With reference to drug and drink driving convictions, and possible issues with the chain of evidence being affected, Officers agreed to provide Members with information on whether individuals would have the right to address if their specific case was overturned.

126.2   FEEDBACK REPORT FOLLOWING OBSERVATION VISITS BY INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE TO SWFRA COMMITTEES

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update on the feedback received following observation visits by Independent Members of the Standards Committee to SWFRA Committees.

The Chair took the opportunity to inform Members that he recently observed a Local Pensions Board Committee meeting and provided a brief overview of the structure of the meeting and his observations, which he considered to be positive and purposeful.

He also advised Members that the observation form was a structured form which should be completed for Officers to receive valuable feedback and comments on performance, etc.

The Chair urged Independent Members to try and observe at least one of the online Committee meetings whenever possible.

RESOLVED THAT

126.2.1 Members agreed to note the verbal feedback report following observation visits by Independent Members of Standards Committee to SWFRA Committees.

126.2.2 Following lengthy discussion on hearing difficulties for some Members within individual meeting rooms, Officers agreed to consider cost effective alterations and to possibly install headphones or hearing loops which could be mobile and moved from room to room.

126.3   STANDARDS CONFERENCE WALES 2023

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided a verbal update report on the Standards Conference Wales 2023, and assured Members that they would be informed of the date of the next conference as soon as possible.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the verbal update report on the Standards Conference Wales 2023.

126.4   ADJUDICATION PANEL FOR WALES – ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which advised Members of the Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report 2021/22.

RESOLVED THAT

Following discussion on Members observations on the number of disciplinary cases, and the disappointment expressed in upward

trends, Members agreed to note the Adjudication Panel for Wales Annual Report 2021/22.

126.5 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which brought Members' attention to the relevant sections of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report that related to payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the extract of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Draft Annual Report, attached to the report at Appendix 1, which provided details of payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

126.6 PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021/22

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which provided Members with extracts from the Annual Report and Accounts for the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for the year ending 31 March, 2022, in respect of Members' Code of Conduct matters.

RESOLVED THAT

126.6.1   Members agreed to note the content of the report.

126.6.2   With reference to the Ombudsman possibly attending a future meeting, Officers agreed to invite either the Ombudsman or a member of her team to attend in due course.

126.6.3   Following detailed discussion on the content of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Annual report, Officers agreed to find out what a 'Review Request' was and to report back to Members in due course.

126.7 PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES – UPDATED GUIDANCE ON THE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Deputy Monitoring Officer informed Members of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales revised guidance setting out Members' obligations under the Code of Conduct and advised Members that this item would be deferred to the next meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note that the report would be deferred to the next meeting.

127. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2022/2023

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note that the Forward Work Programme for the Municipal Year 2022/2023 was now complete.

128. TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no further items of business to consider that the Chair deemed urgent.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking Members for their attendance.

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 1030 HOURS
IN MEETING ROOM AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

45. PRESENT

Councillor	Authority
Cllr C Elsbury (Chair)	Caerphilly
Cllr K Carr	Cardiff
Cllr M Hughes	Bridgend
Cllr C Wright	Caerphilly
Cllr T Watkins	Newport

APOLOGIES:

Cllr A Best	Torfaen
Cllr A Hussey	Caerphilly

OFFICERS PRESENT: ACO G Thomas, Monitoring Officer; Mr C Barton, Treasurer, Mrs S Watkins, Deputy Monitoring Officer.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

47. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements to record.

48. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023 were received and accepted as a true record.

49. CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

The Treasurer presented the Capital Outturn Report for 2022/23 which provided the position for the year ended 31 March 2023, the financing arrangements and the budget slippage required to complete capital schemes in 2023/24.

The Treasurer explained the key messages provided within the report which presented the total budget (2021/22 slippage plus 2022/23 budget), the outturn budget overspend and slippage as £12 million, £7.9 million, £1.9 million and

£6.1 million respectively. He provided detail which supported this position plus the funding analysis on how the investment is financed.

In response to Members' queries, the Treasurer agreed that additional narrative would be included in future reports presented to the Finance, Performance and Management Committee.

RESOLVED THAT

Members scrutinised the report and following challenge and clarification of its contents, noted the capital outturn and associated funding for 2022/23.

50.   REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT 2022/23

The Treasurer presented Members with an outline of the revenue outturn position for the financial year end 20223/23 and the resultant impact on reserves. It was noted that the revenue outturn position was subject to the external audit process.

The Treasurer clarified aspects of the report and in response to Members' requests, again agreed to provide additional narrative in future reports and to consider how they are presented to ensure consistency across all budgetary reports.

RESOLVED THAT

Members received and noted the outturn position and consequent transfer to usable reserves of the revenue surplus.

51.   MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE

The Treasurer presented Members with the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2026/27 for approval. It includes budget projections based on the Authority's plans and strategies informed by the general financial and operational environment in which services are provided.

The Strategy indicates that the Authority's cost base will continue to increase over the currently approved budget in response to the general inflationary pressures in the UK economy. These cost pressures are compounded by unforeseen under-provision in the current financial year. This will present a challenge to the Fire Authority and potentially to our funding councils next year.

The Strategy is drawn up in the light of rapidly changing economic projections and few firm resource commitments beyond the current year. This background introduces significant financial risks to the Strategy. Whilst it is tempting to

consider the information in this report a worst-case scenario, this is far from reality given the current volatility in the UK economy and public finances.

The Finance, Audit and Performance Management Committee considers the Strategy each year throughout its budget planning cycle.

The Treasurer provided clarity on Members' queries arising from the report including those relating to budgetary provisions for unsettled pay awards, the process for grant applications and reserves. The Treasurer undertook to include additional narrative in the upcoming report to the Finance, Audit and Performance Management Committee.

RESOLVED THAT

Members considered the Strategy and associated financial challenges in light of the information and projections contained within it.

52. OVERVIEW OF FIRE AUTHORITY AND COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMMES FOR 2023/24

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented Members with an overview of Fire Authority and Committee Work Programmes and requested Members to identify the areas of scrutiny they may wish to pursue for the 2023/24 municipal year.

The Chair noted that the Committee has been committed to scrutinise the progress made by the Unwanted Fire Signals Working Group against the recent Audit Wales Review. The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that a progress report would be received by the Scrutiny Committee at its 5 February 2024 meeting.

The Deputy Chair queried whether other Committees may wish to refer particular areas for additional scrutiny by the Scrutiny Committee.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided clarification on the complaints process, including the number and complaints profiles, which is received by the HR & Equalities Committee. If Members wished, a precis of that report could be brought to future Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Members were mindful of not overloading the Forward Work Programme bearing in mind the importance of the Scrutiny Committee's role and preparation for the outcome of the impending Culture Review report.

Additional areas that Members wished to consider included sight of overarching schemes such as Biodiversty, Wellbeing Objectives and Public Service Boards and areas relating to capital spends and projects, including possible templates for station redesigns. It was also noted that Member Champions could be a

conduit for specific areas where they might identify a degree of attention is necessary.

Members suggested that holding meetings of the Fire Authority at fire stations would be useful to provide an opportunity to liaise with staff on the fireground and to view premises. The Monitoring Officer advised that the Member Development Programme which is in its early stages of development includes visits to fire stations and the Joint Fire Control.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted and considered the Forward Work Programmes for each body of the Authority with a view to identifying areas of scrutiny for review during the 2023/24 municipal year.

Members agreed to email the Chair and Monitoring and Deputy Monitoring Officers of additional areas of scrutiny they would like included on the Forward Work Programme for review during the 2023/24 municipal year.

53. CONSULTATION RESPONSE ACTIVITY

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided the Scrutiny Committee with assurance that the Service is actively engaging in consultations from other bodies to provide support and actively open democracy to ensure that the views and opinions of the Service help shape both public and sector specific activity.

Members were grateful for the feedback and it was suggested that individual responses be made available as an embedded document in an agreed format. The Monitoring Officer noted that at the Committee is very much in development so all feedback is gratefully received to assist in deciding how the Committee progresses.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that all the Welsh Government consultations that the Service engages in are fully publicised along with all consultation responses and outcomes on the Welsh Government website.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the consultation process within the Service and took assurance that the Service plays an active role in both public and sector specific consultations.

54. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer provided Members with the current Forward Work Programme for 2023/24 which he confirmed remains flexible. Members were

reminded to email any additional areas they would like included on the Forward Work programme to the Chair and Monitoring and Deputy Monitoring Officers.

RESOLVED THAT

Members noted the Forward Work Programme for 2023/34.

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

There were no items of business that the Chair deemed urgent.

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE HR & EQUALITIES MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER, 2023**

**HELD IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM
OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

8.   PRESENT:

Councillor	Left	Authority
A Roberts MBE (Chair)		Rhondda Cynon Taff
K Carr (Deputy Chair)		Cardiff
D Ali		Cardiff
C Elsbury		Caerphilly
G Holmes		Rhondda Cynon Taff
L Wright		Monmouthshire
A Hussey		Caerphilly

APOLOGIES:

A Best	Torfaen
M Hughes	Bridgend
AM N Davies	Head of Training & Development

ABSENT:

S Melbourne	Cardiff
T Watkins	Newport

OFFICERS PRESENT:- ACO A Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACFO G Davies – Temp Director of Technical Services, Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, Mrs L Shroll – Head of People Services, Mr M Fry – TPR Independent Pay Consultant (One item only)

9.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Each Member declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

10. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements to report.

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous HR & Equalities meeting held on 10 July, 2023, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

12. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

12.1. REVIEW OF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT 2022/2023

The ACFO Technical Services presented a report which provided Members with an overview of the Training & Development department's performance during 2022/2023, which included the design and delivery of accredited Wildfire training packages, an update on the Service's Apprenticeship Scheme, and an electronic performance management system which outlined the Centre's course attendance vs capacity statistics, and the Service's operational assurance metrics.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the content of the report.

12.2 FIREFIGHTERS PENSION SCHEMES – WALES GOVERNMENT CIRCULARS 2023/2024

The ACO People Services informed Members that under the terms of the Public Services Pension Act 2013, the Fire & Rescue Authority was the recognised Scheme Manager for Firefighters Pension Schemes.

Welsh Government issued regular communications to all Chief Fire Officers, Chairs, and Clerks of Fire & Rescue Authorities, electronically in a standard circular template. These emails and circulars can cover a variety of areas, including all aspects of Firefighters Pension Schemes, and had to be noted or actioned as appropriate.

RESOLVED THAT

12.2.1   Members agreed to accept the Welsh Government Firefighters' Pension Scheme Circulars and emails that had been received in the year 2023/2024.

12.2.2   Members agreed to note the actions that had been implemented for each of the circulars.

12.3 NJC FOR BRIGADE MANAGERS SALARIES AND NUMBERS SURVEY 2022

The ACO People Services presented a report to Members which shared the 2022 NJC for Brigade Managers Salaries and Numbers Survey results, which was for information purposes.

RESOLVED THAT

12.3.1   Members agreed to note the content of the report.

12.3.2   Following a question and answer session on recruitment issues within various ethnic groups, Officers agreed to provide Members with a presentation at the next meeting on recruitment stats from each Local Authority area.

13.   REPORTS FOR DECISION

All Officers withdrew from the meeting and left the room before Members considered the following report Agenda Item 8 'Independent Pay Review – Principal Officers Remuneration'.

Mr M Fry, TRP Independent Remuneration Consultant, joined the meeting to provide Members with an overview of the report.

13.1 INDEPENDENT PAY REVIEW – PRINCIPAL OFFICERS REMUNERATION

Mr M Fry of Total Reward Projects Limited, took Members through the content of his report.   It was noted that in September 2022 the Fire & Rescue Authority received a report from external consultants, The Total Reward Projects Limited (TRP), on a review of Brigade Manager/Principal Officers' remuneration that had been

requested by Fire Authority Members following the completion of the Job Evaluation exercise for Green Book employees. An uplift of 4.5% was agreed and it was also resolved that a further piece of work would be commissioned immediately on Principal Officer pay, and that a review on Principal Officers' pay would be carried out on a yearly basis by an external consultant for a period of two years, followed by a review thereafter.

It was noted that the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority (FRA) Pay Policy document stated that Principal Officers' remuneration should be reviewed annually by the local Fire & Rescue Authority and that the HR & Equalities Committee was assigned to consider PO remuneration and report findings to the Fire & Rescue Authority. The National Joint Council for Brigade Managers of Fire & Rescue Services, Constitution and scheme of conditions of service, stated there was a two-track approach to determining Principal Officers remuneration, as outlined above, one of these was a local review undertaken by the Fire & Rescue Authority.

RESOLVED THAT

13.1.1   Members agreed to review the report attached at Appendix 1, which had been prepared and presented by an Independent Pay Consultant.

13.1.2   Following lengthy discussion and consideration of the report, it was unanimously agreed that the Chair of the HR & Equalities Committee would make a recommendation to the Fire & Rescue Authority at the meeting scheduled to take place on 25 September, 2023.

Officers returned to the meeting room to re-join the formal proceedings.

13.2   HR & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE – PROPOSED NEW TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which requested Members to consider and review the current Terms of Reference of the HR & Equalities Committee, and to agree the Terms of Reference going forward.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to review and approve the Terms of Reference of the HR & Equalities Committee to ensure they remained suitable and fit for purpose.

14.   FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/2024

The ACO People Services provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024, and noted that in order to balance meetings out equally that some reports would be brought forward from March to November's meeting.

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

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, AUDIT & PERFORMANCE
MANAGEMENT MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2023
IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

9.   PRESENT:

Councillor	**Left**	
S Evans (Chair)		Torfaen
J Morgan (Deputy Chair)		Blaenau Gwent
I Buckley		Vale of Glamorgan
P Ford		Bridgend
M Al Nuaimi		Newport
M Powell		Monmouthshire
G Williams		Rhondda Cynon Taff
C Wright		Caerphilly

APOLOGIES:
D Isaac	Merthyr Tydfil
B Proctor	Cardiff
ACO G Thomas	Monitoring Officer

ABSENT:

OFFICERS PRESENT:- Mrs S Watkins – Deputy Monitoring Officer & Head of Corporate Support, ACFO D Rose – Director of Service Delivery, Mr C Barton – Treasurer, Mrs L Mullan – Temp Head of Finance, Procurement & Property, Mrs H Cargill – TIAA Internal Auditor

10.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in each agenda item which affected their Authority.

Councillor Evans declared a personal interest in any items which related to New Inn Fire Station.

Councillors Evans and Morgan both declared a personal interest as Members of the Gwent Public Service Board.

11.   CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair had no announcements to make.

12.   MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Finance, Audit & Performance Management meeting held on 24 July 2023, were received and accepted as a true record of proceedings.

13.   REPORTS FOR DECISION

13.1 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND REVENUE BUDGET UPDATE REPORT

The Treasurer presented to Members the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/2023 to 2026/2027 for approval. It included budget projections based on the Authority's plans and strategies informed by the general financial and operational environment in which services were provided.

The Strategy indicated that the Authority's cost base would continue to increase over the currently approved budget in response to the general inflationary pressures in the UK economy. The cost pressures were compounded by unforeseen under-provision in the current financial year. This would present a challenge to the Fire Authority and potentially to the Service's funding from councils next year.

The Strategy was drawn up in the light of rapidly changing economic projections and few firm resource commitments beyond the current year. This background introduced significant financial risks to the Strategy. Whilst it was tempting to consider the information in the report a worst-case scenario, this was far from reality given the current volatility in the UK economy and public finances.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session on issues with Grant Funding from the Welsh Government, Members agreed to note the risks and uncertainties within the projections and approved the Strategy as the basis for financial planning over the Strategy period.

13.2   REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2023/2024

The temporary Head of Finance & Procurement informed Members that the Revenue Monitoring report provided details of the Annual Revenue Budget and associated information for the year ending 31 March, 2024.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session on the possibility of making efficiencies and savings, as well as the overspend on energy costs, Members agreed to note the content of the report.

13.3   CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2023/2024

The temporary Head of Finance & Procurement informed Members that the Capital Monitoring report provided details of the Capital Budget, transactions to date, and the forecast year end position for the year ending 31 March, 2024.

RESOLVED THAT

13.3.1   Members agreed to note the budget and progress of capital schemes, and approved the alterations identified in Appendix 1 and associated movements in funding.

13.3.2   Following a lengthy question and answer session, Officers assured Members that they would continue to monitor the consultancy and legal costs and agreed to circulate a copy of a report on the Raac concrete survey work which had recently been carried out on all premises across the Service.

13.4 2022/2023 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW

The temporary Head of Finance & Procurement presented a report for Members to review the Treasury Management activities for the year ending 31 March, 2023, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/2023.

RESOLVED THAT

13.4.1 Members agreed to recommend to the full Fire & Rescue Authority Committee to note the annual Treasury Management review data for 2022/2023.

13.4.2 Members agreed to recommend to the full Fire & Rescue Authority Committee they approve the actual prudential and treasury indicators set therein.

14.   REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

14.1 INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT & AUDIT ACTION UPDATE

The TIAA Internal Auditor presented a report which updated Members upon progress being made against the Internal Audit Plans for 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the internal audit recommendations and work completed to date on the Internal Audit Annual Plan.

14.2 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The ACFO Service Delivery presented the Performance Monitoring report to Members for their information.

RESOLVED THAT

Following a question and answer session on the stats for Water Rescue and Bariatric incidents compared to other Emergency Services, Members agreed to note the presented report and its contents.

14.3 HEALTH CHECK OF PRIORITY ACTIONS AND Q1 PROGRESS AGAINST THE STATUTORY PIs

The Head of Corporate Support provided Members with a brief overview of the Priority Actions and Quarter 1 progress against the statutory PIs.

RESOLVED THAT

14.3.1   Members agreed to note the presented report and its contents.

14.3.2   With reference to the recent introduction of the new 20 mph speed limit in a number of residential areas, and whether it would affect the turn-out times for On-Call firefighters, Officers assured Members that they would continue to monitor the situation over the next twelve months.

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Deputy Monitoring Officer provided Members with the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

RESOLVED THAT

Members agreed to note the content of the Forward Work Programme for 2023/2024.

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

There were no further items of business to consider that the Chair deemed urgent.

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UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETINGS

Huw Jakeway – CFO Dewi Rose – T/DCFO SD Geraint Thomas – ACO CS Alison Reed – ACO PS	Chris Barton – Treasurer Garry Davies – T/ACFO TS

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
21/22 – 17.3.2	Firefighter Pensions – Remedying Age Discrimination : Pension Benefit Options	Provide pension benefit options to the individuals considered to be in scope for Immediate Detriment (ID)	ACO PS	The Service provided benefit options for Immediate Detriment (ID) cases (Category 1) during the period October 2021 and September 2023. A total of 50 ID cases were processed during this period. These were cases where the individual in scope of ID, submitted their notice of intention to retire prior to the new pensions legislation coming into force on 1 October 2023.
21/22 – 17.3.3	Firefighter Pensions – Remedying Age	Progress exercise to implement the wider remedy work as described in the outcome of the	ACO PS	The new pensions regulations came into force on 1 October 2023. The resourcing for the internal pensions

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
	Discrimination : McCloud Exercise	HMT consultation on public service pensions for implementation by October 2023 at the latest.		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.
23/24 – 25	Real Living Wage Accreditation	Members to receive a briefing note in due course to include key areas such as branding.	ACO PS	A briefing note was prepared and circulated ahead of the September Fire Authority meeting. **Completed.**
23/24 – 26.1.2	Strategic Themes and Proposed Objectives 2024/25	Publish the approved Strategic Themes and Objectives in the consultation document – Stage 2 of the Improvement Plan – on the Service's website by 31 October 2023.	ACO CS	Strategic themes have been updated with amendments suggested by FRA and included in the plan for publication by 31 October **Completed**
23/24 – 26.3	Refurbishment of Treorchy Fire Station	On completion of works, arrangements to be made for Members to visit the new Treorchy and Pontycymmer Fire Stations, as well as the Community Garden at Ogmore Vale Station.	ACO CS	Arrangements are being co-ordinated for Members to visit the stations.
23/24 – 27.5	Welsh Language Standards Update	Members to be requested to appoint a Members Champion for Welsh Language.	ACO PS	Request for Member nominations has been circulated.
23/24 – 35.2	Appointment of ACFO – Technical Services	Appointment process to commence following the outcome of the Culture Review.	CFO	

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
23/24 – 35.3	HMI of Constabulary and FRS's Report – Values and Culture in FRSs (Spotlight Report)	Agreed actions and progress against the HMICFS recommendations to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee.	CFO	To be placed on the agenda of the Scrutiny Committee meeting of 5 February 2024.
23/24 – 37.3	Carbon Reduction Plan Annual Update	Fire Authority to receive a progress report in 6 months.		To be placed on the agenda for 18 March 2024 meeting.

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AGENDA ITEM NO 6

Reports for Decision

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY   AGENDA ITEM NO 6.i
                                                                                    18 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25
THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY TREASURER
PRESENTING OFFICER TREASURER

SUMMARY

This report presents the updated draft revenue budget 2024/25 for consultation. It includes revised projections based on the Medium Term Financial Strategy approved in September and work carried out by officers following previous meetings of the Finance, Audit and Performance Committee (FAPM) and Scrutiny Committee.

The report provides context for budget setting considering the Authority's increasing cost base, pressure on the current financial year's budget and the likely challenges faced by the constituent councils in funding the Service next year.

The report identifies significant financial risks in setting the budget both in the short and medium term.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. That Members note the financial risks within the report and consult on a contributions budget of £94,574,239, noting the potential impact of firefighter pension funding arrangements highlighted in the report.

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1.   BACKGROUND

1.1   The Authority approved a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in September. This report provides an update on key matters within the budget for 2024/25 together with work that has been progressed since the MTFS was approved.

1.2   The Authority follows appropriate Codes of Practice in managing its finances including the maintenance of an MTFS underpinned by its Treasury Management Strategy. The Authority's latest external audit report confirms that its governance, reporting and financial management arrangements are appropriate and functioning well.

1.3 Few firm forward financial plans have been released by central government whether nationally or regionally in the wake of the current cost of living crisis. Forward planning with any accurate assessment of external factors is therefore very challenging. Commentary by Welsh Government Ministers has referenced the limited funding available for public services both in this year and next. Indications from Welsh Government are that the next budget round will be extremely challenging and that no new resources are expected from Westminster. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement offered no clear insight into the level of funding for public services for next year and beyond.

1.4 There is an ongoing discussion with Welsh Government regarding the broadening of the role of firefighters but currently, no clear parameters exist to base assumptions on. This work is therefore not factored into any budget proposals at this time.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

2.1 The Authority is asked to agree the consultation budget considering the risks and unknowns facing the service.

2.2 For the current financial year, the Fire Authority set a budget of £89,375,478. In setting its annual budget, the Authority has always been mindful of the resources available to its constituent councils both from Welsh Government and local taxpayers.

2.3 The following chart shows the historical trend of increases / reductions in the revenue budget compared to the resources available to councils from Welsh Government and Council Tax.
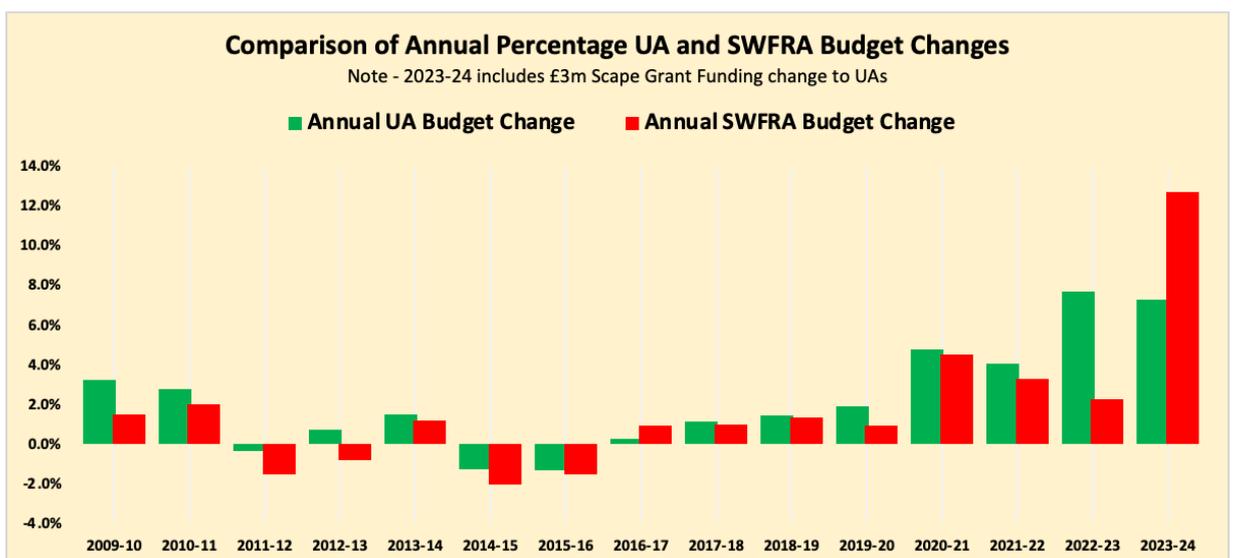
2.4   **LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT**

2.4.1 In recent years, the Welsh Government has started to increase resources within the local government settlement. Welsh Government indicated in its current year settlement that resources for councils in Wales could increase by 3.1% for 2024/25. This is generally regarded to be significantly less than the cost pressures faced by local government.

2.4.2 In previous years, the Fire Authority has been informed of the consistent pattern of increases in local taxation which assists in budget setting for council services which includes fire and rescue services. Council tax yield has typically increased by an average of between 4% and 5%. Council Tax still accounts for around one quarter of councils' net revenue to fund services.

2.4.3 Depending on council tax decisions, these resources combined could see average net revenue spending in councils rise by around 3.5%.

2.5   **WELSH GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES**

2.5.1 The Authority relies on several streams of Welsh Government funding to support its budget. As in previous years, no forward commitment has been given to support these key income streams. Pension costs, National Resilience and community safety activities all rely heavily on this grant funding and this lack of long-term commitment represents a risk to the Authority. Including pensions and PFI grant, the funding amounts to around £20m per annum, the equivalent of approximately 22% of the contributions budget.

2.5.2 In the current year, Welsh Government terminated its support for FireLink (the Airwave emergency communications system) resulting in a withdrawal of £600k of funding citing the case that such costs were part of the operational service delivery of the Authority. There is a risk that other similar grant cuts may follow.

2.5.3 In 2023/24, Welsh Government transferred pensions (SCAPE) grant into the general local government settlement. There is a wider initiative underway within central government to reduce specific grants and thus reduce administration costs. Whether this will further impact grant funding for Fire in 2024/25 is not known. What is known, is that there is another SCAPE rate adjustment coming in 2024/25 and this budget report is built on the premise that whatever the size of the adjustment, it will come with additional funding for councils which will make it cost neutral.

2.5.4 There are several other matters regarding pensions which could affect costs and these are discussed later in this report.

2.5.5 Whether or not grants for community safety or national resilience work will continue is not clear.

2.5.6 In most years, Welsh Government provides a cash flat grant profile. This of course represents real terms cuts as costs have significantly increased. Likely pay inflation in 2024/25 will again erode the value of those grants which remain.

2.5.7 Welsh Government are not publishing their budget until the day after this meeting. Any announcements will therefore not be available until after the consultation budget is set. Should there be cuts, the Fire Authority will need to consider its response. Where possible, the budget consultation will provide details of any key announcements that are made.

2.6 **POPULATION CHANGES**

2.7 Population data used in the Welsh Government Settlement is the basis on which the Fire Authority's budget is distributed and funded by the ten constituent councils in the South Wales area. The Fire Authority has no powers to vary this distribution methodology which is set out in legislation.

2.7.1 Based on the revised population figures, the table below shows the underlying changes in each council's contributions before any decision by Fire Authority to change the budget.

Authority	Budget 23/24	Population 23/24	Population 24/25	Change %	Change £
Bridgend	8,522,690	147,031	146,136	-0.61%	(47,118)
Vale of Glamorgan	7,778,455	134,192	133,492	-0.52%	(36,208)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13,942,307	240,528	239,018	-0.63%	(79,780)
Merthyr Tydfil	3,475,795	59,963	58,883	-1.80%	(60,708)
Caerphilly	10,381,343	179,096	176,130	-1.66%	(166,184)
Blaenau Gwent	3,953,469	68,204	67,014	-1.74%	(66,802)
Torfaen	5,408,971	93,314	92,860	-0.49%	(23,292)
Monmouthshire	5,471,544	94,393	93,886	-0.54%	(26,359)
Newport	9,242,329	159,446	161,506	1.29%	124,670
Cardiff	21,198,575	365,711	372,089	1.74%	381,781
	89,375,478	1,541,878	1,541,014	-0.06%	0

2.7.2 These changes at council level will be reflected in variations from the overall average increase in contributions set by the Fire Authority.

2.8 BASE BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

2.8.1 The Authority has been working with other Welsh FRAs and the WLGA to communicate to Welsh Government the scale of cost pressures across Wales for this and next year. Our initial planning work shows a consistent pattern of budget pressures across Wales supporting the basic construction of the MTFS.

2.8.2 There are two fundamental issues with the base budget going forward which have been reported to the FAPM Committee in detail. Firstly, there is under-provision within the current year arising from unforeseen inflationary pressures. The latest budget monitoring indicates a substantial overspend of around £1.3m although work will continue to drive down this figure. Secondly, there is continued inflationary pressure in 2024/25 on top of planned expenditure requirements contained within budget submissions for the coming financial year. A summary of the information provided to FAPM is included below.

2.8.3 The most significant pressure on the Authority's budget is employee costs with current year pay awards exceeding the approved budget. Whilst inflation rates have started to fall in the UK (4.6% in October), the speed with which they will come down remains uncertain and the modelled 3% pay awards in the MTFS for 2024/25 may not be sufficient.

2.8.4 Further pressures will arise from pension costs. The latest Firefighters' Scheme valuation shows an increase in cost equal to a further 3.7% of pay.

2.8.5 The Premises budget is once again under pressure from inflationary increases mainly in energy costs. Contracts linked to RPI are subject to significant increases from the prevailing inflationary conditions.

2.8.6 ICT, Equipment and Supplies costs are also increasing with inflation. The Authority's insurance cover was re-tendered and costs came in lower than anticipated resulting in savings in this budget.

2.8.7 Transport costs continue to be targeted for reductions by reducing vehicle movements and introducing zero emission vehicles. Fossil

fuel costs are still increasing and these are used extensively by the Services heavy fleet of emergency response vehicles.

2.8.8 Increasing capital financing costs are driven by the Authority's capital programme and its Treasury Management Strategy.

2.9 **BUDGET REDUCTIONS**

2.9.1 The initial draft budget showed an increase of 7.8%. Since the MTFS was completed, a review of the following has been undertaken and work is continuing to refine the budget preparation.

- the assumptions underpinning the budget
- the bids submitted by service areas
- options for funding costs other than from the base budget and
- savings that can be secured both this and next year

2.9.2 The key downward adjustments to the draft budget as reported to FAPM are summarised in the table below.

Budget Adjustment	£000	Notes
Vacancy provision	459	Based on historical records and latest budget monitoring analysis. No direct action is proposed to restrict recruitment in areas such as on-call firefighters
Staff costs funded from Reserves	249	Temporary posts with determined end dates plus residual cost of Job Evaluation
Growth bids deferred or funded from savings in existing budgets	443	Re-assessment of bids to prioritise expenditure
One off equipment renewals and other one off project costs funded from reserves	570	Equipment replacement reserve created in 2022/23 for this purpose together with the use of Invest to Save Reserve
Savings in capital financing costs through re-profiling capital spend	328	Changes to timing of capital programme spend avoiding deletion or significant stoppage to the programme
Total reductions	**2,049**	

2.9.3 Inevitably, there are also some upward adjustments identified as part of this work. Some of these have arisen to facilitate the reductions above with others arising from emerging external factors. The table below outlines the background to the increases.

Budget Adjustment	£000	Notes
Home Fire Safety	70	In previous years, the Home Fire Safety budget has benefitted from the redistribution of underutilised Welsh Government grants. This is unlikely in the current and future years. As a result, to maintain the current level of risk based home fire safety activity, additional provision is required. Currently the Service installs Carbon Monoxide detectors in homes where risk is identified, this costs an additional £100k to do so. Officers are exploring other funding streams for this hardware.
Auxiliary Control Operations	80	The Service has been considering the extent to which it needs provision for auxiliary fire control operators in the same way that it has for firefighters during periods of industrial action. Based on the absence of clear direction regarding the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act in Wales, additional provision is required for the Authority to meet its statutory duty at times of industrial disputes.
Firefighter Pensions	112	Revaluation of the firefighter pension scheme indicates that Employer's costs could increase from 27.3% to 31% next year. The majority of this 3.7% increase relates to changes in the Scape Rate (1.4%) and liabilities arising from the O'Brien case (2%). Assuming that external funding will be passed from central government to fund the bulk of the costs, the net increase in the budget would be £112k (0.3%). If however this funding were passed through the local government settlement (as Scape was last year), the gross increase in the Fire budget would be £1.378m with £1.266m increased grant to constituent councils.
Total increases	**262**	

2.9.4 The increase in the budget for next year including these reductions and increases would be 5.8%. It is pertinent to note that if the pensions grant funding above is directed to the constituent authorities, this 5.8% like for like increase will show as a 7.2%

headline increase but will not be at an increased cost to our constituent Councils.

2.10 LEVEL OF RESERVES

2.10.1 Following consideration of the MTFS within the Service, through the Scrutiny Committee and through the initial Constituent Council consultation meetings, one theme has consistently emerged and that is the level of and availability of usable reserves and the extent to which the Fire Authority could deploy these reserves to mitigate or smooth any budget increases.

2.10.2 The Authority must be particularly mindful of the availability, commitment and sustainability of usable reserves in accordance with the Financial Management Code. The following table summarises the position of usable revenue reserves considering known and projected commitments together with those items discussed in paragraph 2.9 of this report.

Reserve	Balance 31/3/23 £000	Use 23/24 £000	Balance 31/3/24 £000	Use 24/25 £000	Balance 31/3/25 £000
General	3,000	-	3,000		3,000
General reserves equate to 3.4% of revenue budget					
Change Management	3,094	(1,325)	1,769	(226)	1,543
Required to fund forecast overspend in 23/24 plus budget reductions in 24/25					
Culture Review	340	(340)	0	-	0
Fully committed to meet known liabilities.					
Carbon Reduction	3,000	-	3,000	-	3,000
Reserve maintained to fund projects as identified.					
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	2,000	-	2,000	-	2,000
Reserve maintained to fund projects as identified.					
Equipment Renewals	2,000	(289)	1,711	(570)	1,141
Reserve used to fund equipment renewals and one off costs avoiding impact on revenue budget.					
PFI Equalisation	3,192	(287)	2,905	(322)	2,583
Fully committed to match reductions in grant v expenditure to mitigate impact on revenue budget.					
Managed Underspends	141	(141)	0	-	0
Fully committed to meet known liabilities.					
Joint Control Lease	200	(100)	100	(100)	0
Fully committed to meet known liabilities.					
Total	**16,967**	**(2,482)**	**14,485**	**(1,218)**	**13,267**

2.10.3 Should the Authority be minded to utilise additional reserves to mitigate or smooth the increase in budgets, it would have to put in place a plan to remove the ongoing use of those reserves. This could be through the identification and delivery of savings or increases in the base budget in future years or a combination of both.

2.10.4 For illustrative purposes only, each 1% reduction in the budget increase would require the use of £894k in reserves.

2.11 **RISKS**

2.11.1 The detail of the report highlights some of the financial risks in setting the budget for next year. It is important to highlight those key risks for Members when considering the appropriate consultation budget. These risks are

- The level of inflation for the coming year, in particular pay increases
- The uncertainty of Welsh Government grant funding
- The projected in year overspend which will be met from reserves
- The need to set a sustainable budget beyond 2024/25
- Failure to identify and / or deliver identified savings

2.12 **CONSULTATION BUDGET**

2.12.1 Following consideration of the budget detail, the level of reserves and the inherent financial risks outlined, the FAPM Committee recommended to Fire Authority that it should consult on a budget of £94,574,239.

2.12.2 The proposed budget if approved, would result in the following contributions. As noted earlier in the report, population variations result in a range of percentages increases which will also be broadly reflected in the local government settlement. The detail of the budget is set out in Appendix 1.

Authority	Budget 2023/24 £	Budget 2024/25 £	Change £	Change %
Bridgend	8,522,690	8,968,576	445,886	5.2%
The Vale Of Glamorgan	7,778,455	8,192,595	414,140	5.3%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	13,942,307	14,668,877	726,570	5.2%
Merthyr Tydfil	3,475,795	3,613,734	137,939	4.0%
Caerphilly	10,381,343	10,809,351	428,008	4.1%
Blaenau Gwent	3,953,469	4,112,745	159,276	4.0%
Torfaen	5,408,971	5,698,951	289,980	5.4%
Monmouthshire	5,471,544	5,761,918	290,374	5.3%
Newport	9,242,329	9,911,855	669,526	7.2%
Cardiff	21,198,575	22,835,637	1,637,062	7.7%
Total	**89,375,478**	**94,574,239**	**5,198,761**	**5.8%**

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability / Environment / Carbon Reduction	Yes
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	Yes
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.1.1 The MTFS includes assumptions of savings derived from Carbon Reduction initiatives.

3.1.2 The MTFS includes budget projections that will form the basis of consultation with the ten constituent authorities.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No
Financial	Yes
Procurement	No
Corporate Risk	No
Information Management	No
Data Protection / Privacy	No
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Governance & Audit	No

Service Policy	No
National Policy	No

3.2.1 The MTFS includes detailed plans of the Authority's finances and is prepared in compliance with several regulatory Codes of Practice.

3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

Human Resources and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

3.3.1 The MTFS forms the basis of the revenue and capital budget planning for the coming financial year.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Following extensive work undertaken by officers in reviewing the basis of the MTFS and options for achieving reductions, a like for like budget increase of 5.8% is projected.

4.2 Lowering the budget further would require the temporary use of revenue reserves and commitment to the development of a sustainable and deliverable plan to address future budget levels acknowledging any consequential impacts on service delivery.

4.3 There are significant risks associated with the delivery of both the current year outturn and next year's budget.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Members note the financial risks within the report and consult on a contributions budget of £94,574,239, noting the potential impact of firefighter pension funding arrangements highlighted in the report.

Contact Officer:	Chris Barton Treasurer	
Background Papers	**Date**	**Source / Contact**
None		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Draft budget 2024/25

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REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25
Appendix 1
DRAFT BUDGET 2024/25

		£	£
Direct Employee Costs	Whole time uniformed staff	36,532,111	
	On Call fire fighters	7,109,730	
	Auxiliary Reserve	311,548	
	Control staff	1,593,613	
	Non-uniformed staff	10,668,165	
	Members expenses	86,380	
	Overtime & Other Allowances	2,347,903	
	Apprenticeship Levy	260,000	
Indirect Employee Costs	FF Scheme - employer's contributions (See note below)	11,542,491	
	LGP Scheme - employer's contributions	1,762,288	
	FF Ill health pensions	962,724	
	NHS Reimbursements, Class 1 NI, Scheme Admin	66,160	
	Travel & Subsistence	426,000	73,669,114
Premises Related Expenses	Repair & maintenance	1,250,972	
	Grounds maintenance	42,000	
	Cleaning	738,180	
	Rates, Lease, Rents	1,225,500	
	Water	43,992	
	Energy	2,102,000	
	Security	115,200	
	Telephones/Communications	1,656,613	7,174,457
Training Expenses	Training		1,834,599
Supplies & services	Operational equipment	454,205	
	Other equipment & furniture	509,059	
	RTC (Scrap Vehicles)	68,500	
	Fitness/training equipment	50,000	
	Equipment repair & maintenance	119,900	
	Fire Ground consumables	20,000	
	I.C.T.	2,056,654	
	Clothing & Uniforms	721,694	
	Stationery, Printing, Postage, books etc	73,662	
	Advertising (vacancies etc.)	181,400	
	Licences	107,207	
	Literature / subscriptions	218,293	
	Catering & fire ground provisions	56,770	
	Presentations, awards & fees	29,800	
	Insurances	1,178,380	5,845,524
Transport			1,724,590
Contracted Services			1,352,970
Capital costs / leasing			5,305,190
Total Expenditure			96,906,444
Income (See note below)			-2,332,205
CONTRIBUTIONS BUDGET			94,574,239

Note - Firefighter pensions include the estimated costs of a further SCAPE rate adjustment due in 2024/25 together with the estimated costs of O'Brien (part time firefighter) cases as estimated by the Government Actuary. The above budget also includes additional grant funding to offset these costs in full. Should this additional grant funding be paid directly to constituent councils via the local government settlement, the contributions budget will increase by £1.266m representing a 7.2% headline increase.

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY   AGENDA ITEM NO 6.ii
                                                  18 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

TREASURER VACANCY – APPOINTMENT AUTHORISATION TO RECRUIT A TREASURER

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

PRESENTING OFFICER ACO PEOPLE SERVICES

SUMMARY

The Fire and Rescue Authority's Constitution determines that a request to fill the post of Treasurer on a permanent basis has to be brought before the Fire & Rescue Authority for approval. The Authority's Treasurer has announced their intention to retire at the end of March 2024. This report seeks approval to recruit a replacement on a permanent basis.

As this is one of the three statutory roles for the Authority it is proposed to commence the recruitment process at the earliest opportunity, subject to Fire Authority approval with the aim of making a permanent appointment before the end of March 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the recruitment of the role of Treasurer.

That Members approve the recruitment timetable as laid out in the report.

---

1. BACKGROUND

1.1   As outlined in the Authority's Constitution a vacancy for the post of Treasurer must be reported to the Authority to consider whether the appointment is necessary and what shall be the terms and conditions.

1.2   As the role of the Treasurer is one of the three statutory roles for the Authority it is necessary to make provision for a postholder therefore the Authority must take steps to appoint, including drawing up a statement specifying the duties, any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed and make arrangements for the post to be advertised appropriately.

1.3   As Members will be aware, the role of Treasurer for the Authority is similar to that of Treasurer at your home authorities, the only difference being that

the appointment is made under s.112(2)(b) of the Local Government & Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 Schedule 1, para 68(3)) rather than s.151 of the Local Government Act 1972. The role is one of the three statutory roles that the Authority must secure. To be able to fulfil the role of Treasurer for the Authority, the postholder must fulfil minimum qualification standards to be appointed: s.113 of the 1988 Act.

1.4   The role of Treasurer primarily relates to ensuring the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs. The responsibilities of the post are set out in the Local Government & Finance Act 1988 and in relation to the Fire and Rescue Authority can be summarised below:

- To perform the role of Treasurer in accordance with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (Combination Scheme) Order 1995, Sections 112, 113 and 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 Sch. 1, para 68 (3)), Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and any subsequent or subordinate legislation.
- To determine and issue the constituent authorities' contributions.
- To determine the accounting policies, procedures, records and systems for the Organisation and approve any amendments thereto.
- To ensure that financial statements are prepared on a timely basis and in accordance with Codes of Practice.
- To secure the provision of treasury management services.
- To enter into credit arrangements on behalf of the Organisation.
- To write off of bad debts (to a specified limit) where there is no prospect of recovery.
- To report any potentially unlawful decision on expenditure within the Organisation.
- To settle, subject to discussion with the Director of Corporate Services, any uninsured claim against the Authority (up to a specified limit) subject to an annual report to the Fire and Rescue Authority on the use of this delegation.
- In consultation with the Director of Technical Services to dispose of assets in the most appropriate manner to ensure best value is obtained for the Organisation.
- To agree the carry forward of year end balances for specific items of expenditure (up to a specified value), such sums to be included in earmarked reserves, included in the Statement of Accounts and reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

1.5   The role is further defined in Cipfa's publication "The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government" as:

- being a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest

- being actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the organisation's financial strategy

- leading the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively.

- leading and directing a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose

- being professionally qualified and suitably experienced

2. ISSUE

2.1 It is proposed that the role of Treasurer is filled on a permanent basis through a process of open and fair competition.

2.2 The role is currently contracted to undertake 118 days per annum. It is proposed that this contractual requirement is retained going forwards.

2.3 Vacancies at this level have previously been advertised with our ten constituent authorities and also in the public domain in order to attract the best possible field of applicants.

2.4 The Authority's Constitution states that suitable shortlisted candidates should be submitted to the Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee for consideration and appointment where appropriate. The Fire Authority may wish to broaden the appointment panel to include the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fire Authority, along with the Chair of the HR & Equalities Committee.

2.5 The proposed timetable for the appointment process following approval of this report is as follows:

Activity	Provisional Date(s)
Advertisement	Dec - Jan 2024
Shortlist	January 2024
Professional interview with Executive Leadership Team	Jan/Feb 2024
Fire Authority Appointment Panel	February 2024

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability / Environment / Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	Yes

3.1.1 An integrated Impact Assessment has been prepared and incorporates the Service's Equal Opportunities and Fairness protocols which will form a central part of the recruitment process to ensure that the process is transparent, open and fair for all applicants.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No
Financial	No
Procurement	No
Corporate Risk	No
Information Management	No
Data Protection / Privacy	No
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Governance & Audit	Yes
Service Policy	No
National Policy	No

3.2.1 The Fire & Rescue Authority's Constitution determines that a request to fill the post of Treasurer on a permanent basis has to be brought before the Fire & Rescue Authority for approval.

3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

Human Resources and People Development	Yes
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

3.3.1 Funding for the role of Treasurer is contained within the salary revenue budget as an established post. The salary for the post is a single point salary, £79,788.00 (FTE) pa. Currently the Treasurer is contracted to work 118 days per annum, the salary reflective of this contractual commitment is £36,208.00 per annum.

3.3.2 The pay structure is set out in the Service's Pay Policy Statement.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Approval to recruit the Treasurer will provide stability in terms of structure and it will ensure service delivery is unaffected.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 That Members approve the recruitment of the role of Treasurer.

5.2 That Members approve the recruitment timetable as laid out in the report.

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

Appendices	

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY   AGENDA ITEM NO 6.iii
                                                  18 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-TERM REVIEW REPORT 2023/24

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE TREASURER

REPORT PRESENTED BY CHRIS BARTON, TREASURER

SUMMARY

The Treasury Management Mid-Term Review Report provides an update on the Authority's treasury activities for the period 1 April – 30 September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

The Fire & Rescue Authority is asked to note and approve the report and the treasury activity for 2023/24.

---

1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1   The Fire & Rescue Authority approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2020/21 on 13 March 2023. The TMSS sets out the reporting framework for monitoring performance and compliance of treasury management activities.

1.2   This report contains indicators and information for the 6 months leading up to 30 September 2023. Treasury procedures and reporting are intended to limit the Authority's exposure to unforeseen and unbudgeted financial consequences and to ensure that treasury management activity has been conducted in accordance with legislation and the agreed strategy.

2.   **ISSUE**

2.1   This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2017).

2.2   The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

2.2.1   Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMSS) which sets out the policies and objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities.

2.2.2 Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the way the Authority will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.

2.2.3 Receipt by the full Authority of;

- An annual TMSS to include the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy for the year ahead;

- A Mid-year Review Report (this report), and

- An Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year.

2.2.4 Delegation by the Authority of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.

2.2.5 Delegation by the Authority of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Authority the delegated body is the Finance, Audit & Performance Management (FAPM) Committee.

2.3 This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;

- The Authority's capital expenditure and how these plans area financed

- The impact of the changes in capital expenditure plans on prudential / treasury indicators and limits and the underlying need to borrow;

- A review of the Authority's investment portfolio;

- A review of the Authority's borrowing strategy;

2.3.1 Appendix 1 provides an economic update for the 6 months leading up to the 30 September in addition to forecast information to inform treasury activities.

3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT UPDATE

3.1 There are no policy changes to report and a review of the indicators and limits are set out in the below tables.

Capital, Prudential and Treasury Indicators	2023/24 TMSS	2023/24 Mid-year Review
Opening CFR	46,478	40,226
Capital Spending	**14,861**	**10,563**
CERA	-200	-200
Partner Contribution to Capital		-339
Capital Receipts		-66
Capital Grant		-586
Revenue Reserves		
Borrowing requirement for the year	**14,661**	**9,373**
Repayment of Debt		
MRP	-4,163	-3,822
MRP on PFI	-437	-437
Closing CFR	**56,538**	**45,339**
Movement in closing CFR	10,060	5,113
Gross Borrowing at 1 April	26,737	26,737
New Borrowing	10,000	6,000
Loan Repayments	-1,383	-1,383
Gross Borrowing at 31 March	35,355	31,354
Investments/Deposits at 1 April	-1,000	-2,163
Investments/Deposits at 31 March	-2,058	-1,000
Net borrowing at 1 April	25,737	24,574
Net borrowing at 31 March	33,297	30,354
Other long term liabilities i.e. PFI	3,242	3,242
Gross Debt	38,596	34,596
Under/Over borrowed (Gross Debt vs CFR)	**17,942**	**10,744**
Movement in OLTL from year to year	-437	-437

Operational Boundary;	TMSS	Mid-year
Debt	57,000	Unchanged
Other long term liabilities	3,500	Unchanged
Total	60,500	Unchanged
Authorised limit		
Debt	58,000	Unchanged
Other long term liabilities	3,500	Unchanged
Total	61,500	Unchanged
Affordability:		
Ratio of Financing costs to Revenue	5.78%	6.03%

Operational limit	9%	Unchanged
Authorised limit	10%	Unchanged
Bank / current rates		
Lloyds	0%	5.15%
Barclays		4.95%

The ratio of financing costs to revenue has marginally exceeded the estimated figure by 0.25% as a result of an increase in MRP charges, as opposed to increased interest rates in the period.

3.2   SWFRS bank rates track the Bank of England (BoE)base rate with an adjustment of -0.10% and -0.30% for Lloyds and Barclays accounts respectively. The current BoE rate is 5.25% and the last increase of 0.25% was announced 3 August 2023, and the rate has been maintained since.

The following provides an overview the borrowing position for the Service;

Borrowing/External Debt	**22/23**	**23/24**
PWLB		
Opening Principal	28,138,845	26,736,946
New Borrowing	0	6,000,000
EIP Principal Repaid	-401,899	-382,819
Maturity Principal Repaid	-1,000,000	-1,000,000
Closing Principal	26,736,946	31,354,127
Non PWLB/Salix		
Opening Principal	6,917	0
New Borrowing	0	0
EIP Principal Repaid	0	0
Maturity Principal Repaid	-6,917	0
Closing Principal	0	0
Total		
Opening Principal	28,145,762	26,736,946
New Borrowing	0	6,000,000
EIP Principal Repaid	-401,899	-382,819
Maturity Principal Repaid	-1,006,917	-1,000,000
Closing Principal	26,736,946	31,354,127
Total principal paid	-1,408,816	-1,382,819

A breakdown of principal amounts outstanding, i.e. loans, for the beginning and end of the current financial year is provided below, together with applicable rates, interest payable for the year and loans type.

Original Principal (£)	Rate (%)	Principal OS 31/03/2023	Interest Charge 2023/24	Principal 2023/24	Principal OS 31/03/2024	EIP/MATURITY
954,000	4.75	19,080.00	237.13	19,080.00	0.00	EIP
1,031,000	4.375	1,031,000.00	45,106.26	0.00	1,031,000.00	MATURITY
1,042,000	4.875	1,042,000.00	50,797.50	0.00	1,042,000.00	MATURITY
750,000	5.25	750,000.00	39,482.88	0.00	750,000.00	MATURITY
702,000	4.875	702,000.00	34,316.26	0.00	702,000.00	MATURITY
1,500,000	4.75	240,000.00	10,687.50	60,000.00	180,000.00	EIP
536,000	4.4	107,200.00	4,266.44	21,440.00	85,760.00	EIP
1,488,000	4.3	297,600.00	12,156.96	59,520.00	238,080.00	EIP
1,773,000	5.25	451,941.02	22,814.34	69,529.41	382,411.61	EIP
3,678,000	4.35	996,125.00	40,176.33	153,250.00	842,875.00	EIP
2,000,000	4.55	2,000,000.00	91,000.00	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
4,100,000	4.41	4,100,000.00	181,305.37	0.00	4,100,000.00	MATURITY
2,000,000	4.62	2,000,000.00	92,146.85	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
1,000,000	4.42	1,000,000.00	14,955.34	1,000,000.00	0.00	MATURITY
1,000,000	3.41	1,000,000.00	34,193.42	0.00	1,000,000.00	MATURITY
1,000,000	3.57	1,000,000.00	35,797.81	0.00	1,000,000.00	MATURITY
2,000,000	4.23	2,000,000.00	84,368.22	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
2,000,000	4.26	2,000,000.00	84,966.58	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
1,000,000	4.28	1,000,000.00	42,682.74	0.00	1,000,000.00	MATURITY
1,000,000	1.27	1,000,000.00	12,734.79	0.00	1,000,000.00	MATURITY
2,000,000	1.02	2,000,000.00	20,455.89	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
2,000,000	1.32	2,000,000.00	26,472.33	0.00	2,000,000.00	MATURITY
34,554,000.00		26,736,946.02	981,120.93	1,382,819.41	25,354,126.61	

*EIP: Equal instalment of principle - payments throughout the term (life) of the loan.
*Maturity – loans are paid when the term of borrowing has expired

New borrowing will be drawn in the last quarter of the current financial year if the current capital investment forecasts are realised and if Firefighter retirements outstrip the pension grant provided by Welsh Government (WG), the difference to be paid or recouped in the following year.

3.3   The following deposits were held at each month end for the first 6 months of this financial year;

		Average Month End Balances			interest rate
		Barclays £	Lloyds £	Total £	
1	MTH01	10,012,880	7,932,403	17,945,283	4.25
2	MTH02	9,999,000	7,814,381	17,813,381	4.50
3	MTH03	3,613,045	7,016,066	10,629,111	5.00
4	MTH04	2,184,768	7,031,929	9,216,698	5.00
5	MTH05	50	8,287,210	8,287,260	5.25
6	MTH06	3,750,250	4,623,819	8,374,069	5.25

There was an average monthly balance of £12 million at an average rate of 4.88%. £338k has been received in the first 6 months of this financial year which exceeds the £334k estimated for the full year in the TMSS.

In addition, 2 fixed term deposits were undertaken of £2m and £3m each for terms of 1 and 3 months respectively. The Service has received £45k in interest in consequence of these deposits.

3.4   Narrative Update

3.4.1 There are no major changes since the strategy has been set other than the level borrowing required which has reduced from £10 to £6 million.

3.4.2 A key indicator is how the CFR compares to the borrowing position. Borrowing should remain below the CFR limit, at least in the medium to long term and this position is described as either under or over borrowed. This indicator helps ensure borrowing is undertaken for capital purposes only. The above table indicates the Authority anticipates continuing with it's under borrowed position of £10.7million for the year.

3.4.3 It is a statutory duty for the Authority to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits and indicators. During the half year ended 30th September 2023, the Authority has operated within the indicators set out in the TMSS 2023/24. The Treasurer reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators and that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) were not breached during the period. All treasury management operations have also been conducted in compliance with the Authority's Treasury Management Practices (TMP's).

3.5   Interest Rate Forecasts

3.5.1 The Authority's treasury advisor, Link Group, provided the following forecasts 30th October 2023.

Bank Rate

	NOW	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
Link Group	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.00%	4.50%	4.00%	3.50%	3.00%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%	2.75%
Capital Economics	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	5.25%	4.75%	4.25%	3.75%	3.25%	3.00%	-	-	-

5yr PWLB Rate

	NOW	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
Link Group	5.21%	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.70%	4.40%	4.20%	4.00%	3.90%	3.70%	3.70%	3.60%	3.60%	3.50%
Capital Economics	5.21%	5.20%	5.10%	4.90%	4.80%	4.60%	4.40%	4.30%	4.10%	4.00%	3.80%	-	-	-

10yr PWLB Rate

	NOW	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
Link Group	5.34%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.60%	4.40%	4.20%	4.00%	3.80%	3.70%	3.60%	3.60%	3.50%	3.50%
Capital Economics	5.34%	5.10%	4.80%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%	4.30%	4.20%	4.10%	4.00%	3.80%	-	-	-

25yr PWLB Rate

	NOW	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
Link Group	5.77%	5.40%	5.20%	5.10%	4.90%	4.70%	4.40%	4.30%	4.10%	4.00%	3.90%	3.80%	3.80%	3.80%
Capital Economics	5.77%	5.50%	5.10%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.60%	4.50%	4.40%	4.30%	4.10%	-	-	-

50yr PWLB Rate

	NOW	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
Link Group	5.53%	5.20%	5.00%	4.90%	4.70%	4.50%	4.20%	4.10%	3.90%	3.80%	3.70%	3.60%	3.60%	3.60%
Capital Economics	5.53%	5.00%	4.90%	4.80%	4.70%	4.60%	4.50%	4.40%	4.30%	4.20%	4.00%	-	-	-

3.5.2 The table sets out a view that both short term interest rates will remain elevated as the Bank of England seeks to squeeze inflation out of the economy.

This means using temporary/short term borrowing to support the capital financing requirement and seeking longer term capital finance/loans when current interest rates fall back.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   The financial implications of treasury activities have been factored into the Authority's budgeting and reporting processes.

5.   IMPLICATION

5.1   **Community and Environment**

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability / Environment / Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

5.2   **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

Legal	No
Financial	Yes
Procurement	No
Corporate Risk	No
Information Management	No
Data Protection / Privacy	No
Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Governance & Audit	No
Service Policy	No
National Policy	No

5.3   **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

Human Resources and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	Yes

6.   RECOMMENDATION

6.1   The Fire & Rescue Authority is asked to note and approve the report and the treasury activity for 2023/24

Contact Officer:	Chris Barton, Treasurer
Background Papers	- TMSS 23/24 - TM Outturn Report 22/23 - Revenue / Capital Monitoring Report - Link Service Information

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AGENDA ITEM NO 7

Reports for Information

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BUSINESS PLAN ACTIONS REPORT

Health Check

2023-2024 Quarter 2 (1st July – 30th September 2023)

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Produced in

BMIS
Business Management
Information System

Summary

This paper will give assurance to the Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority and senior management within South Wales Fire & Rescue Service on progress towards achievement of the Strategic Themes and performance of the Strategic Performance Indicators for the period 01 July – 30 September 2023.

Background

1.1   The Welsh Government requires South Wales Fire & Rescue Service to develop Strategic Plans to identify the direction for the Service and address areas for improvement. The Service does this by developing a Strategic Plan, implementing actions, and measuring indicators to enable the Service to achieve these organisational goals.

1.2   All departments link actions within their annual department plans to the appropriate Strategic Objectives. This enables us to measure how well we are performing against these objectives by how many of the linked actions are on target and review how the associated indicators are performing.

1.3   Quarterly updates are recorded by action owners onto the Business Management Information System (BMIS), and staff within the Planning, Performance and Risk Team monitor the information and extract reports accordingly.

1.4   To further support the performance management framework, National Strategic Indicators were introduced for reporting year 2015/16. Together these provide data and information to inform and support decision-making processes within the Service to target activity and drive improvement. The Statistics and Risk Team monitors the information and extract reports accordingly.

1.5   This report will provide Members and Officers with a health check on performance against the Strategic Themes and Strategic Indicators for the period 01 July – 30 September 2023.

Issue

2.1   For Members' information going forward, considering the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Service has adopted eight Strategic Themes, as detailed below, to structure our 2020-2030 Strategic Plan:

ST01 – Keeping you safe

ST02 – Responding to your emergency

ST03 – Using technology well

ST04 – Working with our partners

ST05 – Engaging and communicating

ST06 – Valuing our people

ST07 – Protecting our environment

ST08 – Continuing to work effectively

2.2   Each of these Strategic Themes has one or more Objectives that the Service has monitored progress against during 01 July – 30 September 2023.

2.3   Appendix 1 attached is a summary of the Performance Monitoring Report, which reviews the period 01 April – 30 September 2023 performance against agreed targets for the seven National Strategic Performance Indicators. It also includes a summary comment for each indicator.

2.4   Appendix 1 identifies that four indicators have not met their targets and performed worse than last year, three indicators have met their targets and performed better than last year.

2.5   Four indicators did not achieve target and performed worse than last year:

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Q1/2 2022-23 Actual	Q1/2 2023-24 Target	Q1/2 2023-24 Actual	% Under (-) or Over (+) Target	Q1/2 Year on Year Change
Total RTCs Attended	379	430	434	+1%	+55
Total False Alarms Attended	4,529	4,392	4,534	+3%	+5
Total Other SSCs Attended	1,544	1,431	1,660	+16%	+116
% of dwelling fires confined to the room of origin	81.00%	85.00%	80.10%	-4.90%	-0.90%

2.6   Three indicators met or exceeded their targets and performed better than last year:

STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	Q1/2 2022-23 Actual	Q1/2 2023-24 Target	Q1/2 2023-24 Actual	% Under (-) or Over (+) Target	Q1/2 Year on Year Change
Total Fires Attended	4,063	3,587	3,501	-2%	-562
Total Deaths and Injuries	33	32	22	-31%	-11
Accidental Deaths and Injuries	27	26	20	-23%	-7

2.7   Appendix 1 attached provides information on the Service's performance during the period 01 April – 30 September 2023.

Equality Risk Assessment

3.1   This report, the accompanying appendices, and the targets themselves have no Equality Risk Assessment impact. The Service Performance and Communications Department and the respective Directorates are working with the performance data to establish any trends and implications that would include equality implications. These will be addressed at that time.

3.2   It is the responsibility of the action owners to ensure that Integrated Assessments are carried out for their actions in the planning framework.

Recommendations

4.1   That Members review the performance details and statistical data for the period 01 July – 30 September 2023 contained within this report.

Strategic Theme Task Overview

Theme ID	Theme	RED	AMBER	GREEN	DELAYED
ST01	Keeping you safe	0	6	10	2
ST02	Responding to your emergency	0	8	11	0
ST03	Using technology well	0	10	28	4
ST04	Working with our partners	2	5	8	0
ST05	Engaging and communicating	0	11	2	2
ST06	Valuing our people	0	8	22	6
ST07	Protecting our environment	0	4	9	0
ST08	Continuing to work effectively	2	9	18	4
	TOTAL	**4**	**61**	**108**	**18**

Since the Quarter One report 12 business plan tasks have been closed of which:

- 6 have now been completed.
- 6 have now been embedded as business as usual.
- 0 have been superseded by new tasks.
- 0 duplicates of another task.
- 0 have been cancelled.

Ops20.08	**Increased support for the NFCC water and boat safety campaigns.** This action is now completed; we are continuously raising awareness in relation to the hazards and risks around water with numerous safety campaigns.
CS23.05	**Document management considerations and actions in relation to planning and implementing Service response to extraordinary events and establish reference library.** A number of libraries are now being populated for Business Continuity Plans, Consultation Responses and Corporate Protocols. Work continues but is now a BAU task.
T&D21.24	**Review the National framework for emergency response driver training and align SWFRS practices to this framework – Objects 1,2, 4 and 6.** All tasks complete.
F&P21.04	**Work with the Social Value Portal (https://socialvalueportal.com/) to embed the national Themes, Outcomes & Measures (TOMS) into our procurement processes.** We continue to include well-being outcomes in our procurements. Welsh public sector have explored the Social Value Portal and cannot see any value being added. We therefore will not be using the portal. Action can be closed.

ORM22.23   **Work with external contractor Associated Business Solutions (ABS) to ensure Service Driving Licences checks are maintained in line with organisational policy.**
The move from ABS to the new provider "Davis" has been completed and this function now sits across HR, Legal and Training.

F&P13.07   **To introduce electronic approvals to reduce paper.**
All agreed PROC forms have been updated to electronic versions.

ICT20.05   **VDI Hardware Replacement Project (previously VDI Improvement Project)**
All hardware has been installed.

ICT23.06   **Upgrade the domain from Windows Server 2012R2 to Windows Server 2022. This will provide improved security and improvements to the roles and features used.**
All servers updated to 2022

T&D22.01   **Develop BMIS dashboard for Training and Development assurance metrics.**
Task complete now core business

ORM23.06   **Embed resilience working Ops Intel within the team.**
This has now been embedded into the team, all members have laptops and can work remotely. Training days take place where resilience on workstreams is completed.

CS21.08   **Review the regular use mapping layers required in the service and provide them via the appropriate service mapping systems.**
Review of mapping layers is monitored by the Geospatial Data User Group (GDUG) within the group's terms of reference.

CS21.33   **Develop a reporting portal on BMIS to track the compliance with the Welsh Language Standards**
Reporting portal awaiting sign off, development task is complete therefore task is closed.

Strategic Theme Task Commentary

ST01 – Keeping you safe

1.1 Reduce the impact of false alarms on our resources

The Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS) Working Group continues to respond to the recommendations of the **Audit Wales report on False Fire Alarm Reduction** (published 27/07/23 – see below).

The UFS reduction strategy is in draft. Sharing of information is being conducted with Family Group 4 FRSs alongside a questionnaire on approaches taken by other services. Data analysis is being undertaken prior to engagement with Alarm Receiving Centres on the impact of false alarms on resources. A reporting portal has been set up to support the Working Group.

Approaches

1. We recommend that the Authority explore and assess other approaches taken elsewhere to identify opportunities to strengthen its management of and performance in reducing false alarms. This should be informed and include the utilisation of data held by the Authority.
2. We recommend that the Authority improve how it communicates and involves key stakeholders to ensure partners align their work to support a reduction in false alarms.
3. We recommend that the Authority facilitate the sharing and discussion of good practice internally through the Unwanted Fire Signal Champion scheme.

Data

4. We recommend that the Authority revise its coding system for recording false alarms to reduce the volume of 'unknown' causes to help target prevention work.

Reporting

5. We recommend that performance reporting on false alarms is strengthened by:
   • aligning performance monitoring and reporting to the four-stage policy approach;
   • providing a detailed commentary of the approaches taken and detailed trends over time to help members scrutinise activity.

1.2 Reduce the number of fires in the home and understand the behaviours and causes of them

The review of how we identify and apply risk rating of Home Safety Checks utilising the All-Wales Risk Stratification Group is making good progress in conjunction with adopting the **Safelincs** online system which will provide an online home fire safety assessment. The onboarding process with Safelincs has now started with all three Welsh FRSs go live, originally anticipated for December 2023, now scheduled for April 2024 due to Welsh translation.

Work continues with partner agencies to identify and support those most at risk from fire. We are using a range of data sets and profiling models to identify our most vulnerable community members. Introduction of the Safelincs online tool will provide an additional means of supoprting our high-risk communities.

Learning Evaluation After the Fire (LEAF) is being piloted and has already provided valuable information on behaviours pre and post fire. On completion of the pilot, an evaluation report will be produced for consideration of amendments required to the process.

1.3 Reduce the number of Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs)

We continue to work with Welsh Government (WG) and **Go Safe Wales** to explore areas where we can initiate behavioural change amongst road users. The Domino presentation is routinely being delivered to

further education colleges. We continue to deliver 30-20 sessions.

1.4 Reduce the number of deliberate fires

The Arson Reduction Team continues to work with Community Safety (CS) Partnerships and local partners, including **Natural Resources Wales** (NRW) and unitary authorities (UAs), to address deliberate fires through focussed interventions, campaigns and collaborative work.

In relation to reducing wildfires, a land management information form is being developed to collect information from landowners and managers. This will populate a central database to monitor and evaluate risk. Discussions are taking place with partners on trialling this. Work on identifying and building relationships with landowners and partners continues.

1.5 Improve safety in and around water

Phase 1 of the Water Rescue Strategy 2020-2025 went live in March 2023; an Ops Bulletin was published and Joint Fire Control (JFC) received training. We are progressing with Phase 2 which involves uplifting all Wholetime Duty System (WDS) firefighters from E type to D type with three stations this year and three stations next year. A budget of £100k has been secured. An additional 12 Water Incident Managers (WIMs) have been trained in the previous quarter.

The Water Safety team continue to:
- work with Water Safety Wales, in particular the Education Sub Group on the supply of resources for use in schools.
- engage with stations to educate them on how to manage the water risks within their station areas. These can be recorded on Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) returns.
- look for additinoal suitable venues to use when engaging with the community, for example the 2023 999 Day in Cardiff Bay.

The Crucial Crew partnership with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is developing very well.

The River Usk Trackway project (a deployable boat launch point trackway) is underway. All relevant surveys have now been completed and, following submission of the planning pack to Newport City Council, additional information is to be produced.

1.6   Improve fire safety in buildings in our communities

Our current approach to targeting our risk reduction activity continues and the department is considering a document shared by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) on risk-based intervention programmes.

High-Rise Phase 3 audits are now underway to address deficiencies with external walls of high-rise residential buildings which now fall under the amended legislation.

Work on our Business Fire Safety (BFS) regulating officers gaining access to the national Contextualized Auditors Register (CAR) is progressing.

Work is ongoing to develop a reporting module via our Business Management Information System (BMIS) to provide BFS management information and this is scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

JFC Systems Team continue to work with Operational Risk Management (ORM) Ops Intel to align Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) data held within the Command and Control System. There is a large resource implication for JFC to input all information, review and update if required.

ST02 – Responding to your emergency

2.1 Respond effectively when you need us

JFC establishment is increasing slowly, with four new recruits joining their respective watches shortly. However, resignation, retirements and job share applications are also affecting the overall agreed establishment figures. A recruits' course is planned for April 2024 to increase numbers. Sickness levels are low. Resilience Team continues to support Emergency Response (ER) during busy periods and to provide absence cover, and watches continue to work well with the minimum of seven.

JFC continues to test with partners on the full implementation of Multi Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT). The Vision Command and Control system has recently been updated with the MAIT configuration - further tests to be carried out by ICT.

> ***MAIT*** *is a highly resilient service for all emergency service providers. It facilitates the fast exchange of secure messages and incident notifications between agency control rooms.*

The Fire Investigation team has 14 competent and 13 development officers with six members recently completing their practical course. There is an even spread across the rota groups, although this needs to be monitored. The team is trailing work with the Office of Product Safety and Standards on sharing information about product fires to identify trends and improve safety.

The final draft of the review of Operation Ategol is nearing completion which takes regard of industrial action planning assumptions, SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), training regime and concept of operations. This includes the new Auxiliary Control training plan,. Consultation with the Senior Management Team (SMT) and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) members will take place late Oct 2023.

Auxiliary FF establishment remains sufficient despite some recent leavers. Yearly training plan is. Auxiliary Control staff are currently receiving initial training.

Chassis have been ordered for "fit for purpose" 4x4 fire appliances and delivery is expected 1st week of January 2024 when the body build will commence.

Vehicle modifications, to accommodate the new road traffic collision (RTC) equipment, has been completed on most appliances with three plus spares due to change in the new year.

SSRI Phase 1 Data Cleanse Report and Phase 2 Risk Information Flow Report are progressing with a new SSRI system planned 2024/25.

We are conducting research and development into emergency response to fires involving electric vehicles including visits to equipment manufacturers to view options. A demonstration day, in collaboration with all Welsh FRSs, is to be arranged for Autumn 2023. An EV fire blanket demonstration was carried out at Cardiff Gate Training and Development Centre.

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2.2 Do all we can to make sure that our On-Call Duty System crews are available

Improving the training pathway from initial recruitment to competent On-Call firefighter continues with an internal thematic review being carried out by the Retained Management Team (RMT). A document has been produced to brief the Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) during November 2023.

> **On-Call** *Firefighters* live or work in local communities to the stations they serve and respond to their station when required, within their contracted hours.

Skills for Justice (SFJ) are still evaluating changes to the On-Call qualification. A trial has commenced with RMT and SFJ to look at the viability of having all assessments at station, awaiting data capture from SFJ

> **SFJ** *is the leading Awarding Organisation for Fire and Rescue Qualifications offering a wide range of training for individuals, teams, and employers across fire and rescue, including fire safety, fire prevention, and much more.*

2.3 Train our personnel to respond to current and future risks in our communities

The Training and Development (T&D) department is working closely with Staffing and Operations to ensure training delivery minimises impact on service delivery. Monthly meetings are held with T&D and Operations Staffing to determine course requirements and impacts.

The Efficiencies and Effectiveness Group met during Q2 and updated activity on the recommendations from the **WG FRS Operational Training thematic review**. The group will be presenting to SMT in due course on implementing actions.

Driver training courses have been prepared to accommodate Section 19 of the 2006 Road Traffic Act updates. Courses ready to be implemented into planner following ELT decision of adopting Sec 19 changes prior to it being made legislation.

Breathing Apparatus Refresher (BAR) currently in early stages of review. Gap analysis with National Operational Guidance (NOG) to confirm areas of development. Online content being developed to support training packages and currently sitting with the Training Support Unit (TSU).

ST03 – Using technology well

3.1 Use the most suitable technology and equipment to improve our services

Several projects are currently being undertaken by BFS to improve the suite of risk reduction activities we provide to enable better efficiencies through use of technology whilst undertaking core risk reduction activities. This includes the RIDGE project, fire safety checks and BFS tactical officer work streams.

Audit outcomes continue to be recorded into the RIDGE system while a system review is due to commence. Trialling the electronic form using tablets is being progressed to gather feedback and inform future practice.

> **RIDGE** (risk information data gathering engine) identifies and prioritises domestic and commercial properties that are most at risk from fire.

We continue to explore ways to share data internally and externally, as part of wider review of performance reporting and transparency.

Our HR system, People-xd (previously Core), is being developed with On-Call recruitment now via an online application form and "blind shortlisting" being piloted. Introduction of new employees to the workplace via an online onboarding function is being progressed with reports and workflows being streamlined.

Release of an upgrade to our finance system, E-Fin, has been delayed. We anticipate our own upgrade will take place around October 2024.

Development of a Geo Data Hub on the intranet for staff to access information/guidance on the use of geographic information system (GIS) data and mapping is ongoing.

Existing BMIS station dashboards continue to be supported pending the design and implementation of a revised dashboard to replace the existing 47 dashboards which is now scheduled for Q3.

South Wales Police (SWP) replacement Command and Control solution is expected to go live in 2025. This will have implications for the ICCS which is being discussed with ICT to determine support required.

> **The ICCS** is a touch screen interface enabling users to efficiently manage radio and telephony voice communications whilst being able to easily access other subsystems, for example, CCTV, voice recorders, intercom systems, door locks and alarms.

The deployment of the **Emergency Services Network** (ESN) has been delayed with a likely implementation date of 2029. However, good multi agency progress is being made on the ESN Coverage Project with two sites remaining to be surveyed.

> **ESN** is a cross-government programme, led by the Home Office, to deliver the new Emergency Services critical communications system. This will replace the current Airwave service used by the emergency services in England, Wales and Scotland) and transform how they operate.

The next pdrPro 3-year cycle is under construction, for completion by December 2023.   E-learning packages are being updated with the Training Support Unit working towards December deadline.

pdrPro is a planner-based maintenance of competence system that includes all the activities that make up a core skill. Whether attained in training, incidents, courses or e-learning they are recorded and reported in one place. The dashboard provides an overview and a route into all parts of the system.

Progress on re-instating the Ops Intel intranet presence has been slow due to staff change overs. A basic framework has been set out on paper.

Meetings and demonstrations have taken place regarding the replacement of the hydrant monitoring system, working towards January 2024.

Ops Intel are reviewing the SSRI Management System database in preparation for migration to a new management system during 2024-2025.

Requirements for our Management Information Systems have been reviewed and options are being considered by the relevant Head of Service and Director for decision. Once the Service's direction has been determined, the relevant documentation for the procurement process can be devised (building on the requirements outlined within the procurement process undertaken for our current system). The procurement process can be initiated once this documentation has been finalised.

ICT have:

- Awarded the tender for the replacement of the existing core layer 2 switches at HQ and the disaster recovery (DR) site with new hardware. Meeting is being arranged to discuss plans for setup, configuration and installation of new hardware.

- Purchased virtual Firewall Management Centre (vFMC) software for the replacement of the HQ inner firewall allowing management of new JFC firewalls as well as SWFRS. FMC software has been updated.

- Reviewed progress on developing and integrating the Gazetteer and Geospatial Data (G2D) system. A Project Team is being established to consider requirements.

- Commenced the creation of a client database to manage Community Safety (CS) contacts. This will enable the CS manager to interrogate the system to identify any interactions an individual or premises has had with the Service.

- Commenced work on the server update project, updating ICT owned servers and contacting suppliers of systems owned by other departments to consider options.

- Awaiting sign off on the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) from Occupational Health Unit (OHU) before rolling out the system enabling text message to be sent to a group of people with their appointment details, reporting back to OHU confirmation that messages that have been successfully received. This will improve efficiency and provide evidence that a message has been received.

- Progressed the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI) build which is now awaiting testing.

    ***VDI** is a virtualisation solution that uses virtual machines to provide and manage virtual desktops. VDI hosts desktop environments on a centralized server and deploys them to end-users on request. accessed over the network with an endpoint device (laptop, tablet, etc.).*

- Completed a tender, through Gcloud, and commenced a project to replace backup technology to meet our existing disaster recovery plans and implement backup technologies to protect our Office 365 estate.

  > *Gcloud is an online catalogue where public sector customers can buy cloud-based computing services such as hosting, software and cloud support.*

- Purchased 120 new wireless Access Point (AP) licenses instead of 100. All 84 existing APs have been replaced. 12 additional APs have been installed to improve coverage at specific sites. Further installs are planned at other sites.

- Worked with Information Governance and Compliance (IG&C) to explore new tools to improve our information management and data retention – this will lay the groundwork to allow more data to be held in the cloud long term and adopt more tools in the Office 365 ecosystem.

- Worked to support IG&C in SAR management, by providing Office365 search facility to identify relevant emails, files etc. Further work required in the tagging, retention and federation workstreams. This may mean the final works have to move to business as usual (BAU) teams in Q1 24.

- Awaited an update for some time from the Welsh Government Cymru Security Operations Centre (SOC) as the procurement progresses. Due to staff absence, we have not yet been able to make use of the £10K grant that was available - a bid for the budget increases needed has been submitted within the Authority.

3.2 Review the standard and use of technology and equipment across the Service

We have reviewed a number of mobilising hardware failures to ascertain whether it is still fit for purpose. Hardware still supported and repairable by supplier.

A tender is out for the replacement of in use iPhone 7 Plus mobile phone devices, now becoming end of life, with new devices linked into Office 365.

The options paper regarding status of our risk modelling system and the options available to the Service going forward is with the Executive Leadership Team for consideration. It has, however, been acknowledged that the FSEC system is no longer viable for modelling risk.

> *FSEC was a software-based toolkit, used to assist FRSs in assessment of risk. FSEC can also be used to identify and help to reduce the number of people at significant risk and the amount of property, environment and heritage at significant risk from fire and other emergencies within the community.*

ST04 – Working with our partners

4.1 Work with our Public Service Boards (PSBs) to support our communities.

All operational Group Managers (GMs) have been proactive throughout Q2 attending PSB meetings within their respective UAs. No strategic issues to report on via the PSB meetings. Reports on the Service's activities are regularly provided to GMs to inform PSB updates.

Refuse fire working group re-established. New partnership created with Caerphilly with a team member embedded within the group to lead on waste fire strategy. Exploring a trial on the management of garden fires to link with UA waste strategy.

4.2 Work with our partners to deliver our services where they are needed

Work on the specialised housing guide (addressing sheltered housing) is on hold pending amendments by an NFCC working group.

Regular communication is ongoing between the three Welsh FRSs promoting shared health and safety understandings and benchmarking processes. An all-Wales meeting is planned to take place in November 2023.

Work ongoing by Community Safety to strengthen partnership working referrals. Partnership work with all Wales Manual Handing to identify referral pathway for bariatric patients.

A meeting has been held with MAWWFRS to consider how risk information can be shared, informed by heat maps created for MAWWFRS / SWFRS over border incidents. Options for a system to provide automated updates is under consideration.

The JFC IG&C manual will be progressed according to joint priorities between SWFRS and MAWWFRS.

Ongoing and continuous work representing SWFRS on all appropriate Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Subgroups and supporting and hosting MA training.

> **LRFs** 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.

4.3 Review and evaluate our existing partnerships

Property Services continue to work with our emergency service partners towards a co-ordinated strategy to develop future co-locations. Progress has been made with mapping of Fire, Ambulance and Police sites across South Wales utilising **Data Map Wales**. This will allow all Services to access this information securely when looking at strategic areas for new/further sites. Work has progressed with the data mapping now up and running. Next phase is for other services to begin populating their information.

We continue to review current lease arrangements for co-location sites with a view to replacing with a standardised cost recovery mechanism. We have liaised with a firm of chartered surveyors who are putting together a proposal for our recharge mechanism, for discussion with our co-location partners.

ST05 – Engaging and communicating

5.1 Deliver on the recommendations of the Investors in People report

This is now reported on under ST06 Valuing Our People.

5.2 Involve our communities and make sure they have their say in what we do

We continue to review our social media channels. Tik Tok is still under consideration with resourcing, creativity, security concerns and culture review process remaining factors in postponing the launch. Threads, a new text-based conversation app like Twitter, is also under consideration.

Our stakeholder register continues to be reviewed. New sign-up forms have been designed for use at events. A contact form and area of the website is also in progress to allow people to sign up online. We continue to identify additional mechanisms for engagement and consultation and have recently created a dedicated Intranet page for surveys so that staff can see current opportunities for consultation as well as feedback on previous surveys, enabling us to share consultation from other sources, eg, PSBs.

The engagement area of the Intranet is still in progress. Engagement Toolkit is being updated.

We continue to explore new and innovative ways to involve our partners and communities in our planning processes and will be developing our Annual Improvement Plan to incorporate additional community background and performance analysis.

The Service's accessibility score (referencing the Silktide Index) has risen to 66% as of October 2023, which is rated as 'Good'. Work is expected to accelerate in Q3 to improve the website's accessibility, ahead of an anticipated 12-month review by the Government's Digital Service. This review is not definite, but work will continue to ensure that the website is compliant and the Service is in the best possible position should a review take place.

We continue to maintain awareness of high impact community events. Co-ordination and chair of the events group is ongoing, with many major events planned for over the last quarter. Work to enhance representation on UA planning groups is ongoing.

At 999 day there was a station for feedback on the event via an iPad. Consultation activity was also undertaken. This approach is to be rolled out to recruitment activities, by new CAE Lead.

5.3 Help keep our communities safe through safety education and attending community events

The starting point for developing a UA CRMP that links to Service Strategic objectives is the Annual Improvement Plan which has been completed. Work regarding a UA specific strategic plan is still ongoing.

The Road and Water Safety Team regularly share content with the Media Team. Conversations are taking place to increase our coverage across FRS media streams.

New waterside responder resources created and training provided to the RTC reduction team. New resources have been created for the FIS team and delivery on drowning prevention has been enhanced by the purchase of a new river safety demonstration unit. Staywise Cymru resources are now live.

Coordinating and promoting risk reduction involvement in large scale events is now embedded within policy. The Events Coordination Group meets each month to analyse the events risk matrix and decide upon the required actions for medium and high-risk events. Work is still required to ensure that all Station Commanders realise their role in actioning events within their area and updating the events risk matrix. Liaison with ICT underway to ensure algorithm (to calculate risk) aligns with the NFCC.

We have attended recent 999 multi agency events with risk assessments completed and signed off by Health and Safety. This will continue during 2024 in addition to considering our attendance at the eisteddfod.

A digital campaign calendar is being developed by CEG (Consultation and Engagement Group).

The engagement team will be working with recruitment to discuss and plan ways to improve coordination of community events and activities, providing support for stations at local events. We will also consider input from operational teams on how best to communicate with and support station events.

ST06 – Valuing our people

6.1 Attract a workforce that reflects and represents our communities

Work is ongoing with new initiatives aimed at increasing the diversity of applicants to the Service. Event attendance has increased, linking with Boxing Club and councillors around Cardiff to work with underrepresented groups. New EDI officer starting so hoping to gain additional traction with this support.

The development and implementation of a Service recruitment strategy, considering the **NFCC recruitment hub** best practice, is in draft format for consultation.

Recruitment exploring the use of metrics via People-xd data. Dashboard reviewing WDS recruitment has been produced, now looking at engagement tracking. Evaluation form now active for recruitment events.

6.2 Develop our people by identifying training and development opportunities

RMT are carrying out a thematic review of the on-call training hours/drill nights. Recommendations will be presented to DCFO during November 23.

The structure of BFS has been slightly amended again to ensure the training and development of teams are a priority, providing opportunities for other officers to support succession planning.

A team has been set up to develop all BFS tactical officers on engineered buildings via site visits and department training days. Following this, information will be provided to the operations department on how BFS tactical officers can assist incident commanders. Dates have now been set for October-December 2023 to provide input to Levels 2 and 3 incident commanders via the IC Module held at Cardiff Gate. Further dates will be set for this same input to be provided to our JFC staff so they too understand the BFS tactical officer.

Learning and Development have launched four of the five learning pathways with the final one being launched in the new year.

JFC are awaiting administrative training on pdrPro so that two trained members of staff will be able to edit and update training material and that the objectives/learning outcomes on pdrPro as this is delaying full use of the system.

IG&C training and awareness materials to be reviewed and updated in accordance with priorities and resources.

The Operational Assurance Support Team (OAST) are reviewing outstanding Personal Reviews (PRs) and information provided to Station Managers. PRs need to be undertaken as part of the promotional process. Issue around completion of PRs have been raised with L&D. OAST will continue to monitor completed PRs for the Ops Department.

6.3 Support our people to feel well, healthy and happy at work

A meeting to explore making effective use of BMIS data by Attendance Management, Occupational Health and HFA statistics to inform training for middle leaders deal with complex health and wellbeing situations has been rescheduled to the end of October.

Our new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was launched in September to provide additional health and wellbeing support for staff across the Service.

The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) for 2023-26 was written and published in April. The Inclusive Action Plan has been written and all actions assigned to relevant directorates with an SMT Lead for accountability and monitoring. However, there are multiple actions that SMT would like time to consider e.g., Zero-tolerance, so this is likely to cause further delays to the roll-out across departments.

EDI induction now delivered to Corporate, Operational and Joint Control to provide consistency. Promotion of Neurodiversity Partner Network in Routine notices. EDI Lead on multiple working groups and there are plans to increase presence at more senior level. Once additional resources are in the team EDI visits will be arranged across all premises.

The holistic EDI assessment and audit will not be undertaken - the Service will work from the Inclusive Action Plan and the recommendations as a result of the Culture Review when available.

The Inclusive Workforce Group continues to provide a steer for EDI and has increased by two members since the last report.

The decision to fully implement the 'Fire Fit Programme' is to be considered by SMT.

We have discussed our stance as a Service with WG Fire Advisor to undertake an all-Wales health and safety approach to contaminants. We have also set up a SWFRS working group with both uniformed and corporate staff. A SOP and risk assessment is in place. Quarterly working group meeting set for October. Provided SWFRS'S stance to NFCC as part of a national gap analysis project relating to contaminants. SWFRS represented at a newly formed Southwest contaminants group alongside Devon and Somerset, MAWW, Cornwall and Hampshire & Isle of Wight FRS' to share ideas of current practice and develop ideas.

Work to extend 10 On-Call fire and rescue stations to include gyms, drying facilities, etc, is progressing. Pontycymmer due to be handed over early November. Treorchy in construction and due to be handed over March 2024. Tender packs for Gilfach Goch & Ferndale due to be compiled by December 2023 with the view to go to market January 2024.

Incorporating inclusive facilities within our buildings has started and dormitories have been installed at Roath and about to begin at Whitchurch. We have met some resistance with gender neutral facilities which has delayed other works.

JFC are making progress with appraisals and an agreement is in place for SWFRS appraisal to trigger payment for MAWW staff. Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Care of Dependants Leave (CDL) and sickness policy work being initiated by both HR departments and meetings to progress have been arranged. Uniform procurement for JFC ongoing with expected delivery in 2024-2025.

New desks, PODS and chairs are in place in JFC. Snagging still to take place on pods, otherwise all aspects of welfare and new furniture are complete.

6.4 Deliver on the recommendations of the Investors in People report

Survey on communication within the Service undertaken in May to June amongst middle leaders. Findings reported to SMT on 20 July and included in August Shout newsletter. With new CAE Lead in place, the recommendations can be progressed next year, although some, such as CFO video briefings, already actioned.

6.5 Encourage and support a bilingual culture across the Service

A BMIS reporting portal has been designed to track compliance with the **Welsh Language Standards** and is awaiting sign off by HR.

> *The **Welsh Language Standards** promote and facilitate the Welsh language and ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in Wales.*

ST07 – Protecting our environment

7.1 Reduce our usage of single use materials

We continue to explore opportunities to reduce the amount of non-recyclable materials used.

We have developed a 'Sustainable Procurement Policy' with a view to ensuring the organisation considers sustainability impacts in all future procurements which is going out to consultation.

7.2 Expand the use of electric vehicles

We continue to expand our network of electric vehicle (EV) charging points to support increased use of EVs. All chargers that we received funding for have been installed. Others will be installed as part of the RDS project and other major projects when possible.

A paper was submitted to SMT in September and it was agreed that employees will be able to use the charging infrastructure following the introduction of the EV charging policy.

We continue to review developments and opportunities in fuel and other technologies including the use of biodiesel (a form of diesel fuel derived from plants or animals).

We are in the process of devising and implementing a light vehicle replacement policy to meet Welsh Government 2030 target for zero emissions. Currently the are no tax exemptions to operate a blue light vehicle and this, along with the charging infrastructure, will cause delays in going fully electric.

7.3 Reduce our energy use and our carbon footprint

The main build for the Net Carbon Zero New Inn fire and rescue station is in planning consultation.

A gap analysis has been conducted to determine what needs to be done to implement an accredited Environmental Management System to gain recognition for our environmental practices and demonstrate our commitments to sustainability, consideration of environmental impacts, compliance with legislation and environmental protection. We are aiming for a minimum of level 3 out of 5 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard. Initial conversations have been held with Green Business Centre who can consult and assess for the award.

Energy use data for 2021-22 and 2022-23 at all sites is currently on the Sustainability Intranet Page. Waste data is being received following award of contract in April and will be published once data is reviewed and validated.

Meetings between the statistics and risk team and sustainability team have been ongoing with progress made on developing a dashboard of metrics on BMIS to demonstrate change on a granular level. This will be fine-tuned before being made live.

7.4 Consider how our activities impact on the environment

We are developing open dialogue with staff on our carbon reduction position and the challenges we face. The intranet page has been made live and is a work in progress. This allows messages to be communicated to all staff members and provides contact details of the sustainability team as well as a link to the innovations scheme for any suggestions from staff members.

Plans for station sustainability champions have been made with enthusiastic individuals from a station level being asked to volunteer time. Quarterly meetings will be chaired by the Sustainability Officer. Call to arms has been drafted for circulation across the Service.

7.5 Reduce the amount of waste produced

The new waste contract has been awarded and stations being brought on according to previous contracts' end dates.

A meeting was held with station commanders to explain new recycling legislation requirements. Waiting for new sustainability manager to start to plan further engagement on station.

ST08 – Continuing to work effectively

8.1 Be clear and publicly accountable

Discussions are still ongoing regarding an all-Wales training assurance system. The GM within training currently ensure the training satisfies SFJ criteria and other legislative requirements. L2 incident command courses will be peer reviewed in the coming months to ensure consistency.

WG published their consultation documentation relating to the changes in pension legislation linked to the Matthews/O'Brien exercise, closing on 6th October. This exercise will commence Oct 2023, with an 18-month window for implementation and review. The Local Government Association (LGA) are in discussions with the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to provide FRAs with a calculator to assist with this exercise from October. The LGA will provide a suite of warm up letters, for those in scope of remedy and these letters will need to be sent out as soon as is possible. This is an extensive piece of work, with some calculations stretching back as far as the 1960s. At this point it is not possible to anticipate how long this exercise will take, running alongside the McCloud exercise, which is already an extensive piece of work.

Information, regarding implementing the national McCloud Pension Reform Exercise, is being provided for those that are retiring from the Service and the legislation changed on 1st October 2023. Both RCTCBC and SWFRS are experiencing resourcing difficulties, which may impact on our ability to continue to deliver services to the standard that we would normally expect. The McCloud data remedy exercise has commenced and we are prioritising cases, as recommended in legislation. This remains a manual process, with 7 years of pay and service information needing to be compiled for 1200+ members and returned to RCTCBC. This exercise has an 18-month window for completion. Once the Service has provided all the retired information, to RCTCBC, there is a requirement for a Remediable Service Statement to be sent out to all members. Immediate Choice members are being prioritised, they include, normal and ill health retirements, dependants of the deceased, transfers in and out, non-eligible individuals and those that have a deferred record or have opted out. All other member data will follow.

An Information Security questionnaire has been drafted and once feedback has been received from the Security Risk Group is received, a scoring matrix will be finalised before it is deployed. Responses to the questionnaire will inform a future audit program.

Discussions continue on work required to meet data management framework, will progress in accordance with priorities and available resources.

Meeting held with Procurement and Legal on the creation of a combined central Contracts Register that will be accessible by all three teams. Information sharing and disclosure agreements will be logged and registered here moving forward. Work on centralisation and associated procedure ongoing.

IG&C continue work with Property Services and Sustainability on bringing archive into compliance with currently stated retention periods. Deployment of confidential waste bins to all stations to be reviewed following completion of the information security questionnaire.

Updates to IG&C webpages have been submitted to the Deputy SIRO for review before they can be submitted to be deployed to the website. Discussions continue with Media and Communications on creating a Disclosure Log for publication of information requests with the Publications Library on the website.

Work continues on drafting an information governance and compliance training and awareness plan, it will be progressed in accordance with priorities and available resources.

Register of Processing Activities (RoPA) will no longer be integrated with the proposed Information Asset Register (IAR). The creation, publishing, and promotion of a IAR will be progressed with support from the Stats Team.

Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) guidance will be reviewed, updated, and published once the review of the DPIA procedure has been completed.

IG&C Officer joined a combined Attendance Management and OHU team meeting to support with information governance related questions. A programme of information governance and compliance surgeries in collaboration with JFC and OHU to be formalised.

Professional concerns strategy was created and ratified by the Safeguarding Board. This is now embedded within the Safeguarding strategy. Level one safeguarding training provided by Social Care Wales will be uploaded to e-Hyb to ensure all staff receive the input. Further levels of training will be agreed on an all-Wales basis shortly.

Implementation of a new Accident and Near Miss Reporting process is on track with new process and forms launching end of October following training rollout.

The design and implementation of a dashboard within BMIS to monitor the complaints procedure and provide a quarterly report complete and is updated monthly.

A draft of the initial Cyber / Forensic Readiness Policy has been produced which will contribute to the overall Cyber plan when we integrate NFCC and Gwent LRF plans.

The **Cyber Assessment Framework (CAF)** assessment was carried out with the Specialist Assessors onsite and submitted. Considering CyberEssentials+ activity for next year.

> *CAF provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to assessing the extent to which cyber risks to essential functions are being managed by the organisation responsible.*

> *Cyber Essentials is an effective, Government backed scheme that helps to protect organisations against a whole range of the most common cyber attacks.*

We are conducting a **Fire Standards** gap analysis and benchmarking exercise. Progress being made, standards currently going via Heads of Service to SMT for approval. Further work taking place on how the tasks can be recorded and actioned.

Work has commenced to develop a Community Safety and Partnerships data quality assurance guide/procedure. recording of the processes involved with CS work. This will be developed in Q3/4.

8.2 Maximise value for money

We currently have no issues disposing of vehicles, we are seeing strong resale values at auction and the need for third world countries to receive appliances is strong.

Visits are programmed to visit two London Fire Brigade facilities, to understand their set-up and learn from any issues they have encountered with Real Fire Training Facility (RFTF). Further discussions are required with property services to understand where they are with employing a facilities manager to support us.

Review of standard licences and leases is complete, agreements have been reviewed and standard documents created. Property Management are to provide a standard charging mechanism and then these

will be shared with our partner agencies. Licences updated from legal position. Awaiting finance data and then can be rolled out. Station commander meeting held and comments obtained. This will be fed back to Joint Emergency Services Interoperability. Programme (JESIP) later in October.

ORM and Procurement are working through the programme of events in relation to the tender specification for the all-Wales next generation of corporate wear. Project has progressed slowly due to circumstances beyond our control but is now on track. Tenders have been shared with potential suppliers, desk top evaluation being prepared which will lead to samples being produced for testing.

8.3 Develop new ways of working

The detail surrounding the development of the organisational filing system remains unclear. Head of Service Performance and Communications will research this further in Q3 to determine whether this action, along with the current deadline, remain.

A draft process for project proposal and initiation processes are being developed, paper to be drafted for consideration of approval and monitoring processes.

The transfer of tasks, previously undertaken by JFC Protection and Prevention Team, as part of the outcomes of the JFC Review is progressing.

Developing operating procedures to provide resilience within Business Support is progressing well.

Implement the National Pensions Dashboard Project led by DWP and central government is temporarily on pause, as the Government are currently relaunching this national project. The majority of the workload will be the responsibility of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), although there will be some links back to the SWFRS Pensions Team.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Appendix 1

01 April 2023 – 30 September 2023

Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Produced in
BMIS
Business Management
Information System

Introduction

The Performance Monitoring Report reviews the Service's performance for the period 01 April 2023 to 30 September 2023. The report includes:

- Strategic Indicator Performance Summary……………………………………………………Page 5
- Strategic Indicator Performance Comments………………………………………………Pages 6-9
- Analysis of incident activity levels by Unitary Authority Area (UAA)……………………Pages 10-20

The performance indicators show six years of data to demonstrate trends in the Service's longer-term performance.

Following consideration by the Senior Management Team and the Fire and Rescue Authority, the report is made available to the public via the internet.

When comparing Q1/2 2022-2023 to Q1/2 2023-2024, incident numbers for fires were:

- Total fires: decreased from 4,063 to 3,501, -13.8%
  - Accidental fires: 987 to 919, -6.9%
  - Accidental dwelling fires: 298 to 286, -4.0%
  - Deliberate fires: 3,031 to 2,509, -17.2%
  - Deliberate refuse fires: 1,655 to 1,268, -23.4%
  - Deliberate grass fires: 976 to 727, -25.5%

Following an increase in grass fires during Q1 associated with an extended period of extreme hot weather in June, grass fires have reduced in Q1/2 compared to last year. Increased grass fires are associated with an increase in good intent false alarm incidents and in Q2 these incidents reduced alongside the reduction in grass fires:

- Q1/2 - Good intent false alarm calls: 997 to 839, -15.8%

The recent Audit Wales report into False Alarm reduction highlighted the need to make more use of data and learning from elsewhere to identify opportunities to better manage performance and risks. This included aligning performance monitoring and reporting to the new four-stage approach for Unwanted Fire Signals (UFS), ie, actuation of an Automatic Fire Alarm for any reason other than fire. This policy for targeting reductions from high volume premises was adopted in 2020. It created a

four-stage system for monitoring and building on data recorded by crews following incidents. Each stage is based on the volume of alarms generated at a premises in the preceding rolling 12 months.

Stage 1 – Up to 4 Unwanted Fire Signals in the 12-month period

Stage 2 - 5 to 9 Unwanted Fire Signals in the 12-month period

Stage 3 - 10 to 19 Unwanted Fire Signals in the 12-month period

Stage 4 – 20 or more incidents in the 12-month period

The following table shows a monthly snapshot of premises in Stages 2-4 since September 2022. Numbers in Stage 2 have increased since January 2023 with some variation in Stage 3. Premises in Stage 4 have fallen from 11 in September 2022 to 9 in September 2023 (all hospitals which have historically recorded highest volumes on UFS).

Stages	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23
Stage 2 - 5 to 9 UFS in 12 months	136	137	120	115	131	143	149	159	162	164	165	167	163
Stage 3 - 10 to 19 UFS in 12 months	24	27	31	31	31	30	32	30	32	26	27	27	29
Stage 4 - 20 or more incidents in a 12 month period	11	6	6	6	6	6	8	8	7	8	8	7	9
Totals	171	170	157	152	168	179	189	197	201	198	200	201	201

More detailed information will be introduced in future reports.

Other Special Service incidents have shown an upward trend since 2020-2021 when incident numbers for the full financial year were 2,275, rising to 2,712 in 2021-2022 and 3,079 in 2022-2023. For Q1/2 of this year this upward trend has continued with the Service experiencing an 8% increase in Other Special Service Calls compared to Q1/2 of the previous year. The following incident types have recorded an increase:

- Assist other agencies: 314 to 399, +27.1%
- Assistance to Ambulance: 245 to 357, +45.7%
- Bariatric patients: 97 to 147, +51.5%
- Suicide or attempted suicide: 11 to 15, +36.4%
- Lift release: 57 to 61, +7.0%
- Other rescue release of persons: 108 to 132, +22.2%

Other Special Service incident types such as water rescues and flooding and are influenced by extreme weather conditions and are likely to become more prevalent in future years. Increased water rescues in Q1 coincided with the period of hot weather experienced in June, 3 last year Q1 compared to 12 this year. For Q2, the numbers rose from 9 last year to 23 this year with 11 incidents in July, 5 in August and 7 in September. Compared to Q1/2 of the previous year the incident numbers were:

- Rescue or evacuation from water: 12 to 35, +183%

Flooding calls in Q1/2 have also increased although most of these were internal flooding and not related to weather conditions:

- Flooding: 79 to 88, +11.4%

The Service saw an increase of 14.5% in calls to Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) from 379 in Q1/2 2022-2023 to 434 in Q1/2 2023-2024. Although these incidents are increasing, they have not yet returned to pre-pandemic volume. The proportion of incidents involving Extrications/release of persons in Q1/2 2023-2024 was 20% of all RTCs, slightly higher than Q1/2 of 2022-2023 rate of 19% of RTC incidents, although the number of incidents has increased. There have been 10 fatalities at RTCs attended in Q1/2 2023-2024 compared to 11 in Q1/2 of 2022-2023 and there were 256 injuries (incl. rescue with injury) compared to 235 in the previous year for Q1/2.

During Q1/2 2023/24 the Service recorded 8,162 home fire safety checks: 6,925 were carried out, 409 were refused and at 828 addresses we were unable to contact the occupier. The majority of home fire safety checks are now carried out face-to-face.

The Service Performance & Communications Department co-ordinates and compiles this report on behalf of the Service Delivery Directorate. Incident data is extracted from the Incident Recording System (IRS) and may be subject to change pending validation by the Statistics and Risk Team. Data for this report was extracted on 27th October 2023.

If you have any questions or comments on this report, please contact Neil Herniman at n-herniman@southwales-fire.gov.uk 01443 232775 or Suzanne Absalom on s-absalom@southwales-fire.gov.uk 01443 232588 to discuss.

Strategic Indicators 2023-24 Q1/2 Performance

The table below displays the progress of each Strategic Indicator based on its performance against the target set.

Performance Key	⭐ Better than or equal to target	🟠 Up to 5% from target	🔺 Over 5% from target

	Q1/2 23-24 Actual	Q1/2 23-24 Target	Q1/2 23-24 Performance	Q1/2 22-23 Actual	Q1/2 23-24 v 22-23
Total Fires Attended	3,501	3,587	⭐	4,063	-562
Total RTCs Attended	434	430	🟠	379	+55
Total False Alarms Attended	4,534	4,392	🟠	4,529	+5
Total Other SSCs Attended	1,660	1,431	🔺	1,544	+116
% of Dwelling Fires Confined to Room of Origin	80.10%	85.00%	🟠	81.00%	-0.90%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	22	32	⭐	33	-11
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	20	26	⭐	27	-7

The following charts show the total incident numbers (orange bar) for Q1/2 of each financial year versus the Q1/2 Target (yellow) for that year. The grey bar indicates incidents recorded in the remainder of the year for previous years compared to the target (blue) set for the whole year.

Numbers in brackets in the commentary are figures for Q1/2 2022-2023 in comparison to Q1/2 2023-2024 and the corresponding percentage increase/decrease between the two figures.

Total Fires attended compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Annual Total	2,448	2,026	2,215	2,434	1,969	
Actual Q1/2	4,450	3,456	3,266	3,133	4,063	3,501
Target Q1/2	3,517	3,772	3,623	3,511	3,402	3,587
Annual Target	5,900	6,200	5,942	5,760	5,600	

Legend: Actual Q1/2, Annual Total, Target Q1/2, Annual Target
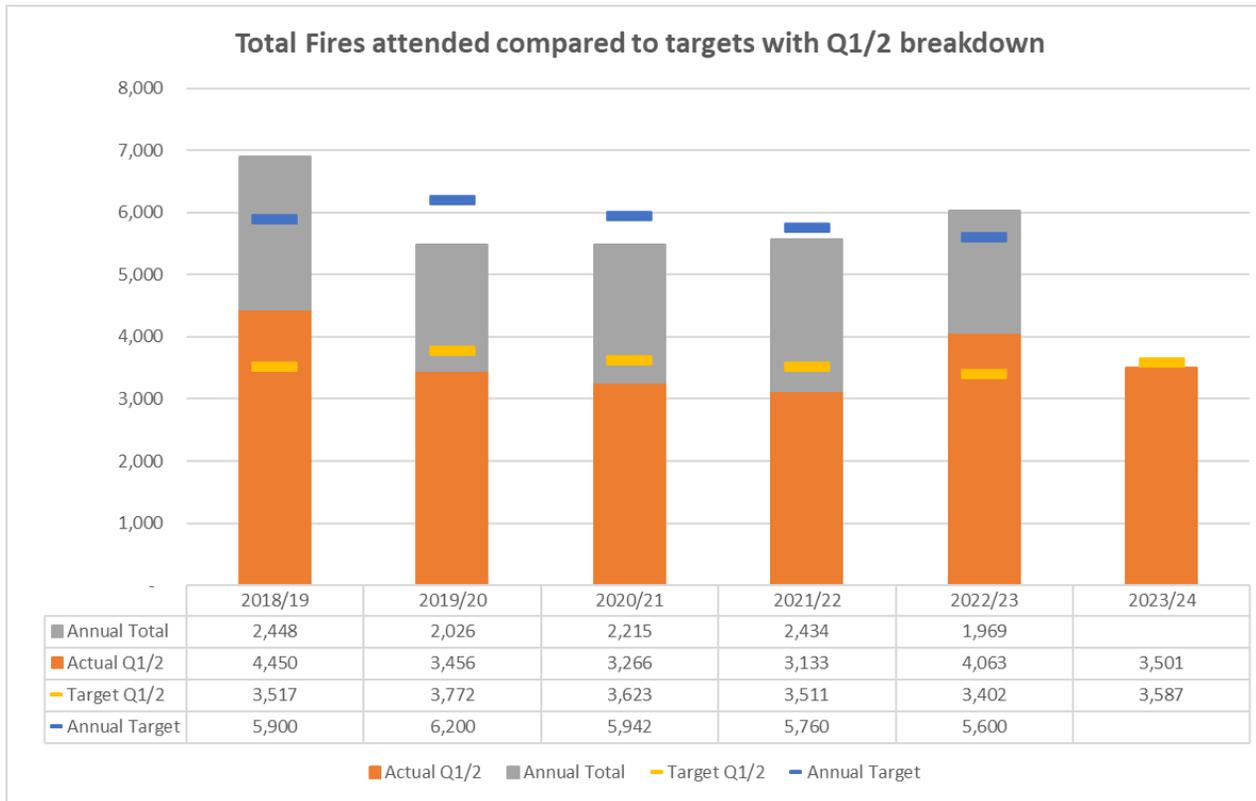
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Total Fires (4,063 - 3,501) ↓ 14%, -2% below the target of 3,587
- Accidental Fires (987 – 919) ↓ 7%,
- Deliberate Fires (3,031 – 2,509) ↓ 17%,
- Deliberate Grass Fires (976 – 727) ↓ 26%,
- Deliberate Refuse Fires (1,655 – 1,268) ↓ 23%,
- Deliberate Road Vehicle Fires (147 – 225) ↑ 53%
- Deliberate Fires accounted for 72% of all fires

Total False Alarms attended compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Annual Total	3,554	3,726	2,884	4,093	4,217	
Actual Q1/2	4,293	4,132	4,440	4,273	4,529	4,534
Target Q1/2	3,966	4,043	3,980	4,231	4,336	4,392
Annual Target	7,500	7,655	7,500	7,974	8,115	
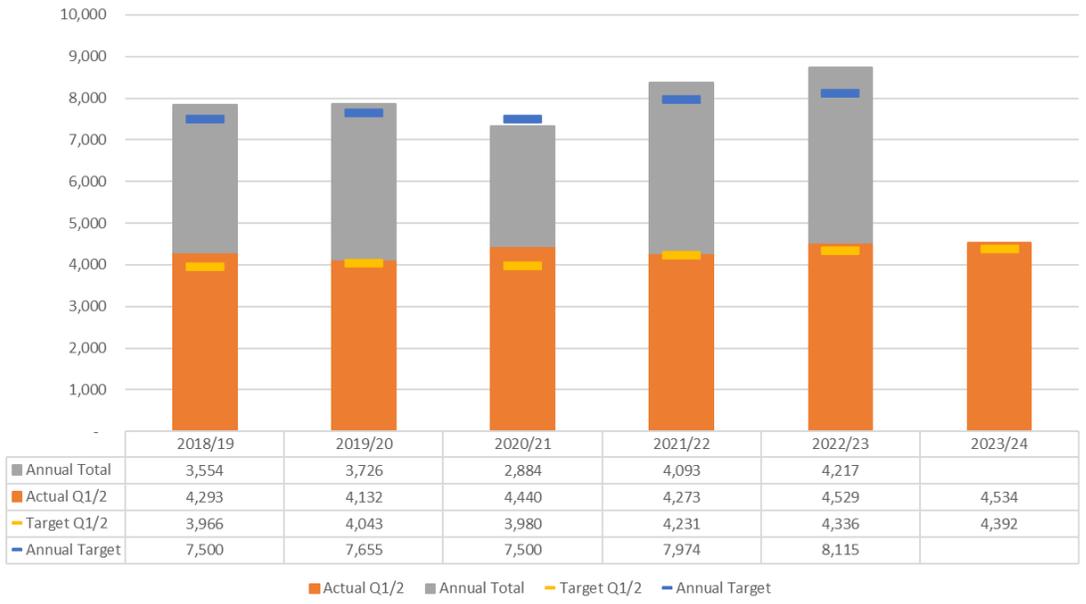
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Total False Alarms (4,529 – 4,534) ↑ 5 (0.1%)
- 3% above the Q1/2 target of 4,392
- False Alarm Due to Apparatus (2,589 – 2,690) ↑ 4%
- False Alarm Good Intent (1,796 – 1,708) ↓ 5%
- False Alarm Malicious (144 – 127) ↓ 12%
- Appliances in attendance at Residential homes (235 – 228) ↓ 3%, Education (316 – 332) ↑ 5%, Hospitals (321 – 361) ↑ 12%.

## Total RTCs attended compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Annual Total	544	468	328	433	469	
Actual Q1/2	568	527	315	424	379	434
Target Q1/2	519	531	503	496	435	430
Annual Target	1,050	1,074	1,002	992	872	
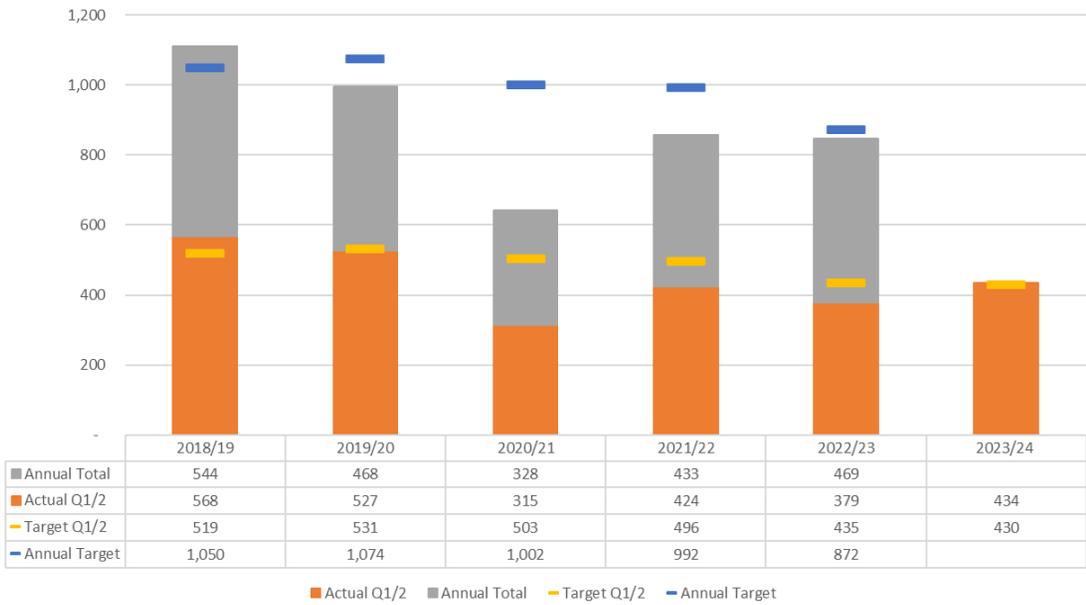
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Total RTCs (379 – 434) ↑ 55 (15%)
- 1% above the target of 430
- Extrications/release of persons in Q1/2 were 20% of all RTCs which is slightly higher than last year when it was 19%.
- There have been 10 fatalities at RTCs this year compared to 11 last year in Q1/2.
- There have been 256 injuries compared to 235 last year in Q1/2.
- There have been 48 rescues without injury compared to 33 last year in Q1/2.

Total Other SSCs attended compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
■ Annual Total	1,000	1,371	1,231	1,336	1,535	
■ Actual Q1/2	1,062	1,198	1,044	1,376	1,544	1,660
— Target Q1/2	981	1,033	1,132	1,185	1,230	1,431
— Annual Target	2,000	2,048	2,276	2,364	2,468	

■ Actual Q1/2   ■ Annual Total   — Target Q1/2   — Annual Target
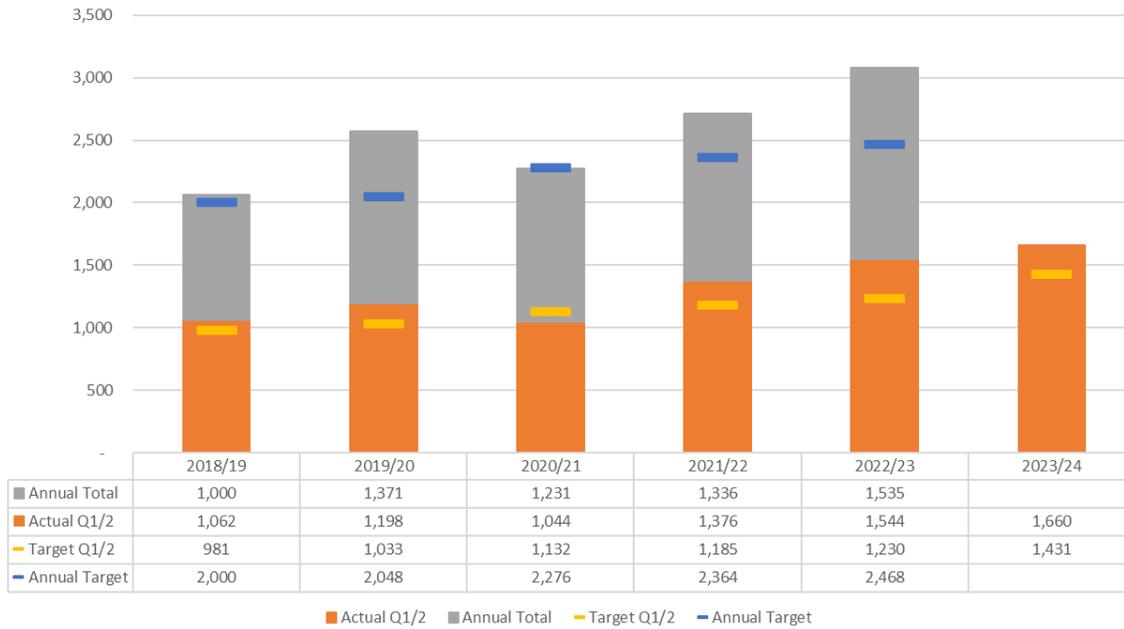
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Other SSCs (1,544 – 1,660) ↑ 8%
- 16% **above** the target of 1,431
- Lift Release ↑ 7% (57 to 61), flooding ↑ 11% (79 -88), other rescue/release of persons ↑ 22% (108 to 132)
- Assisting other agencies (314 – 399) ↑ 27%, Bariatrics (97 – 147) ↑ 52%, Suicides (32 to 43) ↑ 34%
- Compared to last year in Q1/2 calls originating from the Ambulance Service were 46% higher (245 to 357)

Total Fatalities & Injuries compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
■ Annual Total	30	39	25	35	30	
■ Actual Q1/2	41	45	24	27	33	22
— Target Q1/2	31	33	36	34	31	32
— Annual Target	66	66	68	66	63	

■ Actual Q1/2   ■ Annual Total   — Target Q1/2   — Annual Target
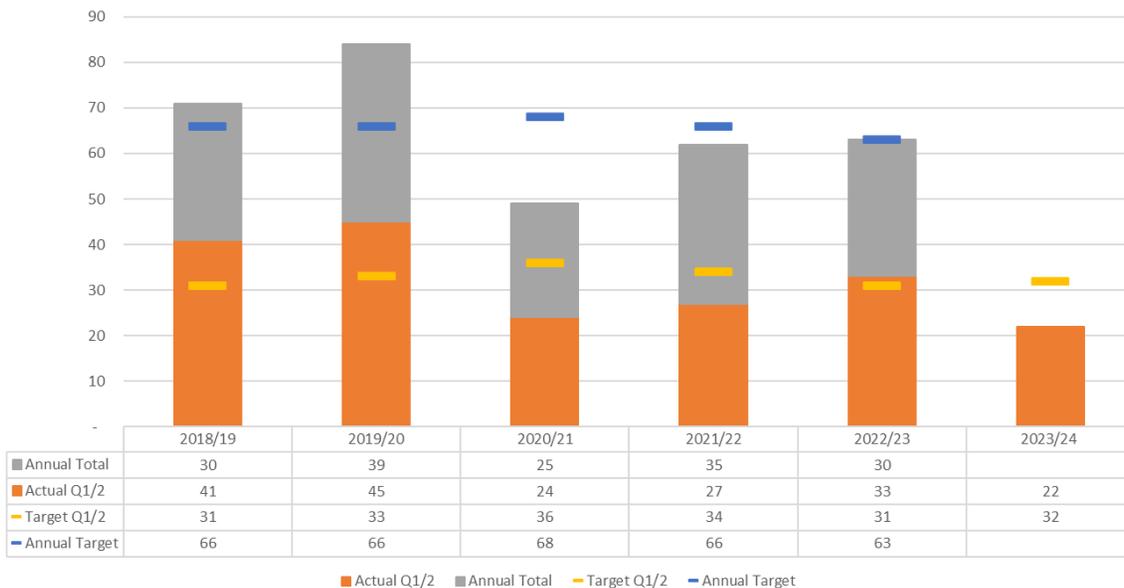
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Total fatalities and injuries have fallen from 33 in Q1/2 2022/23 to 22 in Q1/2 2023/24.
- 31% **below** the target of 32.
- 2 fatalities from fire, compared to 3 last year.
- The fatalities were in accidental dwelling fires and started in the bedroom. Alarms were present during both incidents, but they did not raise the alarm.
- There were 4 serious injuries this year compared to 10 last year.
- There were 16 slight injuries compared to 20 last year.

Total Accidental Fatalities & Injuries compared to targets with Q1/2 breakdown

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Annual Total	19	32	23	30	23	
Actual Q1/2	36	32	19	23	29	20
Target Q1/2	27	29	30	31	25	26
Annual Target	59	59	57	59	48	

Actual Q1/2 ■ Annual Total ■ Target Q1/2 ▬ Annual Target
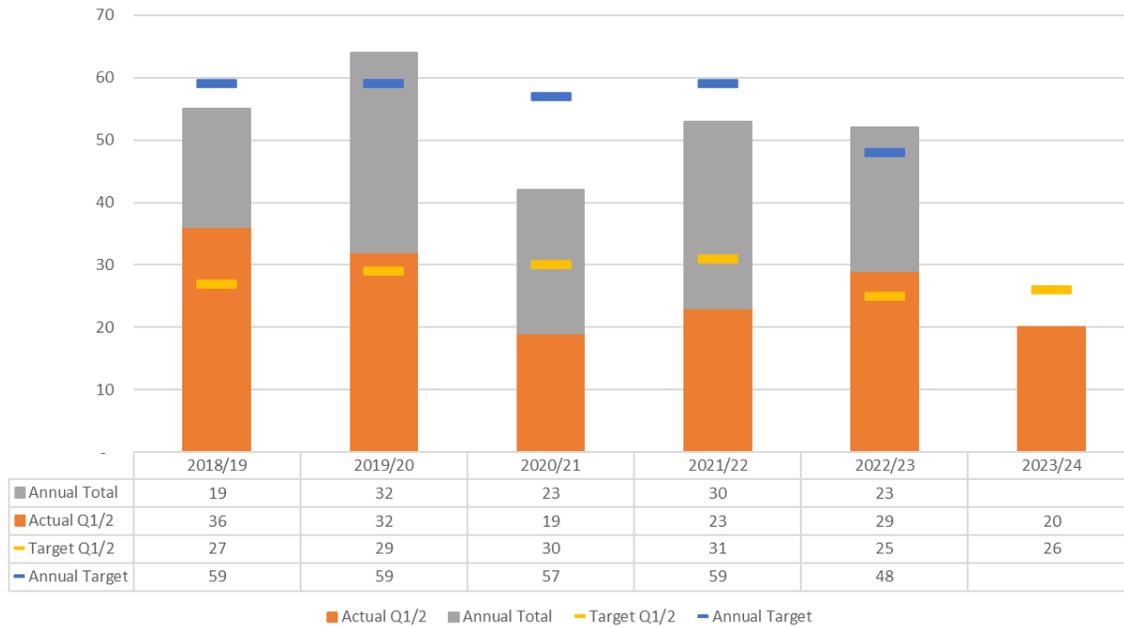
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- Accidental fatalities and Injuries have reduced from 27 last year to 20 this year (-26%).
- 23% below the target of 26.
- There were 2 accidental fatalities which started in the bedroom. Alarms were present during both incidents, but they did not raise the alarm.
- There were 2 accidental serious injuries compared to 9 last year.
- There were 16 accidental slight injuries compared to 17 last year.

% of Dwelling Fires contained to room of origin compared to target - full year and this year to date

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Actual %	82.50%	84.20%	82.23%	83.65%	81.40%	80.10%
Annual Target	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%

■ Actual % ▬ Annual Target
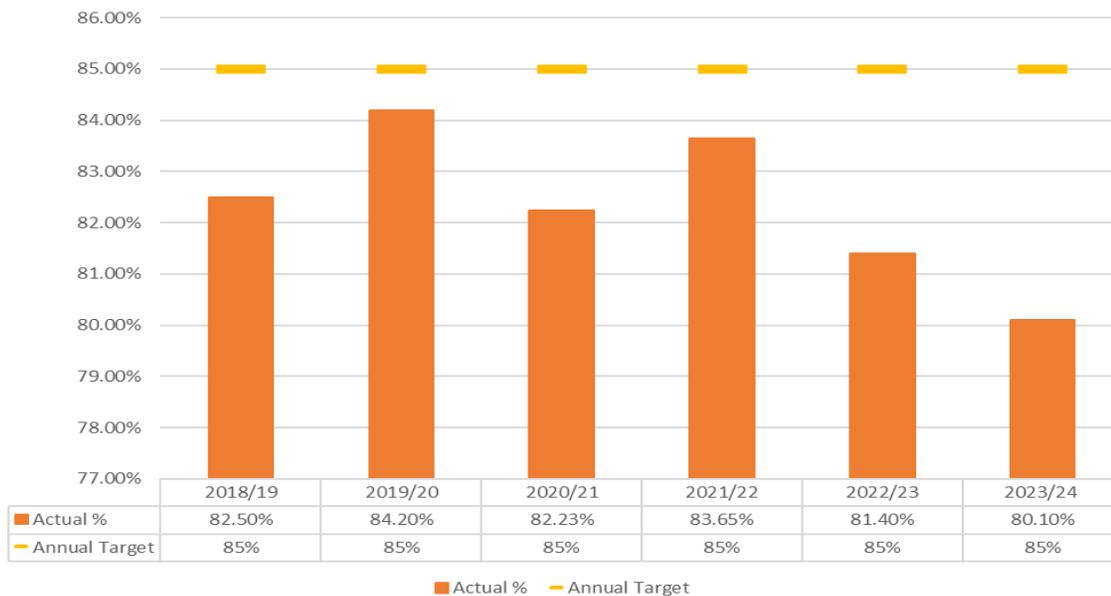
Q1/2 2022/23 Performance V Q1/2 2023/24

- 258 of 322 Dwelling Fires have been Confined to The Room of Origin (80%)
- This is below last year and is 4.9% below the target set of 85% at the start of the year
- Torfaen had the highest percentage, with 89% of fires Confined to The Room of Origin (17 of 19)
- Merthyr had the lowest percentage, with 71% of fires Confined to The Room of Origin (12 of 17)
- Of the 66 fires *not confined* to the room of origin in 30 of them (45%) there was no alarm present

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service — Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	1,091	98	115	151	95	83	69							611	636	-25	-4%
Special Service Calls	165	22	12	17	18	15	15							99	95	4	4%
Total RTCs Attended	32	4	2	4	1	3	3							17	14	3	21%
Total Other SSCs Attended	133	18	10	13	17	12	12							82	81	1	1%
Total False Alarms Attended	413	33	32	39	39	22	26							191	237	-46	-19%
Malicious False Alarms	13	3	1	0	1	1	1							7	5	2	40%
Good Intent False Alarms	178	14	17	22	16	14	12							95	120	-25	-21%
Automatic False Alarms	222	16	14	16	22	7	13							88	112	-24	-21%
Total Fires Attended	513	43	71	95	38	46	28							321	304	17	6%
Deliberate Fire	430	30	57	70	32	37	24							250	260	-10	-4%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	76	8	30	36	8	3	2							87	60	27	45%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	298	16	22	28	14	22	16							118	165	-47	-28%
Accidental Fire	83	13	14	25	6	9	4							71	44	27	61%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	32	5	3	1	2	2	0							13	12	1	8%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	3	1	0	1	0	0	0							2	1	1	100%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	2	1	0	1	0	0	0							2	0	2	200%

- ADFs increased from 12 to 13.
- 2 slight injuries.
- Other SSCs increased from 81 to 82 (1%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 12 to 23 (92%).
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 5 to 9.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 17 to 11.
- RTCs increased from 14 to 17.
  - Of the 17, 7 were making vehicle safe and 4 were making the scene safe.
- Deliberate grass increased from 60 to 87 (45%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 165 to 118 (-28%).
- AFAs decreased from 112 to 88 (-21%).
- Malicious false alarms increased from 5 to 7.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 120 to 95 (-21%).
  - Calls to refuse (25), dwelling (20) and grass (18) accounting for most of this call type.

Bridgend County Borough Council

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	1,522	149	134	197	112	127	131							850	884	-34	-4%
Special Service Calls	345	26	22	34	22	25	34							163	172	-9	-5%
Total RTCs Attended	80	9	5	3	6	4	6							33	36	-3	-8%
Total Other SSCs Attended	265	17	17	31	16	21	28							130	136	-6	-4%
Total False Alarms Attended	722	62	44	67	51	63	62							349	397	-48	-12%
Malicious False Alarms	21	2	2	0	1	1	1							7	7	0	0%
Good Intent False Alarms	291	24	23	33	24	27	35							166	177	-11	-6%
Automatic False Alarms	410	36	19	32	25	34	25							171	213	-42	-20%
Total Fires Attended	455	61	68	96	39	39	35							338	315	23	7%
Deliberate Fire	314	49	52	65	22	26	24							238	227	11	5%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	84	17	21	39	10	1	5							93	74	19	26%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	172	16	19	17	8	19	9							88	129	-41	-32%
Accidental Fire	141	12	16	30	16	12	11							97	88	9	10%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	48	4	4	6	2	3	4							23	25	-2	-8%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	3	0	0	0	0	1	0							1	1	0	0%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	2	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	1	-1	-100%

- ADFs decreased from 25 to 23.
- 1 serious injury.
- Other SSCs decreased from 136 to 130 (-4%).
  - Assistance to other agencies decreased from 37 to 24 (-35%).
  - Bariatric incidents decreased from 11 to 10.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 19 to 8.
- RTCs decreased from 36 to 33.
  - Of the 33, 10 were making vehicle safe and 8 were making the scene safe.
- Deliberate grass increased from 74 to 93 (26%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 129 to 88 (-32%).
- AFAs decreased from 213 to 171 (-20%).
- Malicious false alarms remained at 7.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 177 to 166 (-6%).
  - Calls to dwelling (65), refuse (28), and grass (25) accounting for most of this call type.

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	2,156	196	206	265	184	186	215							1252	1262	-10	-1%
Special Service Calls	383	46	43	31	39	34	49							242	177	65	37%
Total RTCs Attended	96	11	11	11	10	9	11							63	44	19	43%
Total Other SSCs Attended	287	35	32	20	29	25	38							179	133	46	35%
Total False Alarms Attended	889	61	68	91	70	67	96							453	463	-10	-2%
Malicious False Alarms	26	1	0	1	3	3	2							10	11	-1	-9%
Good Intent False Alarms	420	26	39	58	29	33	49							234	251	-17	-7%
Automatic False Alarms	443	34	29	32	38	31	44							208	201	7	3%
Total Fires Attended	884	89	95	143	75	85	70							557	622	-65	-10%
Deliberate Fire	664	72	72	111	60	64	58							437	485	-48	-10%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	160	18	33	49	12	6	0							118	150	-32	-21%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	408	43	35	49	37	42	39							245	274	-29	-11%
Accidental Fire	220	17	23	32	15	21	12							120	137	-17	-12%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	78	3	3	3	5	9	2							25	43	-18	-42%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	9	0	0	0	1	1	0							2	5	-3	-60%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	9	0	0	0	1	1	0							2	5	-3	-100%

- ADFs decreased from 43 to 25.
- 2 slight injuries.
- Other SSCs increased from 133 to 179 (35%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 29 to 55 (90%).
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 8 to 29.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 15 to 13.
- RTCs increased from 44 to 63.
  - Of the 63, 15 were making scene safe and 19 were making the vehicle safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 150 to 118 (-21%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 274 to 245 (-11%).
- AFAs increased from 201 to 208 (3%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 11 to 10.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 251 to 234 (-7%).
  - Calls to refuse (56), dwelling (53), and grass (45) accounting for most of this call type.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service — Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Cardiff City Council — CARDIFF CAERDYDD

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	4,413	343	428	444	419	381	413							2428	2,407	21	1%
Special Service Calls	925	69	86	76	85	86	79							481	484	-3	-1%
Total RTCs Attended	155	12	15	10	14	16	14							81	69	12	17%
Total Other SSCs Attended	770	57	71	66	71	70	65							400	415	-15	-4%
Total False Alarms Attended	2,371	183	202	198	222	202	242							1249	1,164	85	7%
Malicious False Alarms	88	3	8	6	8	9	4							38	43	-5	-12%
Good Intent False Alarms	628	42	60	76	59	48	77							362	340	22	6%
Automatic False Alarms	1,655	138	134	116	155	145	161							849	781	68	9%
Total Fires Attended	1,117	91	140	170	112	93	92							698	759	-61	-8%
Deliberate Fire	752	61	104	117	76	69	71							498	537	-39	-7%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	193	13	18	33	13	4	4							85	176	-91	-52%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	462	39	69	62	49	37	48							304	308	-4	-1%
Accidental Fire	365	30	36	53	36	24	21							200	222	-22	-10%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	138	12	12	19	17	10	6							76	74	2	3%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	10	1	0	3	1	0	5							10	6	4	67%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	8	1	0	2	1	0	5							9	5	4	400%

- ADFs increased from 74 to 76.
- 1 fatality, 1 serious injury, 8 slight injuries.
- Other SSCs decreased from 415 to 400 (-4%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 67 to 93 (39%).
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 19 to 29.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 79 to 68.
- RTCs increased from 69 to 81.
  - Of the 81, 31 were making scene safe and 21 were making the vehicle safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 176 to 85 (-52%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 308 to 304 (-1%).
- AFAs increased from 781 to 849 (9%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 43 to 38 (-12%).
- Good intent false alarms increased from 340 to 362 (6%).
  - Calls to dwelling (163) and refuse (53) accounting for most of this call type.

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service — Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	735	69	87	116	69	67	61							469	415	54	13%
Special Service Calls	162	18	12	18	21	20	14							103	80	23	29%
Total RTCs Attended	42	5	2	4	4	7	0							22	23	-1	-4%
Total Other SSCs Attended	120	13	10	14	17	13	14							81	57	24	42%
Total False Alarms Attended	312	24	27	36	29	30	31							177	162	15	9%
Malicious False Alarms	12	1	3	2	2	0	2							10	8	2	25%
Good Intent False Alarms	118	8	12	23	12	11	8							74	69	5	7%
Automatic False Alarms	182	15	11	11	15	19	21							92	85	7	8%
Total Fires Attended	261	27	48	62	19	17	16							189	173	16	9%
Deliberate Fire	203	22	38	50	13	9	13							145	145	0	0%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	67	12	22	27	4	0	0							65	61	4	7%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	102	9	8	18	4	7	11							57	69	-12	-17%
Accidental Fire	58	5	10	12	6	8	3							44	28	16	57%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	26	2	2	4	1	2	3							14	11	3	27%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	13	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	5	-5	-100%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	7	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	4	-4	-100%

- ADFs increased from 11 to 14.
- 0 injuries or fatalities.
- Other SSCs increased from 57 to 81 (42%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 12 to 23 (92%).
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 3 to 10.
  - Effecting entry/exit increased from 3 to 9.
- RTCs decreased from 23 to 22.
  - Of the 22, 12 were making scene safe.
- Deliberate grass increased from 61 to 65 (7%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 69 to 57 (-17%).
- AFAs increased from 85 to 92 (8%).
- Malicious false alarms increased from 8 to 10.
- Good intent false alarms increased from 69 to 74 (7%).
  - Calls to dwelling (26) and refuse (17) accounting for most of this call type.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service — Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Monmouthshire Council — monmouthshire sir fynwy

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	984	66	83	76	86	60	80							451	522	-71	-14%
Special Service Calls	246	19	23	19	21	17	16							115	126	-11	-9%
Total RTCs Attended	75	7	6	5	6	6	6							36	42	-6	-14%
Total Other SSCs Attended	171	12	17	14	15	11	10							79	84	-5	-6%
Total False Alarms Attended	511	27	37	38	48	33	51							234	251	-17	-7%
Malicious False Alarms	5	0	0	1	0	0	1							2	1	1	100%
Good Intent False Alarms	150	8	12	7	11	15	14							67	93	-26	-28%
Automatic False Alarms	356	19	25	29	37	18	36							164	157	7	4%
Total Fires Attended	227	20	23	19	17	10	13							102	145	-43	-30%
Deliberate Fire	81	9	4	6	6	2	3							30	61	-31	-51%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	22	5	3	3	1	1	0							13	20	-7	-35%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	47	1	0	2	2	1	1							7	35	-28	-80%
Accidental Fire	146	11	19	13	11	8	9							71	84	-13	-15%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	34	1	4	4	2	1	1							13	15	-2	-13%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	2	0	1	0	0	0	0							1	2	-1	-50%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	2	0	1	0	0	0	0							1	2	-1	-100%

- ADFs decreased from 15 to 13.
- 1 slight injury.
- Other SSCs decreased from 84 to 79 (-6%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 16 to 20.
  - Bariatric incidents decreased from 6 to 4.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 10 to 5.
- RTCs decreased from 42 to 36.
  - Of the 36, 13 were making vehicle safe and 11 were making scene safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 20 to 13 (-35%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 35 to 7 (-80%).
- AFAs increased from 157 to 164 (4%).
- Malicious false alarms increased from 1 to 2.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 93 to 67 (-28%).
  - Calls to dwelling (21) and road vehicle (12) accounting for most of this call type.

Newport City Council

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	2,505	176	173	237	183	185	209							1163	1,428	-265	-19%
Special Service Calls	416	32	29	45	43	39	46							234	208	26	13%
Total RTCs Attended	80	3	6	5	12	6	4							36	31	5	16%
Total Other SSCs Attended	336	29	23	40	31	33	42							198	177	21	12%
Total False Alarms Attended	1,127	88	75	92	82	90	121							548	555	-7	-1%
Malicious False Alarms	56	1	1	0	6	3	5							16	23	-7	-30%
Good Intent False Alarms	335	22	28	35	30	22	32							169	200	-31	-16%
Automatic False Alarms	736	65	46	57	46	65	84							363	332	31	9%
Total Fires Attended	962	56	69	100	58	56	42							381	665	-284	-43%
Deliberate Fire	775	47	47	86	47	48	29							304	555	-251	-45%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	163	4	7	18	4	2	3							38	157	-119	-76%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	433	27	34	48	32	29	14							184	293	-109	-37%
Accidental Fire	187	9	22	14	11	8	13							77	110	-33	-30%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	69	5	10	1	4	1	5							26	32	-6	-19%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	3	1	1	0	1	1	0							4	2	2	100%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	2	1	1	0	1	1	0							4	1	3	200%

- ADFs decreased from 32 to 26.
- 1 serious injury, 3 slight injuries.
- Other SSCs increased from 177 to 198 (12%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 39 to 52 (33%).
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 12 to 15.
  - Effecting entry/exit decreased from 27 to 20.
- RTCs increased from 31 to 36.
  - Of the 36, 12 were making scene safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 157 to 38 (-76%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 293 to 184 (-37%).
- AFAs increased from 332 to 363 (9%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 23 to 16.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 200 to 169 (-16%).
  - Calls to dwelling (54), road vehicle (30), and refuse (28) accounting for most of this call type.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	2,605	220	264	406	204	240	222							1556	1,460	96	7%
Special Service Calls	711	59	67	56	53	73	65							373	315	58	18%
Total RTCs Attended	156	17	20	13	8	16	8							82	63	19	30%
Total Other SSCs Attended	555	42	47	43	45	57	57							291	252	39	15%
Total False Alarms Attended	1,072	86	80	143	99	118	108							634	576	58	10%
Malicious False Alarms	36	2	4	4	1	3	5							19	23	-4	-17%
Good Intent False Alarms	448	38	38	76	46	46	45							289	269	20	7%
Automatic False Alarms	588	46	38	63	52	69	58							326	284	42	15%
Total Fires Attended	822	75	117	207	52	49	49							549	569	-20	-4%
Deliberate Fire	565	47	94	161	42	28	28							400	430	-30	-7%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	185	23	41	77	10	2	3							156	163	-7	-4%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	298	17	45	66	24	13	16							181	216	-35	-16%
Accidental Fire	257	28	23	46	10	21	21							149	139	10	7%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	108	13	7	7	3	10	10							50	46	4	9%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	5	0	0	0	0	1	0							1	1	0	0%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	5	0	0	0	0	1	0							1	1	0	0%

- ADFs increased from 46 to 50.
- 1 slight injury.
- Other SSCs increased from 252 to 291 (15%).
  - Assistance to other agencies decreased from 64 to 61.
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 22 to 28.
  - Effecting entry/exit increased from 32 to 43.
- RTCs increased from 63 to 82.
  - Of the 82, 36 were making scene safe and 16 were extrication of person/s.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 163 to 156 (-4%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 216 to 181 (-16%).
- AFAs increased from 284 to 326 (15%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 23 to 19.
- Good intent false alarms increased from 269 to 289 (7%).
  - Calls to dwelling (75), refuse (73), and grass (58) accounting for most of this call type.

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Torfaen County Borough Council

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH — BWRDEISTREF SIROL TORFAEN

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	1,299	95	115	128	97	105	108							648	743	-95	-13%
Special Service Calls	228	24	20	23	18	22	20							127	110	17	15%
Total RTCs Attended	42	7	4	3	5	2	6							27	18	9	50%
Total Other SSCs Attended	186	17	16	20	13	20	14							100	92	8	9%
Total False Alarms Attended	653	47	49	65	57	59	63							340	357	-17	-5%
Malicious False Alarms	17	1	1	4		2	1							9	10	-1	-10%
Good Intent False Alarms	227	14	23	25	15	21	21							119	141	-22	-16%
Automatic False Alarms	409	32	25	36	42	36	41							212	206	6	3%
Total Fires Attended	418	24	46	40	22	24	25							181	276	-95	-34%
Deliberate Fire	293	16	24	27	12	18	14							111	202	-91	-45%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	88	4	12	15	2	0	0							33	84	-51	-61%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	147	9	10	6	7	10	8							50	88	-38	-43%
Accidental Fire	125	8	22	13	10	6	11							70	74	-4	-5%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	46	1	4	2	4	2	5							18	20	-2	-10%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	7	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	5	-5	-500%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	7	0	0	0	0	0	0							0	5	-5	-500%

- ADFs decreased from 20 to 18.
- 0 fatalities or injuries.
- Other SSCs increased from 92 to 100 (9%).
  - Assistance to other agencies decreased from 3 to 2.
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 7 to 9.
  - Effecting entry/exit remained at 0.
- RTCs increased from 18 to 27.
  - Of the 27, 12 were making scene safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 84 to 33 (-61%).
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 88 to 50 (-43%).
- AFAs increased from 206 to 212 (3%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 10 to 9.
- Good intent false alarms decreased from 141 to 119 (-16%).
  - Calls to dwelling (34), refuse (27), and grass (24) accounting for most of this call type.

The Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service / Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub De Cymru

Incident Categories	Apr 2022 - Mar 2023	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Q1/2 23-24	Q1/2 22-23	Q1/2 diff	Q1/2 %
Total Incidents	1,395	116	141	123	134	121	117							752	758	-6	-1%
Special Service Calls	347	29	29	23	31	28	30							170	156	14	9%
Total RTCs Attended	90	6	10	3	8	6	6							39	39	0	0%
Total Other SSCs Attended	257	23	19	20	23	22	24							131	117	14	12%
Total False Alarms Attended	676	56	73	55	68	70	64							386	367	19	5%
Malicious False Alarms	30	1	1	0	3	2	3							10	13	-3	-23%
Good Intent False Alarms	228	19	36	18	20	24	23							140	136	4	3%
Automatic False Alarms	418	36	36	37	45	44	37							235	218	17	8%
Total Fires Attended	372	31	39	45	35	23	23							196	235	-39	-17%
Deliberate Fire	205	12	23	21	15	12	15							98	129	-31	-24%
Deliberate Grass Fire Attended	35	1	9	9	3	1	2							25	31	-6	-19%
Deliberate Refuse Fire Attended	131	9	14	5	11	11	11							61	78	-17	-22%
Accidental Fire	167	19	16	24	20	11	8							98	106	-8	-8%
Accidental Dwelling Fire Attended	44	7	6	1	6	6	3							29	20	9	45%
Total Deaths and Injuries in Fires	8	0	0	0	0	0	1							1	5	-4	-80%
Total Accidental Deaths and Injuries in Fires	8	0	0	0	0	0	1							1	5	-4	-80%

- ADFs increased from 20 to 29.
- 1 fatality.
- Other SSCs increased from 117 to 131 (12%).
  - Assistance to other agencies increased from 18 to 30.
  - Bariatric incidents increased from 4 to 5.
  - Effecting entry/exit increased from 16 to 17.
- RTCs remained at 39.
  - Of the 39, 14 were making vehicle safe and 12 were making scene safe.
- Deliberate grass decreased from 31 to 25.
- Deliberate refuse decreased from 78 to 61 (-22%).
- AFAs increased from 281 to 235 (8%).
- Malicious false alarms decreased from 13 to 310.
- Good intent false alarms increased from 136 to 140 (3%).
  - Calls to dwelling (69) and refuse (16) accounting for most of this call type.

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY   AGENDA ITEM NO 7.ii
    18 DECEMBER 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES' ANNUAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2024/25

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION

REPORT APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES
REPORT PRESENTED BY GERAINT THOMAS, DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

SUMMARY

This report brings to Members' attention the relevant sections of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report that relate to payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the extract of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Annual Report, attached at Appendix 1, which provides details of payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

---

1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1 As Members will be aware, the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 gave powers to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales to determine and review the remuneration of Members of Local Authorities, National Park Authorities, Fire & Rescue Authorities and Town & Community Councils.

1.2 The Panel is also required to produce an Annual Report and consult on this prior to its issue. Following consultation, the Panel has now issued its Annual Report, and the relevant extracts for Members are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

2. **RELEVANT ISSUES**

2.1 Members will note that Councillors' remuneration for Fire & Rescue Authority duties for the 2024/25 municipal year of salaries are determined as follows:

- Basic salary £2,632 per annum
- Senior Salary £6,372 per annum (inclusive of basic salary)
- Chair Of Fire Authority Salary £11,965 per annum (inclusive of basic salary)

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	No
Welsh Language	No
Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	No
Socio Economic Duty	No
Sustainability/Environment/Carbon Reduction	No
Safeguarding	No
Consultation and Communications	No
Consultation with Representative Bodies	No
Impact Assessment	No

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

Legal	No	Data Protection / Privacy	No
Financial	No	Health, Safety and Wellbeing	No
Procurement	No	Governance & Audit	No
Corporate Risk	No	Service Policy	No
Information Management	No	National Policy	No

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

Human Resource and People Development	No
Assets and Resources (Property/Fleet/ICT/Equipment)	No
Service Delivery	No
Procurement	No
Budget Revenue/Capital	No

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That Members note the extract of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Annual Report, attached at Appendix 1, which provides details of payments to Members of Welsh Fire & Rescue Authorities.

Contact Officer:	ACO Geraint Thomas Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers:	Date	Source/Contact
None		

Appendices:	
Appendix 1	Extract of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Annual Report – February 2024/25

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Panel Annibynnol Cymru
ar Gydnabyddiaeth Ariannol
Independent Remuneration
Panel for Wales

Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales

Annual Report

October 2023

Contents

Foreword

Welcome to the draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales, setting out our proposals on pay, expenses and benefits for elected members of Principal Councils, Town and Community Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities for implementation from April 2024.

This has been a year of change for the Panel, with 1 longstanding member leaving us and the appointment of 2 new members. I would like to thank Helen Wilkinson for her contribution over the years to the Panel and wish her well for the future.

Last year we were down to only 3, which is the minimum for a Panel meeting to be quorate. Earlier this year we were able to appoint 2 new members to bring our current complement up to 5. I welcome Dianne Bevan and Kate Watkins to the Panel and thank Saz Willey, Vice Chair, and Bev Smith for their continued contribution throughout the year. You can find out more about our Panel members on our website.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, Part 8 (The Measure), which gives the statutory authority for the Panel's work, allows the appointment of a minimum of 3 and up to 7 members.

This draft annual report is now issued for consultation. We have again put forward a set of specific questions where we would welcome your feedback. We welcome any additional comments either on the detail of the proposed Determinations or on other relevant areas you think the Panel should consider.

The Consultation period ends on 8 December and after deliberating on your feedback, and taking cognisance of any change in circumstances, the Panel will issue its final Determinations and annual report by the 28 February 2024.

Frances Duffy

Chair

Panel Membership

- Saz Willey, Vice Chair
- Bev Smith
- Dianne Bevan
- Kate Watkins

Detailed information about the members, our strategic plan, our deliberations and supporting research and evidence can be found on the **Panel website**.

Introduction

This year we published our first strategic plan. This covers the period from 2023 until 2025 and sets the framework for our deliberations and wider context for our decisions. The key elements are set out below under Roles and Responsibilities of the Panel.

With a strengthened Panel, we were able to focus on building our research and evidence plan to support our discussions on our remuneration framework. Our evidence plan will be published on our website inline with our aim to be open and transparent in all our decision making.

Our goal continues to be to ensure that levels of remuneration are fair and reasonable. We agreed to continue to align levels of remuneration for elected members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities within the context of average Welsh earnings. This has meant using the Annual

Survey of Hours and Earnings within Wales (ASHE) published by Office for National Statistics (ONS) as the main benchmark for setting remuneration.

The Measure states that "the Panel must take into account what it considers will be the likely financial impact on relevant authorities" of its decisions. The Panel considered evidence on public sector finances and the impact on Principal Authorities' budgets. Whilst the total cost of remuneration for elected members is relatively low in terms of overall budgets, the Panel were mindful of the heightened economic and fiscal strain on Principal Councils.

In reaching our decision to continue the link between elected members remuneration and the average earnings of their constituents, the Panel remain of the view that a fair and reasonable remuneration package will continue to support elected members and not act as a barrier to participation. This is an important principle, underpinning our considerations on appropriate remuneration.

In line with our commitment to simplifying reporting and compliance, the Panel this year looked at the reporting requirements for Community and Town Council. We continue to receive queries regarding the PAYE treatment of the mandatory allowance for working from home (£156 per annum) and the option of a flat rate of £52 a year for consumables. We will update our guidance on this issue which should ensure clarity for local clerks.

We are also mindful of a continuing, albeit reducing, number of Community and Town councillors who decide to forego all or part of their entitlement. We strongly believe that councillors should be reimbursed for some of the expenses they necessarily incur whilst carrying out their duties.

Currently each council must annually report to the Panel, and publish on its website, the details and names of each councillor in receipt of any expenses. In previous years we agreed that in respect of costs of care and personal assistance allowances, it would be inappropriate to name individual councillors,

and that it would be sufficient to simply list the total amounts paid and the total number of recipients.

The Panel feels that it would be appropriate to extend this to the mandatory payment for working from home, the flat rate consumables allowance and travel and subsistence claims. This will give the right balance between public accountability and individual privacy, and we hope will encourage all to accept the payments they are entitled to.

We will therefore provide a new template report for use from September 2024 and will continue to monitor the level of payments made.

The final area that the Panel considered this year, was the method of calculating payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park and Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Following feedback on last year's annual report and queries raised through the year by some co-opted members and by several Heads of Democratic Services, the Panel took evidence from the correspondents on the impact of both the increase in numbers of co-opted members and the changing nature of working patterns. This showed that the current arrangement of either a half day rate for anything up to 4 hours and a full day rate for anything over, was insufficiently flexible to reflect the patterns of working now more normally in place, mainly due to more online or hybrid working.

The Panel therefore proposes that the local relevant officer should have the flexibility to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate and when to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings.

The Panel is aware of feedback that our website can be difficult to navigate and that finding the right Determination to deal with a specific issue is not always straightforward, especially for new elected members or officials. We will

therefore update the links on the website and created a new link to a page setting out all the current Determinations that should be applied. It will be updated every year when the final annual report is issued, and we hope this will be easier to navigate than having to refer to every year's report.

We are also reviewing our guidance (previously called the Regulations) and frequently asked questions pages.

Role and responsibilities of the Panel

Our Role

The Panel is responsible for setting the levels and arrangements for the remuneration of elected and co-opted members of the following organisations:

- Principal Councils: County and County Borough Councils
- Community and Town Councils
- National Park Authorities
- Fire and Rescue Authorities
- Joint Overview Scrutiny Committees
- Corporate Joint Committees

The Panel is an independent organisation and the organisations listed above are required, by law, to implement the decisions it makes.

We make determinations on:

- the salary structure within which members are remunerated
- the type and nature of allowances to be paid to members
- whether payments are mandatory or allow a level of local flexibility
- arrangements in respect of family absence

- arrangements for monitoring compliance with the Panel's decisions

Our aim

- supporting local democracy and giving communities their voice, through setting up an appropriate and fair remuneration framework, which encourages inclusion and participation

Our goals

- our determinations should ensure that levels of remuneration are fair, reasonable, represent value for money for the taxpayer, and are set within the context of Welsh earnings and the wider financial circumstances of Wales
- our Determinations should support elected members from a diverse range of backgrounds, and levels of remuneration should not act as a barrier to participation

Our strategic objectives

- to make evidence, based Determinations
- to use clear and accessible communications
- to proactively engage and consult
- to simplify compliance and reporting
- to work collaboratively

The Panel

- Frances Duffy (Chair)

- Saz Willey (Vice Chair)
- Dianne Bevan (Member)
- Bev Smith (Member)
- Kate Watkins (Member)

Further information on Panel members can be found on the **Panel's website**.

Methodology

As set out in our strategic objectives the Panel has committed to making evidence-based decisions. This year we prepared an evidence and research paper to pull together the various sources of information that the Panel considered in making its draft Determinations. This provided a wide range of data, evidence and contextual factors to inform the Panel's decision-making process in relation to its Determinations for the 2024 to 2025 financial year. This included:

- data on average UK and Wales weekly earnings, including ASHE the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
- annual CPIH and CPI inflation rates
- benchmarks, including councillor remuneration in Scotland
- research on councillor workload, views and attitudes to remuneration and diversity (Welsh Government)
- findings of Senedd Cymru Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (2019)
- data collected on the take up of remuneration and benefits packages by councillors
- data on local authority finances

The full set of evidence and research considered, will be published on our **website**.

The Panel engaged directly with key stakeholder representative groups including the Welsh Local Government Association and its Heads of Democratic Services committee, One Voice Wales, the Society for Local Council Clerks and North and Mid Wales Association of Local Councils. These discussions provide an opportunity for the Panel to explore views about existing arrangements, the impact decisions are having on individuals, how the arrangements are operating in practice and any issues or concerns individuals wish to raise. It also provides an opportunity for discussion about emerging situations which the Panel may need to consider in respect of its decision making.

The Panel helped facilitate sessions at the Welsh Government's "Diversity in Democracy" events earlier this year. This gave us the opportunity to hear the direct experiences of a range of elected members, prospective candidates and organisations working to broaden representation in local government. We have drawn on that information to inform this report and to explore areas for future consideration.

This year this focused on 3 main issue, affordability, payments made to co-opted members and reporting requirements for Community and Town Councils. The Panel would like to thank all those that contributed to our deliberations either directly or through feedback and questions on our last report.

The Panels' proposals will now be consulted on and following consideration of views received in response to this consultation the Panel will make its final determinations and issue the 2024 to 2025 final report, in February 2024.

There have been no changes made to allowances for:

- travel and subsistence
- care and personal assistance
- sickness absence
- corporate joint committees
- assistants to the executive
- additional salaries and job-sharing arrangements

Salaries for Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Determination 3

The salary of a chair of a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to be aligned to Band 3 and will be set at £9,333.

The salary of a vice-chair is set at 50% of the Chair and will be £4,667.

There are no other changes.

Payments to national parks authorities and fire and rescue authorities: Determination 4

The 3 national parks in Wales, Eryri (Snowdonia), Pembrokeshire Coast and Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons), were formed to protect spectacular landscapes and provide recreation opportunities for the public. **The Environment Act 1995** led to the creation of a National Park Authority (NPA) for each park. National Park authorities comprise members who are either elected members nominated by the principal councils within the national park area or are members appointed by the Welsh Government through the Public Appointments process. Welsh Government appointed and council nominated members are treated equally in relation to remuneration.

The 3 fire and rescue services (FRAs) in Wales: Mid and West Wales, North Wales and South Wales were formed as part of Local Government re-organisation in 1996. FRAs comprise elected members who are nominated by the Principal Councils within each fire and rescue service area.

In line with the Panel's decision to increase the basic salary of elected members of principal councils, the remuneration level for ordinary members of both NPAs and FRAs is also increased in line with ASHE.

The remuneration for Chairs will remain linked to a principal council Band 3 senior salary. Their role element will therefore increase accordingly. Deputy chairs, Committee chairs and other paid senior posts will remain linked to a Band 5. This means the role element of their pay will continue to be temporarily frozen. Full details of the levels of remuneration for members of NPAs and FRAs is set out in Table 2.

Table 2: payments to national parks authorities

National parks authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£5,265
Chair	£14,598
Deputy chair (where appointed)	£9,005
Committee chair or other senior post	£9,005

Table 2: payments to fire and rescue authorities

Fire and rescue authorities	Amount
Basic salary for ordinary member	£2,632
Chair	£11,965
Deputy chair (where appointed)	£6,372
Committee chair or other senior post	£6,372

All current Determinations, including restrictions on receiving double allowances, will be published on our website. Other than the above increases, there are no changes proposed this year.

Payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities: Determination 5

The current Determination (made in the 2022 to 2023 Annual Report) states that co-opted members of the relevant bodies should be remunerated on a day or half day basis. In addition, the relevant officer may decide on the total number of days remunerated in a year and set a reasonable time for meeting preparation.

The Panel has noted the changes to working practices, put in place during Covid and now becoming more routine, that has meant a move towards more frequent use of online meetings and or training courses, often short, as well as more regular committee meetings. The panel also received feedback from Heads of Democratic Services raising this issue.

The Panel considered moving to an hourly rate instead. This would better reflect new ways of working and hours actually worked. However, the Panel recognised that this may not always be appropriate, especially to cover in person meetings scheduled to last several hours.

The Panel therefore proposes there should be local flexibility for the relevant officer to decide when it will be appropriate to apply a day or a half day rate or to use an hourly rate where it is sensible to aggregate a number of short meetings, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: payments made to co-opted members of Principal Councils, National Park Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authorities

Role	Hourly rate payment	Up to 4 hours payment rate	4 hours and over payment rate
Chairs of standards, and audit committees	£33.50	£134	£268
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees who also chair Standards Committees for Community and Town Councils	£29.75	£119	£238
Ordinary Members of Standards Committees; Education Scrutiny Committee; Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee	£26.25	£105	£210
Community and Town Councillors sitting on Principal Council Standards Committees	£26.25	£105	£210

Archwilio Cymru
Audit Wales

Putting out the false alarms:
Fire and Rescue Authorities' responses to Unwanted Fire Signals

Report of the Auditor General for Wales

October 2023

The Auditor General is independent of the Senedd and government. He examines and certifies the accounts of the Welsh Government and its sponsored and related public bodies, including NHS bodies. He also has the power to report to the Senedd on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which those organisations have used, and may improve the use of, their resources in discharging their functions.

The Auditor General also audits local government bodies in Wales, conducts local government value for money studies and inspects for compliance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

The Auditor General undertakes his work using staff and other resources provided by the Wales Audit Office, which is a statutory board established for that purpose and to monitor and advise the Auditor General.

For further information, or if you require any of our publications in an alternative format and/or language, please contact us by telephone on 029 2032 0500, or email info@audit.wales. We welcome telephone calls in Welsh and English. You can also write to us in either Welsh or English and we will respond in the language you have used. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay.

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

Contents
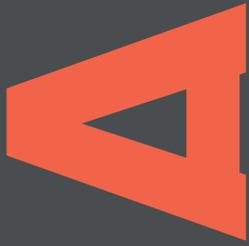
Introduction

01

Audit Wales draws on its recent reviews to consider how reducing false alarms and overcoming key challenges can help the role of firefighters to grow

1   During 2022-23 Audit Wales reviewed the way in which Wales' three Fire and Rescue Authorities' (FRAs) are managing false fire alarms. We examined false alarms due to the significant numbers responded to by FRAs and the consequent impact on FRAs' resources. We focused primarily on their approach to reduce attendance at non-domestic premises but also considered the overall impact of false alarms on each FRA. Our audit included reviewing FRA policies, how these were developed and are being implemented. We also reviewed how FRAs manage, monitor and evaluate performance to drive improvement.

2   The reports summarising the local findings for each FRA are published on our website.

   • North Wales report

   • Mid & West Wales report

   • South Wales report

3   This national summary highlights our key findings and provides a comparative picture of performance across Wales.

What are false alarms and why are they important

Definition and types

4   Within the Home Office Incident Reporting System (IRS), false alarms are categorised into three types:

   • Malicious – a call made with the intention of getting a response to a non-existent fire-related event.

   • Good intent – a call made in good faith that a response would be needed.

   • Due to apparatus – a call initiated by a fire alarm or firefighting equipment (including accidental initiation).

5   **Exhibit 1** shows that, nationally, false alarms 'due to apparatus' is the biggest category, accounting for just under 60% of total false alarms.[1] This data consists of domestic and non-domestic false alarms.

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1   Note – this includes both domestic and non-domestic false alarms due to how data is reported.

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page 6   Putting out the false alarms: Fire and Rescue Authorities' responses to Unwanted Fire Signals

Exhibit 1: share of total false alarms in Wales by type, 2021-22

- Malicious
- Good intent
- Due to apparatus
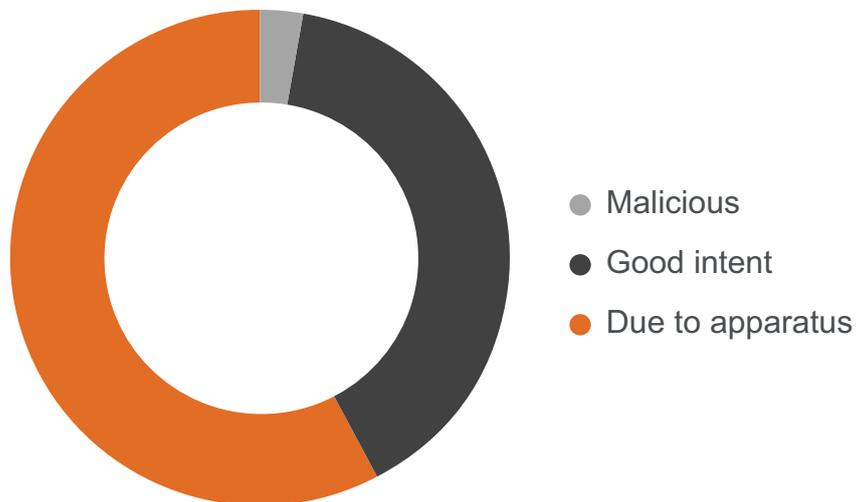
Source: StatsWales

6   False alarms due to apparatus are typically caused by Automatic Fire Alarm systems (AFAs). These are networks of detector heads in buildings that are connected to an alarm system. The alarms are linked to Alarm Receiving Centres (ARCs). Due to technology not requiring on-site management, ARCs can be located anywhere in the world. However, ARCs are required to register with each FRA in the areas they operate within. **Exhibit 2** sets out the AFA process when activated.

Exhibit 2: automatic Fire Alarm Process

| Detector head is triggered | ▶ | Alarm is activated by the detector head | ▶ | Signal is sent to the ARC | ▶ | ARC contact the FRA | ▶ | FRA chooses to respond or not |
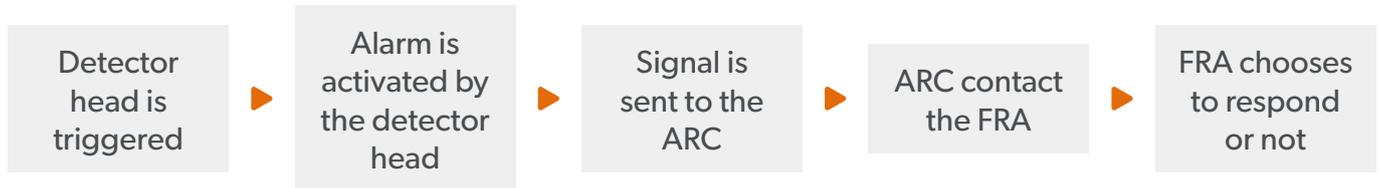
Source: Audit Wales

7   When a false alarm is received via an AFA, it is typically referred to as an Unwanted Fire Signal (UwFS). Because UwFS form the largest share of false alarms, they are the key focus of reduction efforts across the UK[2]. Consequently, the focus of our reviews has primarily been on the three Welsh FRAs approaches to reducing UwFS, whilst also covering other types of false alarms.

National framework requirements

8   The Welsh Government's National Framework for Fire identifies the reduction of false alarms as a key efficiency saving available to FRAs[3]. It notes that responding to false alarms incurs significant financial and time costs, both for FRAs and building occupiers, whilst yielding no benefit whatsoever. In 2021-22, around half of all incidents attended by FRAs were false alarms, illustrating the significant burden they place on fire and rescue services. Consequently, the Welsh Government has set out in the National Framework that FRAs should 'Identify the main sources of false alarms and take all reasonable and practical steps to reduce their incidence'.

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2   For example, see the National Fire Chiefs Council guidance
3   Welsh Government, Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, November 2015

9   In shaping their approach, FRAs must also demonstrate they are
         implementing the sustainable development principle, in line with the
         requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
         This means that FRAs are required to deliver services that meet the
         expectations of the five ways of working. For example, by:

         • balancing short-term responses with the need to deliver long-term
           priorities;

         • taking an integrated approach, ensuring they consider how their
           work may impact upon each of the national well-being goals, on their
           individual wellbeing objectives, or on the objectives of other public
           bodies;

         • involving people with an interest in their work, and ensuring that those
           people reflect the diversity of their area of operation;

         • collaborating with others to help meet their wellbeing objectives; and

         • working preventatively to stop problems occurring in the first place, or
           getting worse.

10   The sustainable development principle and five ways of working provide
         a framework to navigate decision making and can help FRAs to optimise
         their approaches to managing false alarms. In turn, effectively managing
         false alarms can help FRAs to generate the capacity needed to realise
         Welsh Government's wider ambitions for broadening the role and work of
         fire and rescue services in Wales.

Demand over time

11   Data showing the total number of false alarms responded to by each FRA
         is recorded and published annually by Welsh Government. **Exhibit 3**
         shows that FRAs attended over 15,000 false fire alarms in 2021-22, with
         over half of these being in the South Wales FRA area. This data consists
         of domestic and non-domestic false alarms.

Exhibit 3: Number of false fire alarms responded to annually by Welsh FRAs since 2008-09
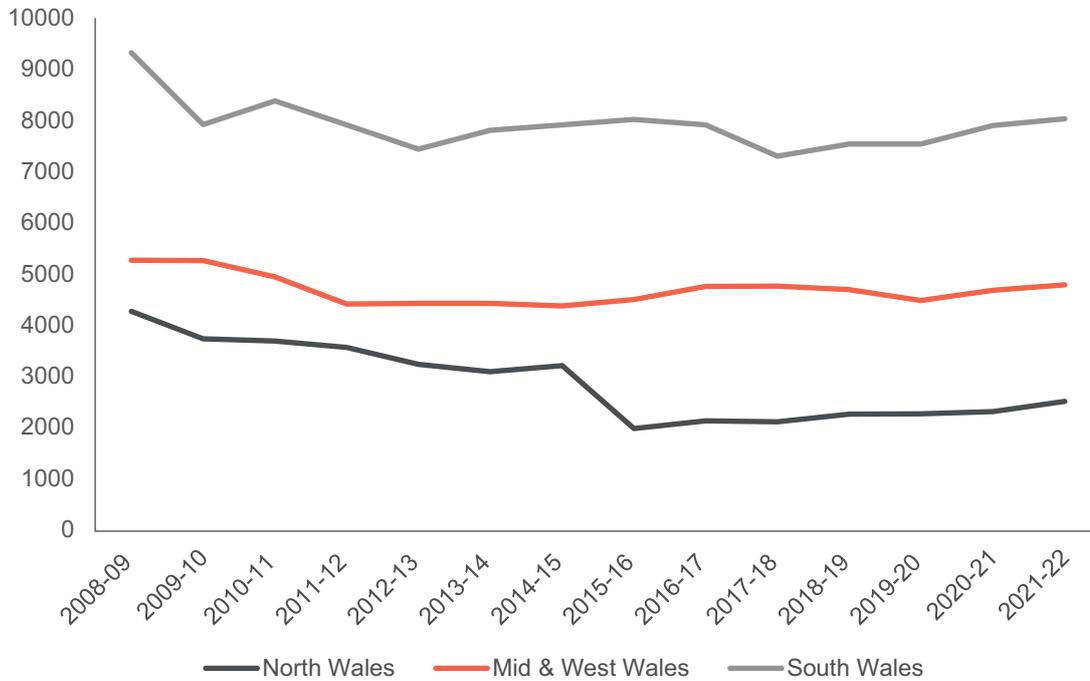
Source: Fires, Special Service Incidents and False alarms attended by Fire and Rescue Services in Wales (gov.wales)

12   The biggest reduction in the number of false alarms between 2008-09 and 2021-22 is in North Wales, which recorded a 41% reduction. Over the same period, false alarms in South Wales reduced by 14%, and Mid and West Wales experienced a 9% reduction.

13   Our analysis summarised in **Exhibit 4**, shows that North Wales FRA has the lowest number of false alarms per 1,000 population.

Exhibit 4: False alarms per 1,000 population, 2008-09 to 2021-22
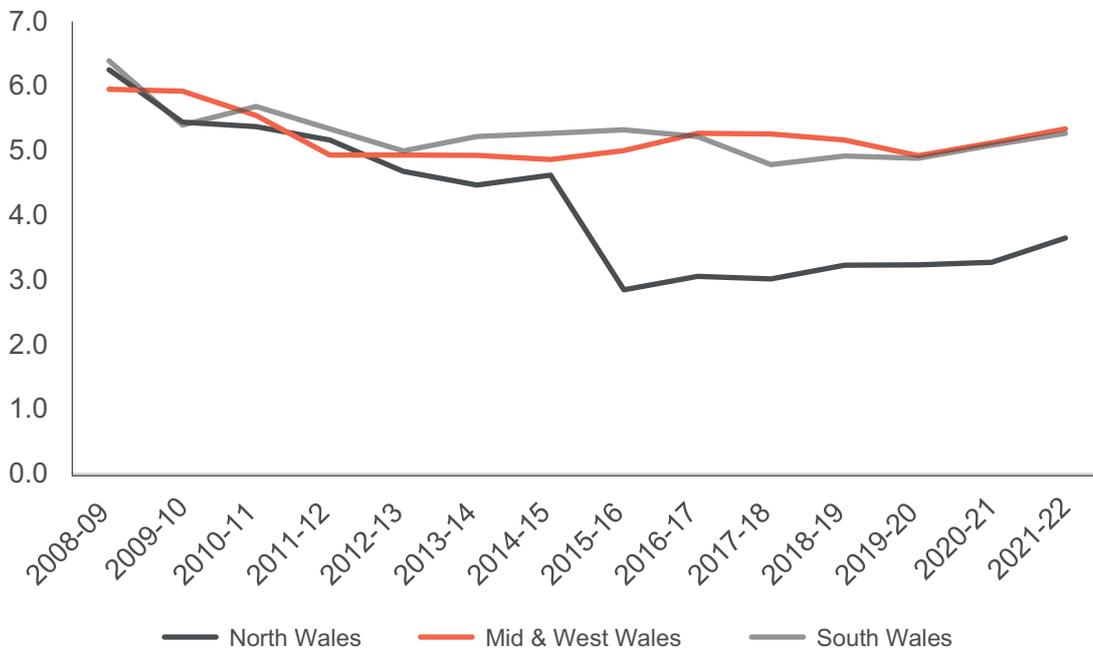
Source: Audit Wales analysis of Fires, Special Service Incidents and False alarms attended by Fire and Rescue Services in Wales (gov.wales) by ONS population estimates (up to 2020) and Census figures for 2021.

14 The number of AFA actuations that occur in any given year is, to a greater extent, out of the control of FRAs. Although they have a role in educating and advising responsible persons as to how unwanted actuations can be reduced, ultimately all that is really in the control of the FRAs is how or if they choose to respond. The next section of this report explains the different approaches taken by each FRA.
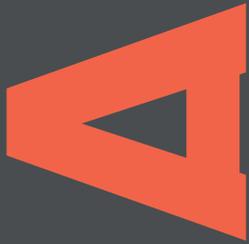
Key findings from local reviews

02

A challenging operating environment

15   False alarms cannot be considered in isolation. Their impact on FRAs' resources is far reaching and different approaches to reducing their prevalence can, in different ways, have a knock-on effect on incident response and fire safety. Understanding the FRAs' operating environment and funding challenges is therefore key in assessing the impact of false alarms and the options available to reduce their incidence.

16   FRAs have had to deliver within significantly reduced budgets in recent years and, as all public bodies, continue to adapt and find more efficient ways of delivering services to address their financial pressures. In real terms[4], FRAs experienced a significant reduction in revenue expenditure between 2009-10 and 2021-22[5]:

- North Wales FRA experienced a 6.3% decrease (£2.6 million) in revenue expenditure.

- Mid & West Wales FRA experienced a 0.9% decrease (£0.5 million) in revenue expenditure.

- South Wales FRA experienced a 16.8% decrease (£15 million) in revenue expenditure.

17   Over the same period, the total calls received across FRAs fell by 16.6%[6] and the number of incidents attended reduced by 25%[7]. The reduction in attendance at incidents is a reflection of FRAs rebalancing their emphasis from responding to incidents, to preventing fires and improving safety.

18   The number of staff employed by each FRA also fell between 2009-10 and 2021-22, as detailed in **Exhibit 5**:

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4   This is based on HM Treasury data calculated during fieldwork for each local report (2021-22) and is not in current real terms. This will be different due to the current levels of inflation.

5   StatsWales, Revenue outturn by authority

6   StatsWales, Calls handled by fire control watch FTE by call type and financial year

7   StatsWales, Fires, Special Service Incidents and False alarms attended by Fire and Rescue Services in Wales

Exhibit 5: FRA personnel headcount by employment type, 2009-10 to 2021-22

Role	2009-10	2021-22	Change
Wholetime uniformed staff	1,658	1,474	-11.1%
Retained staff	1,963	1,642	-16.4%
Fire control staff	124	95	-23.4%
Non-operational staff	643	680	5.8%
All staff	4,388	3,891	-11.3%

Source: StatsWales

Reducing false alarms – what a good approach looks like

19   Our reviews have focused on evaluating the impact of each FRA's policy choices and how these are impacting on their resources. Ultimately, applying criteria to determine whether to respond to suspected false alarms requires FRAs to make a judgement based on risk. We therefore assessed how effectively each FRA is making risk-based decisions to optimise their approach – how they gather and use intelligence and data; how they communicate their policy choices; and importantly, how they know things are working as they should, and working as well as they could.

A good approach to managing fire false alarms will:

- be based on a good understanding of the locations, causes and impacts of false alarms;

- set out in a clear and appropriate plan or strategy which shows how the FRA will improve its performance on false alarms;

- be shaped by risk and suitable evidence;

- be regularly evaluated and performance monitored; and

- will be helping to reduce the volume of false alarms responded to.

Source: Audit Wales

152

No Authority has a comprehensive approach to quantify the impact of responding to false alarms

20   As with any response made by FRAs to any incident, there are financial, operational, environmental, and safety impacts when responding to false alarms. We found that no FRA has a comprehensive approach to quantifying the impact of responding to false alarms at this time.

21   This is important because, taken together, the impacts of responding to false alarms are significant and they highlight the importance of having an effective approach to reducing their prevalence. Any improvement in performance in this context can help FRAs to better manage their resource pressures and increase capacity to undertake additional training and other priority tasks.

22   We found that all three FRAs present some information to key committees regarding false alarms. However, information is not always reported in a format aligned to false alarm reduction policies that would enable a conclusion on effectiveness to be drawn. Our review of the minutes of full Authority and Audit Committee meetings in all FRAs over the last two years found little evidence of Members actively seeking to challenge performance on false alarms to help support financial and operational improvement. Without comprehensively demonstrating their impact on resources and the overall reduction in false alarm attendance, this information is not as rounded as it should be. This limits Members' ability to scrutinise performance.

Financial impact

23   The overall financial impact of responding to false alarms is difficult to quantify. In most cases, the cost of deploying an appliance to attend a false alarm would be similar, if not identical, to that of an actual incident, as crews are deployed in the expectation of a genuine fire. The cost varies by FRA and is determined by a range of factors including geography, travel distance and whether the response is by wholetime firefighters or a retained duty system crew.

24   Knowing how much it costs to respond to false alarms is important to understand the overall impact on resources. In the context of FRAs challenging operating environment and reducing budgets, this can help drive efficiency and better inform the potentially difficult decisions facing FRA members as they navigate the next few years.

25   We found that quantifying the financial impact when wholetime firefighters respond to false alarms is difficult because the costs of activities are absorbed into their overall salaries. Our research shows that generally FRAs in other parts of the UK have calculated the cost of attendance to be in the region of £350-400 per hour[8].

26   The cost impact of responding to false alarms in rural areas is easier to quantify accurately. This is because FRAs can use the call-out fees that they pay on-call firefighters as the basis for their calculation. In reality, however, not many false alarms occur in rural areas – the majority of false alarms happen in built-up, urban areas where fire stations are mostly either wholetime or day crewed. For example, North Wales FRA estimated in 2014 that its on-call firefighters responded to just 15% of the overall number of AFAs it responded to. The remaining 85% were responded to by its wholetime crews, the cost impact of which it has struggled to quantify. Both Mid & West Wales and South Wales FRAs have calculated estimates and unit costs as a basis for their cost analysis for wholetime crews. This is giving them a greater understanding on the cost impact on their resources.

27   To counter the financial impact of responding to false alarms, some FRAs in England have prescribed charges for premises that produce multiple false alarms. For example, Cleveland FRS charge premises £345 (excluding VAT) from their fifth call.[9] Similarly, Humberside FRS charge a minimum of £365.75 from the fourth false alarm.[10] We found that FRAs in Wales have little appetite to pursue the option of charging problem premises, with many officers citing a lack of clarity around the legal basis for doing so. The National Fire Chiefs' Council has published guidance on charging and enforcement action to help reduce false alarms.[11]

8   For example, Devon and Somerset FRS' standard charge of £364.27 or Buckinghamshire FRS estimate of £305 plus VAT.

9   Cleveland FRS, Fire Alarms

10 Humberside FRS, Call out charges 2022-23

11 CFOA_Guideline_for_the_Reduction_Brochure_June__2014.pdf (nationalfirechiefs.org.uk)

Operational

28   Aside from the financial impact, responding to false alarms causes unnecessary disruption to FRAs' work. It can divert people from training, prevention work, or premises familiarisation, which are all critical tasks for a crew to maintain operational capability. Disruptions to training are particularly costly, as highlighted by the Welsh Government's most recent report[12]. The report highlights a risk of staff competencies not being maintained where crews are regularly responding to false alarms.

29   The operational impact is potentially significant for on-call firefighters, whose capacity to attend training is less compared to wholetime crews. In addition, as the RDS model relies on the goodwill of employers to release staff to attend a call during their work hours, increasing responses to false alarms risks deterring businesses from supporting their staff to take on a RDS role. This may negatively affect staff retention.

30   Conversely, our interviews highlighted a potentially perverse incentive to reducing false alarms, affecting RDS staff. Given that the money saved from reducing false alarms in rural areas is mostly in the form of reduced call-out fees for on-call firefighters, reducing attendances at an incident could be perceived negatively. For example, it reduces the remuneration for RDS staff, which can potentially exacerbate recruitment and retention challenges. Rightly, all officers we interviewed emphasised that this incentive, in itself, does not negate the need to reduce false alarms. Regardless, it highlights the importance of applying the sustainable development principle and considering the five ways of working in tackling the issue of false alarms. This does not affect South Wales FRA to the same extent as others, due to the fact that all operational staff, including RDS firefighters, are salaried.

Environmental

31   As set out in our local reports on Carbon Emissions Reduction[13] in 2021-22, there are significant environmental impacts incurred in delivering fire and rescue services. This includes the use of fuel for a response, as well as the environmental impact of firefighters travelling to their station. Given that almost half of all incidents attended by FRAs in 2021-22 were false fire alarms[14], it is an area where a significant reduction in carbon emissions could be made. At the time of our reviews, FRAs in Wales were not measuring the environmental impact of responding to false alarms and how reducing attendance could contribute to their efforts to reduce their carbon emissions.

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12 Welsh Government, Thematic review of operational training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, October 2022

13 Carbon emissions reduction, Audit Wales, 2021-22

14 Fires, Special Service Incidents and False alarms attended by Fire and Rescue Services in Wales (gov.wales)

Safety

32   False alarm reduction is crucial to reducing safety risks. The prevalence of false alarms has potentially significant impacts on the safety risks of communities, such as road risk and complacency.

33   Road safety risks are present whenever the emergency services respond to an incident. Driving at speed or under blue light conditions can generate significant risks to both crews and other road users. For example, data shows that across Great Britain, 79 people were killed or seriously injured in 2021, with an emergency vehicle on a call being a contributory factor in these collisions.[15] This risk is also present at normal road speed, due to the significant size and weight of fire appliances.

34   High volumes of false alarms can also lead to complacency among building occupants and citizens. For example, it may lead to a lack of response during a real incident, placing both the occupants and the responding crew at increased risk. False alarm reduction, therefore, helps to reduce the safety risks to both FRAs crews and to communities. We found that the safety aspects and impact of false alarms were well understood and articulated by all three FRAs.

FRAs in Wales all approach false alarms reduction differently

35   All three FRAs in Wales have different approaches to managing false alarms. Their respective policies are mostly focused on reducing the prevalence and attendance following AFAs. In summary, North Wales FRA's starting premise is to not attend non-domestic AFAs, but to go by exception. Mid & West and South Wales FRAs' default positions are to attend but seek to establish reasons on a case by case basis to de-escalate their response. Their respective policy approaches are as follows:

- Mid and West Wales FRA's starting premise when receiving a call from Alarm Monitoring Centres is to establish the level of response required through pre-determined attendance plans, which can range from one fire appliance attending at normal road speed to no appliance at all when the incident is assessed as highly likely to be a false alarm. Staff in fire control have the discretion to change the level of a pre-determined response by assessing additional information gathered during a call challenge stage.

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15 Reported road collisions, vehicles and casualties tables for Great Britain - GOV.UK (www. gov.uk)

- When South Wales FRA receives a call, control staff are encouraged to filter incidents by challenging the caller and/or seeking confirmation from the premises on the nature of the incident and whether there is a need for the fire and rescue service to attend. This can then enable either escalation, recall, or complete attendance prevention. South Wales FRA adopted a new policy for targeting UwFS reductions from high-volume premises in 2020. This created a four-stage system for monitoring, building on data recorded by attending crews. Each stage is based on the volume of alarms at each premises in a rolling 12-month period. A UwFS working group also supports interventions to help reduce the volume of alarms from repeat offenders.

- North Wales FRA's policy is to not send an emergency response to AFA actuations unless a back-up 999 call is received confirming that there is a fire. Exemptions to this policy include domestic premises and high-risk properties. The current iteration of the Authority's policy was adopted in September 2022, following a review. The review centred on an evolving risk profile due to changes in building occupancy as a result of the pandemic. For example, a reduced likelihood of someone being present in a public building who would normally be expected to make a back-up 999 call to confirm a fire. Apart from reviewing some exemptions, the current policy broadly reinforces the approach adopted in 2014.

36   The number of false alarm calls that FRAs receive from AFAs are rising but there are differences in how authorities are responding. For example, across Wales there has been a 13% increase in the number of false alarms from AFAs (both domestic and non-domestic) received by FRAs since 2008-09. The biggest increase has been in South Wales, where the FRA received 25% more false alarms from AFAs in 2021-22 compared to 2008-09.[16] In Mid & West FRA, however, the overall number of false alarms from AFAs received reduced by 2% over the same period. **Exhibit 6** shows the number of false AFAs received by FRAs, using 2008-09 as a baseline.

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16 Calls handled by fire control watch FTE by call type and financial year (gov.wales)

Exhibit 6: The number of false AFA calls received by FRAs

Total number of false automatic alarm (AFA) calls received	2008-09	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
All Wales	12,395	13,130	13,598	12,897	13,955
North Wales	3,286	3,057	3,271	2,984	3,501
Mid & West Wales	3,564	3,728	3,677	3,641	3,506
South Wales	5,545	6,345	6,650	6,272	6,948

Source: Calls handled by fire control watch FTE by call type and financial year (gov.wales)

37   North Wales FRA's different approach has seen it reducing attendance at false alarms by a significantly bigger margin than the other two Welsh FRAs. The impact of its approach is best illustrated by analysing the data on AFA false alarms and attendance, published by Welsh Government. **Exhibit 7** shows the number of AFAs false alarms that each FRA has attended as a proportion of the overall number of AFA false alarms it received.

Exhibit 7: AFAs attendance in non-domestic properties as a proportion of the number of false AFAs received, by FRA since 2008-09
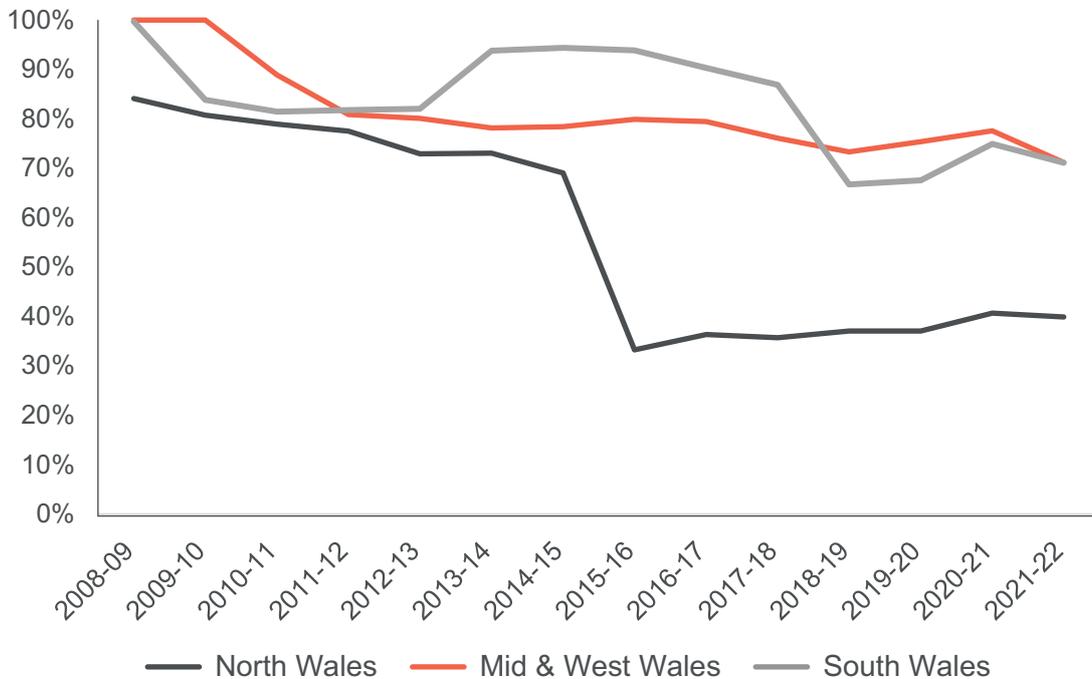
Source: Audit Wales analysis of Calls handled by fire control watch FTE by call type and financial year (gov.wales)

38   It is clear from **Exhibit 7** that the approaches adopted by all three FRAs are making a difference and are all reducing attendance at AFAs. However, the different policy approaches are having different levels of impact – for example, the marked reduction by North Wales between 2014-15 and 2015-16 is in response to its revised AFA policy. South Wales also experienced a smaller reduction in 2017-18.

39   This highlights that reviewing and adopting a managed approach to attendance at non-domestic properties can improve efficiency and effectiveness without compromising risk. However, the different approaches raise a number of key questions. For example, if North Wales FRA can take a risk-based approach to reduce their attendances so dramatically, why have South Wales and Mid & West Wales FRAs not followed suit? And, if reducing attendance at non-domestic AFAs is deemed too risky for communities in South, Mid & West Wales, what is driving North Wales FRA to manage this potentially increased level of risk for communities in their area?

40   Ultimately, it is for each FRA to determine its risk appetite and balance this with the need to be prudent in their use of resources. But given the success of North Wales FRA in reducing the amount of non-domestic AFAs it attends when demand is rising, there are opportunities for the other services to learn from this approach.

41   Health boards facilities continue to place the biggest demand on FRAs in terms of AFA false alarms. This is because all three FRAs are taking a risk-based approach to inform their pre-determined attendance at these sites and continue to focus on collaborating with health board colleagues to encourage a reduction in actuations, rather than adopting a policy of not responding, or pursuing enforcement action.

42   One of the benefits of continuing to attend AFA false alarms in non-domestic properties cited by Mid & West Wales and South Wales FRAs, is the opportunity to gather intelligence on properties to improve their fire safety prevention work. For example, a pattern of AFA actuations may indicate a poorly managed building, which can present a higher fire safety risk. While this insight is potentially useful in itself, it is questionable if it requires a firefighting crew and fire engine to respond in an emergency and there are other less resource intensive ways of gathering this data. For instance, utilising fire safety and business education teams, who regularly audit fire safety arrangements in non-domestic settings.

43   In North Wales, our reviews found that the FRA's policy of not responding (in the main) to non-domestic AFAs inadvertently increased the emphasis on how fire safety and business education teams develop and deliver their work programs. We made recommendations aimed at improving the way in which the FRA uses data on AFA actuations not attended, to provide a more integrated response and ensure it keeps abreast of risks.
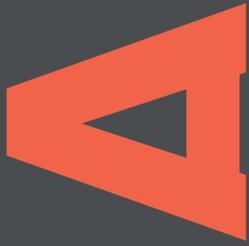
Looking to the future
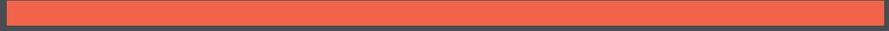
03

The bigger picture and changes on the horizon

44   Since its National Framework was published in 2015, the Welsh Government has set out a broader policy direction for FRAs. This involves expanding the role of firefighters to support the health and social care system, such as responding to non-injured falls. This was approved by the Cabinet in 2020. Reducing false alarms can help to generate the additional capacity needed to realise this ambition, but this requires effective collaboration across FRAs, Welsh Government and wider public bodies within the health and social care sectors.

45   In 2021, the Welsh Government published its assessment of whether the role of firefighters could be expanded without causing detriment to the core fire and rescue service. Even without delivering a broader role, the review concluded that a 'fundamental review of station work routines is required to ensure that activity is appropriately scheduled to maximise output'. Analysis found that there was no unallocated capacity during the day shift of wholetime crews, which would coincide with peak hours of demand for the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust (WAST) between 7AM and midday.[17]

46   A lack of adequate training time was also identified by the Welsh Government and led to a second thematic review focused on operational training[18]. It concluded that there was insufficient training time available, particularly to firefighters under the Retained Duty System (RDS). The report recommended that FRAs 'undertake an unconstrained analysis of the amount of time required for firefighters to train'.

47   Given the broad impact across the service, a reduction in false alarms responses can help increase capacity, which is needed to help grow role of the fire fighter. This is alongside other requirements, such as leadership from senior officers and members, effective collaboration, robust data analysis, and effective scrutiny.

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17 Welsh Government, Broadening of the role of firefighters in Wales, November 2021

18 Welsh Government, Thematic review of operational training within the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, October 2022
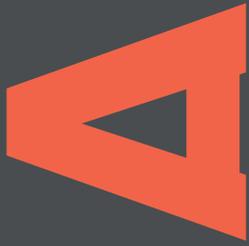
Examples from elsewhere
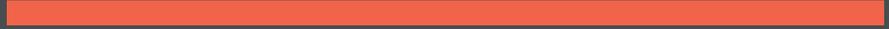
04

What others are doing

48   FRAs across the UK have devised different solutions to address the volume of false alarms. They are a significant burden on the local stations and limit the time that can be spent on other issues. Home Office research[19] found that 63,000 hours were wasted in England during 2017-18 due to responding to false alarms.

49   As a result, English fire and rescue services have developed a range of approaches to help reduce the number of false alarms attended, which vary in their usage (**Exhibit 8**).

Exhibit 8: example approaches taken by English FRAs in 2018

Approach	Description	Proportion of English FRAs adopting the approach in 2018
Call challenging	Where fire control staff ask questions to those making a call to confirm if a fire is real to prevent a first response.	93%
Education and information initiatives	Information or materials are given to building occupants on the need to reduce false alarms.	93%
No confirmation needed	A normal response is sent without confirmation.	76%
Adapted responses	An immediate response is made but reduced from the Pre-Determined Attendance (PDA), e.g., one appliance is sent to investigate rather than three.	74%
Requiring confirmation (or 'double knock')	A response is only sent if a call to confirm a fire is received, or if multiple alarms are triggered.	60%
Enforcement action	A legal enforcement action is taken against premises that often trigger false alarms, such as a fire safety audit or fine.	33%
Fines	A monetary charge is made for premises with repeat false alarms.	24%
Non-attendance	After a warning, no response is made to premises that repeatedly trigger false alarms.	13%

Source: Home Office research

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19 Home Office, Trends in fire false alarms and fire false alarm policies, November 2022

50   The National Fire Chiefs Council has published a toolbox[20] to support
      FRAs with their management of false alarms and the potential options to
      be considered. These include:

   • no response being made to AFAs during daytime hours unless there
      is a higher level of risk (e.g. sleeping risk or high-risk premises like a
      hospital).

   • charging the occupants of a building that repeatedly cause UwFS.

   • requiring premises to register their AFAs to enable enhanced monitoring
      to help call handlers make better informed decisions.

   • establishing thresholds for an adapted response based on the number
      of detector heads in a building (e.g. a building with 500 heads would get
      a full response with ten UwFS whilst a building with 100 heads would
      not).

   • prioritising work on educating and informing people of their
      responsibilities and having dedicated officers to help facilitate change in
      buildings/organisations with high numbers of false alarms.

   • engagement with ARCs to improve call handling and encouraging
      bodies to undertake visual checks to confirm there is a fire.

51   Both the toolbox and research demonstrate the breadth of approaches
      available to FRAs, reflecting their local circumstances and risk appetite.

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20 National Fire Chiefs Council, Unwanted fires signals toolbox

Appendix 1 - Audit approach and methodology

Approach

Our approach was to understand each FRA's approach to false alarm reduction, focusing in particular on non-domestic settings. The review sought to answer the question 'Is the Authority doing all it can to reduce the prevalence and responses to non-domestic fire false alarms?'. Our focus was on the actions of the FRAs, not the actions available to building managers or responsible persons.

We completed our fieldwork across all three FRAs separately, using the same audit team across all three bodies. This enabled insights to be drawn into each FRA, as well as informing this national output.

We sought to be flexible to fit around officers when organising and delivering our fieldwork, ensuring that our work did not detract from the operational work of the FRAs.

Methodology

Our reviews were completed between November 2022 and March 2023. We used a range of methods to draw conclusions for our reviews:

- document review – we reviewed policies and documentation provided by each FRA, as well as reviewing their published information, such as their website. In addition, we also reviewed documentation from the Welsh Government, NHS Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP), and representative groups.

- data analysis – we analysed both data provided by the FRAs and publicly available data. This included management data, Incident Recording System (IRS) data, and other available data from StatsWales.

- local interviews – we interviewed officers nominated by the FRAs that covered a range of different areas, both corporately and locally. This included the lead officer for false alarms, Business Fire Safety (BFS) officers, senior officers and Authority Members.

- national interviews – we interviewed representatives of local health boards, the NWSSP, and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

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telephone calls in Welsh and English.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a
galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR
FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY 2023/24

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
17 July 2023	Use of Delegated Powers	To seek endorsement for the use of officer delegations for the award of contracts following tender exercises.	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	Completed
17 July 2023	Manchester Arena Public Inquiry Vol 2 – Emergency Response Report	To provide Members with an update	I	CFO Contact Officer: Huw Jakeway	Completed
17 July 2023	Report on Proposed Priority Actions 2024/25	To advise Members 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	Completed
17 July 2023	Strategic Risk	To advise Members of the Strategic Risks of the organisation and how these are being treated, managed or reduced.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	Completed
17 July 2023	End of year Health Check on Performance and Strategic Objectives 2022/23	To advise Members of end of year performance against agreed targets and to advise Members of the end of year health check position in securing the achievement of the Strategic Objectives.	I	ACO CS & ACFO SD Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	Completed

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
17 July 2023	Welsh Language Standards	To update Members on compliance against the Welsh Language Standards.	I	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	Completed
17 July 2023	Audit Wales – Fire False Alarms	To update Members on the findings and recommendations of Audit Wales in respect of their analysis of Fire False Alarms.	D	T/DCFO Contact Officer: Chris Hadfield	Completed
25 Sept 2023	Update on MTFS and Reserves Strategy	To update Members on the Financial Strategy and Reserves Strategy of the Authority prior to considering the report on the 2024/25 Budget Setting Strategy.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Chris Barton	Completed
25 Sept 2023	Budget Strategy 2024/25	To obtain clarification upon the political steer for the Budget Strategy for 2024/25 budget setting process.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Chris Barton	Completed
25 Sept 2023	Treasury Management Outturn 2022/23	To advise Members of the year end treasury management position.	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Chris Barton & Geraint Thomas	Completed
25 Sept 2023	Health & Safety Annual Report 2022/23	To advise Members of Health & Safety performance of the organisation.	I	T/ACFO TS Contact Officer: Garry Davies	Completed

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
25 Sept 2023	Carbon Reduction/Biodiversity Plans Update	To advise Members on the progress towards the actions set out in the Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Plans	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	Completed
25 Sept 2023	Certificate of Compliance for the Audit of SWFRA's Improvement Plan 2023/24	To receive Audit Wales' certificate of audit of the Authority's 2023/24 Improvement Plan.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	Completed
18 Dec 2023	Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25	To seek approval for the proposed draft revenue and capital budgets.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	On agenda
18 Dec 2023	Treasury Management Mid Term Report 2023/24	To advise Members of the mid-year position in relation to our treasury management.	I	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	On agenda
18 Dec 2023	Half Yearly Health Check of Performance and Review of Strategic Themes	To advise Members of performance against agreed performance indicator targets and achievement of strategic themes at the mid-way point of the year.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	On agenda
18 Dec 2023	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Draft Annual 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	On agenda

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
15 Jan 2024	Independent Culture Review Report and Recommendations	To consider the outcomes of the Culture Review report and associated recommendations	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	
12 Feb 2024	Revenue & Capital Budget determination for 2024/25	To consider consultation responses and to set the recommended budget determination for consideration by the Fire Authority.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Chris Barton	
12 Feb 2024	Strategic Performance Indicators Target Setting 2024/25	To set the targets for the following financial year.	D	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
12 Feb 2024	Report on responses to the consultation on the Strategic Themes and Objectives for 2024/25	Members to approve the proposed strategic themes and objectives for 2024/25	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
12 Feb 2024	Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary	To advise Members of the key issues emanating from the annual report and to provide an opinion on adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation and its potential to improve, its approach to risk management, control and governance processes based on the Audit Wales work undertaken during the year, including data quality & PIs, HR work, a Framework update, whistleblowing and forward planning.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	
18 March 2024	Pay Policy Statement 2022/23	To consider the Authority's Pay Policy Statement in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
18 March 2024	Gender Pay Gap Statement	To update Members on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
18 March 2024	Strategic Equality Plan	To provide Members with the current Strategic Equality Plan.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Andrew Jones	

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
18 March 2024	Treasury Management Strategy Report	To secure Members' approval to the adoption of the Treasury Management Strategy for the following financial year	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
18 March 2024	Report on Strategic Plan and Priority Actions 2024/25	To seek approval to publish the Strategic Plan and Priority Actions.	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
18 March 2024	SWFRA Summary Report of Activity 2023/24	To provide a summary of the activity and outcomes during 2022/23.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
18 March 2024	Carbon Reduction Plan – Progress Report	To provide Members with an update on the progress of the Carbon Reduction Plan	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
18 March 2024	Annual Report of the Work of the PSB's and Well-being Plan Approval	To update Members on the work of each of the PSB's and how this impacts upon the work of SWFRS, and to seek Well-being Plan approval.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
18 March 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	

Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
18 March 2024	Member Attendance	To review Member attendance 2023/24.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins	
18 March 2024	Fire Authority & Committee Meeting Dates for 2024/25	To present Members with proposed dates of Authority & Committee meetings for the next municipal year.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Geraint Thomas	

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AGENDA ITEM NO 8

**To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent
(Part 1 or 2)**

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1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

   Members of the Fire & Rescue Authority 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 Local Government Act 2000, the Fire & Rescue Authority's Standing Orders and the Members Code of Conduct.

3. Chairperson's Announcements

4. To receive the minutes of:

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