

COMMISSIONERS FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Papers for the Board of Commissioners Committee to be held on:

Friday 6 June 2025, 1430hrs

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

Or

Remotely via MS Teams

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

Meeting Link: <https://bit.ly/Board-of-Commissioners-06-06-25>

**Any issues please contact
01443 232000 and ask for Governance Support**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Chairperson's Announcements
4. Matters to be raised from Commissioner Sub Committees
5. To receive the minutes of;
 - a. Board of Commissioners of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Committee Meeting held on Friday 28 March 2025

b.	People Committee Meeting held on Friday 07 February 2025	15
c.	Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee held on Friday 21 February 2025	19
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Signature of Monitoring Officer:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Jones', with a stylized, cursive script.

MEMBERSHIP

Commissioners:

C	Foulkes
V	Randeniya
Baroness	Wilcox
K	Williams

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COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 28 MARCH 2025 AT 10:30 IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Vij Randeniya, Chair
Kirsty Williams
Baroness Wilcox of Newport
Carl Foulkes

OFFICERS PRESENT: Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, ACFO Brian Thompson - Director of Technical Services, T/ACFO Christian Hadfield – Director of Corporate Services, Lisa Mullan – Head of Finance, Procurement and Property, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, T/AM Matt Jones – Head of Operations, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, Jemma Wells – People Services Business Partner, Christian Landeg-John – Advisor to Commissioners

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were recorded for ACFO Dean Loader, Director of Service Delivery and Kate Havard, Audit Wales.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the following:

Women in the Fire Service – South Wales Fire and Rescue Service will be hosting the Women in the Fire Service Cymru in October 2025.

Whole time Recruits Course: Recruits started their course on 13 January and will celebrate their pass out on 16 April.

Taking Care of Behaviours: This will launch in April 2025. Training sessions will focus on upskilling employees on a range of behaviours

whilst providing guidance to everyone on how they can be an upstander and not a bystander for all sorts of behaviour that causes harm, inequality and prejudice.

National Fire Cadet Games: South Wales Fire and Rescue will be hosting the Games between 25-27 July 2025 which will be held at Cardiff Metropolitan University and will involve Fire Cadets representing nearly all areas of the UK taking part in a series of events and challenges.

The Chair congratulated Interim Monitoring Officer Gabrielle Greathead on her upcoming maternity leave and thanked her for her contribution to the Committee meetings.

4. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF:

a. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2025

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

b. LOCAL PENSION BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

c. PEOPLE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes as a true record of discussion and no matters arising.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The action log has been updated to remove closed actions.

6. REPORTS FOR DECISION

6.1 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

Alison Reed, Director of People Services presented the pay policy statement that provides a forward look and sets out a clear pay policy statement on all forms related to pay. This report was discussed at the People Committee on 27 March 2025 to which the Committee had no

concerns and was content with the report. The Pay Policy Statement has been updated and Alison Reed has pre-empted the discussion around market supplements. It was noted on paragraph 14 that reference to introduction of market supplements for retention and recruitment has been inserted. Alison Reed flagged that the pay rates were reflected of the last national agreed pay uplift, and when this is agreed nationally, the document will be updated to reflect the update. Vij Randeniya commented that there will be a delay, as there is a requirement to report by March and pay discussions are ongoing. Carl Foulkes queried the scrutiny around temporary acting up and honorarium payments and if this will be developed in the future. The Morris Report recommended that a regular review is conducted and Alison Reed stated that she is in the process of doing this. We are seeing more permanent roles filled which will reduce the number of temporary positions. The Service doesn't currently have a temporary promotion procedure but there is a first draft which will go through scrutiny with the Representative Bodies. Once the policy is live then there will be more transparency. The Chief Fire Officer stated that there are workshops underway on promotional processes which provide an opportunity for everyone in the Service to contribute to this.

RESOLVED THAT

6.1.1 The Commissioners reviewed and approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/2026

6.2 2024 GENDER PAY GAP

Jemma Wells, People Services Business Partner presented the 2024 Gender Pay Gap. The data within the report is up to 31st March 2024. There have been several reasons for the continuous decrease such as increasing number of women joining the Service, initiatives such as Work Out With The Watch, blind sifting on application, new learning pathways, increased awareness on menstruation and menopause and enhanced maternity benefits. The Service is continuing its initiatives including the introduction of agile working. The Chief Fire Officer welcomes the points in paragraph 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 and wants everyone on board.

Lady Wilcox noted that there is important data within the report and stated that as long as we are continuing to move forward, we are in a better position than where we began. Carl Foulkes and Kirsty Williams supported the Chief Fire Officers points and asked how progressive we want to be as a Service and the importance of explaining how these initiatives are making us a better Service and taking progressive steps to deliver a better service to the public.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.2.1 The Commissioners approved the 2024 Gender Pay Gap report and Appendix 1 to be published.

6.3 INTRODUCTION OF MARKET SUPPLEMENTS FOR CORPORATE ROLES TO SUPPORT RETENTION OF EMPLOYEES

Alison Reed, Director of People Services presented the report which was discussed at length at the People Committee on the 27 March 2025. The content of the report sets the proposal in retention of employees and the approach. Alison Reed highlighted an important point in that this is not the case of paying people to not leave, more so when someone has another offer, and a conversation will be had to determine whether the job role is graded properly. This would also apply to everyone if there were more than one position and thus will need tight governance.

Kirsty Williams agreed that it is right to look at retention and it is important to recognise that these have to be seen in the context of the wider job market and our availability to recruit into critical roles that are challenging to recruit in. The Commissioners were happy to approve.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.3.1 The Commissioners noted and agreed the report to implement the provision of market supplements with immediate effect to address business critical retention needs.
- 6.3.2 The Commissioners noted that the Service's Pay Policy Statement has been updated to include the provision of market supplements for corporate staff.

6.4 STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2025/2040

Wayne Thomas, Head of Corporate Support presented the strategic improvement plan which highlights the Service's long term plans and outlines the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act. The plan captures the recommendations from the Morris Report and the consultation has been incorporated into the plan. There have been key developments on the plan since the Annual Improvement Plan was brought to the Commissioners in October and following feedback it has been made more concise, accessible and clear on what we needed to do. The Service progressed on an easy read version and a Welsh version is being developed. Vij Randeniya queried whether it is amendable due to

the HMICFRS report being released in May. Wayne Thomas advised this could be easily incorporated. Dominic Mika thanked the team for producing the plan and acknowledging that they were up against strict deadlines. The Chief Fire Officer noted there was a timeline to meet as they were doing this in parallel with the strategy and the plan is fitted into the bigger strategy.

Lady Wilcox emphasised the importance of being able to amend the document to include HMI and was pleased with the clarity of the report. Carl Foulkes commented that cutting the plan down to focus on areas is good and it will keep evolving over time.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.4.1 The Commissioners approved the publication of the Strategic Improvement Plan 2025-2040.

6.5 PROVISIONAL STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATOR PROJECTIONS 2025/2026

Matt Jones, Head of Operations presented the report and noted a few highlights. One is that we are not extracting casualties from vehicles as much due to the modern car structure. We have included a metric of the percentage of dwelling fires, this is the first year we have included this key performance indicator that will form a metric for us to record. We are seeing higher road traffic collisions but less severity. There has been a decrease in special service calls; a Duty Group Manager has been embedded to support Control with challenging calls which is seeing a benefit in flooding and wildfire calls. Kirsty Williams was pleased to see that we have added room of origin, and this is a positive addition to the report. In terms of Automatic Fire Alarms, Kirsty Williams wants this to be a live document to allow for this to be updated to see the predictions of the AFA's as we are still in the phases. It was highlighted we will see a reduction in the future.

Kirsty Williams shared that she received positive feedback from Welsh Government around the support offered to new recruits and their first time experiencing a fatal fire. Welsh Government was impressed by the level of support that was given to the recruits and their families. Carl Foulkes queried whether the data is giving us the KPI's we need over the next 3 years, and able to demonstrate the impact we are having and our response to these incidents. Vij Randeniya noted there are some controlled burns that we still support however, Matt Jones said that we can do a deeper dive into how we capture this data and will pick this up with Wayne Thomas.

Christian Hadfield made some observations on how we present our data to the public, and by looking at a software we are able to demonstrate percentages to give clearer look to the public. Secondly, it was brought up that we have 7 key indicators that we are measuring, however water rescue is not a main indicator and requested to include this as the Service invests heavily into this. Kirsty Williams would like to record that this is for the Commissioners to pursue with Welsh Government to include Water Rescue into the key indicators and Christian Hadfield will provide a briefing note for the Commissioners but will add Water Rescue and Flooding on their internal reporting. Brian Thompson assured the Commissioners that they do have this detail at the Service Delivery meetings.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.5.1 The Commissioners noted the provisional Performance Indicator Targets for 2025/26.
- 6.5.2 The Commissioners approved delegation to the Assistant Chief Fire Officer to review Q4 2024/25 data and planned reduction strategies and refine projections as necessary.
- 6.5.3 The Commissioners approved publication of projections onto the SWFRS internet site.

6.6 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025/2026

Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented the report. Lady Wilcox assured the Board that that the Treasury Management Strategy was vigorously evaluated at the Finance and Audit Committee on 7 March 2025. Lisa Mullan explained that the report provides the framework the officers will operate from during the year and a framework that the Commissioners can assess. The second main function is that we ensure we can borrow within affordable limits to fund the capital programme, which is a key issue for Commissioners to note. Lisa Mullan expressed it was important to note that we are under borrowed and we could be looking at an ask from Welsh Government to provide capital funding. Lady Wilcox stated that this is an opportunity to ask for a capital fund due to future changes following from the CRMP. Vij Randeniya suggested that Lisa Mullan draft a plan that we can provide to Welsh Government and a report to be presented to the Commissioners setting out suitable options.

There was a discussion on capital funding and the allocation. Carl Foulkes queried funding around the transformation programme. The Chief Fire Officer explained the aim of the recent SLT Away Day was to

obtain timelines and costings for the activities that we are doing, albeit a further conversation needs to be had on how we use the money. Lisa Mullan will come back with a reserve policy in September. She would like to see a plan so we have numbers for an overall strategic piece that involved permanent, temporary, revenue and capital.

RESVOLED THAT

6.6.1 The Commissioners noted and approved the following:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)
- Capital / Prudential indicators
- Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy
- Borrowing strategy
- Treasury indicators and limits
- Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)
- The Treasurer to update strategies / policies as necessary

6.7 CARBON REDUCTION 2030 ROADMAP

Bethan Harvey, Sustainability Officer presented the Carbon Reduction Roadmap which sets out the vision ahead and progress in phase 2 up to 2027 and the tasks to embed this into the Service. Bethan Harvey looks to publish the plan and implement the tasks. This will be monitored by the sustainability working group and will ensure our asset categories are covered. Lady Wilcox commented that this is a good piece of work and thanked Bethan for compiling this data. Bethan Harvey stated that if we need to cover more tasks then she is open to recruiting to the working group and adding new areas.

A discussion on costing and grants was had and Lisa Mullan reported that as it is one individual working under Sustainability the budget is subsumed into the Property budget. We have been successful over the last 2 years with funding, and we will be looking at funding for solar panel and low carbon heat grant. If we are looking at strategic sustainability plans for investment pieces, then a grant would be beneficial for us to target. The Chief Fire Officer expressed that we need to do as much as we can to help climate change and wanted to expressively state that if Bethan encounters problems to inform him. Vij Randeniya asked if we can calculate the CO2 impact to the atmosphere from a wildfire; Christian Hadfield picked this up under the socioeconomic impact the Service has and will look to address this in the CRMP.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.7.1 The Commissioners agreed to the new Carbon Reduction Plan and supported the format.
- 6.7.2 The Commissioners noted the immediate priorities and importance of building robust systems before more reaching work can be achieved.

6.8 SWFRS COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Christian Hadfield, Assistant Chief Fire Officer presented a paper to implement a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The Service felt as an organisation we are at a good point to carry out a full CRMP. A fire cover review was completed in 2013 which was part of a wider plan of financial reductions which saw the outcome of 2 fire stations closing. Since then, the risk has significantly changed in terms of population and infrastructure. Christian Hadfield advised we will follow guidance from the NFCC as there are elements of the framework that we can use through the lifespan of the project. We will be focusing on 4 areas which are Response, Prevention, Protection and Resilience and propose to engage in a live simulations that will give clear indication where our risks lies. In terms of financial and procurement, it is proposed it will cost £45k plus VAT. Phase 1 would be the data analysis stage for approximately 14-18 weeks while the data is inputted and then he will have a substantial update in August for the model simulation package.

Kirsty Williams noted that this will be the bedrock on how we take the organisation forward and referred back to the report for further explanations on the phases and timescales of the CRMP and how we will engage with communities to feed into the process. Our first phase between now and August will allow us to make informed decisions with the data analysis then we will move to engagement with stakeholders and the public. Christian Hadfield has been working with Vale of Glamorgan Public Service Board to look at how we engage wider. Kirsty Williams commented that following the mechanisms we used to engage with the Strategic Plan we know we won't receive much response and consider adapting our communication methods. The Head of Communications and Engagement has worked on a draft and as we move through the phases this will be brought to the Commissioners. The Chief Fire Officer stated that we are approaching this plan with no preconceived ideas and will be a data driven piece of work. Matt Jones added that to offer assurance that we need to be careful with the terminology used when conducting the CRMP.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.8.1 The Commissioners noted the report and agreed to implement a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and associate investment with immediate effect.

6.9 ESTABLISHMENT OF A PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Dominic Mika, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation presented to the Board the proposal to establish a Portfolio Management Office (PMO). Lady Wilcox noted that this report has been extensively discussed at the Finance and Audit Committee on 21 March 2025.

Approval has been given to recruit 3 transformation programme managers and a project manager which were initially recruited on a 12 month basis and has been extended to 24 months, with the opportunity to be made permanent. This will continue to be reviewed to adjust to business needs.

RESOVLED THAT

- 6.9.1 The Commissioners approved the implementation of a permanent Portfolio Management Office (PMO)
- 6.9.2 The Commissioners approved and support the required recruitment of personnel to resource the PMO.

7. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

7.1 CORE CODE OF ETHICS UPDATE

Dominic Mika, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation provided an update on the Core Code of Ethics and listed the engagement that has been undertaken. The Chief Fire Officer has met with over 150 people and a common theme from these visits is that people would now like to see the Core Code of Ethics and the Vision, Mission and Values embedded which will allow us to move forward with the Service's strategy. The Board agreed in moving forward.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.1.1 The Commissioners noted the update.

7.2 COMMITTEE DATES 2025/2026

The committee dates for 2025/2026 has been prepared and provides a forward look of the calendar which will be available for the public. The Chief Fire Officer stressed that lateness of reports are causing issues as it does not allow time for people to make any further comments. An executive decision was made that if reports are not submitted by the deadline then these will get pulled from the agenda, notwithstanding statutory reporting deadlines. Wayne Thomas added that the Service has always met our external public deadlines.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.2.1 The Commissioners noted the committee calendar for publication.

7.3 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2025/2026

The Forward Work Programme for the municipal year from May 2025 to March 2026 has been created.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.9.1 The Commissioners noted the Forward Work Programme.

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

There were no items that the Chairperson deemed urgent.

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 1000 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairperson - Mr V Randeniya

PRESENT:

Assistant Chief Officer A Reed – Director of People Services, Assistant Chief Fire Officer D Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Assistant Chief Fire Officer C Hadfield – Director of Corporate Support, D Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, G Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, L Shroll – Head of People Services, W Thomas – Head of Corporate Support, J Wells – People Services Manager, H Goodchild – People Services Manager, M Collins – Business Partner of Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity, N Howell – Business Partner of Wellbeing and Welfare

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Chief Fire Officer F Monahan, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Brian Thompson – Director of Technical Services

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIRPERSONS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Pioneer Programme launched on 20 January 2025 which is aimed current or aspirational strategic leaders which provides learning, reflection and development of key areas and themes for effective leadership. The programme will run over the next 6 months. There are 9 individuals from South Wales Fire and Rescue Service on the All-Wales programme.

The Fire Cadet Branch Manager and Instructor pay award increase of 2.5% agreed in December will be paid in February salaries.

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Service reward and recognition awards ceremony was held on 20 November 2024.

There are a number of recruit course pass out parades upcoming. Last year, there were 6 courses held and there are 6 courses scheduled for 2025.

4. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF PEOPLE COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the Committee.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There were no outstanding actions.

6. GENDER PAY GAP (GPG) 2024

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 (the public sector Regulations), all public authorities are required to publish Gender Pay Gap (GPG) information by reporting the percentage differences in pay between their male and female employees.

In Wales, public bodies, including Fire and Rescue Services, must comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

These regulations set broader equality duties, which include a focus on gender pay gap reporting as part of advancing equality and fostering good relations.

The deadline for publication is 31 March 2025.

The report presented by People Services Manager Jemma Wells also referenced specific aspects of the Morris report into the culture of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and how this is likely to impact the GPG in future years.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.1 The Commissioner approved the 2024 Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report at Appendix 1 to be published by 31 March 2025.

7. REPORT ON SICKNESS ABSENCE AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW

The report presented by Business Partner Natalie Howell provided information on the Service's sickness absence statistics for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Where appropriate, it also stated relevant comparisons against previous year's performance.

RESOLVED THAT

- 7.1 The Commissioner noted the content of the report. Discussion was held around the future work and challenges set out in the

report. A further report being presented to the March People Committee drawing on wider research to inform the Wellbeing Strategy was agreed.

8. FORMALISATION OF A TALENT MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The report presented by Head of People Services Lisa Shroll provided an overview of a Talent Management Programme. This is critical to ensure that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) attracts, develops and retains skilled personnel to deliver its core mission: protecting lives, property and the environment. A strategy is being developed as part of the Service Change and Transformation 'Step Forward – Talent Management' project. The Executive Sponsor is ACO People Services – Alison Reed and the Project Executive is Head of People Services – Lisa Shroll.

The purpose of the project is to develop a strategic approach to managing talent, ensuring that the workforce stays aligned with our vision, mission and objectives via healthy culture and employee engagement, building a resilient, diverse and high-performing workforce capable of meeting current and future challenges.

Talent management means implementing processes to attract, identify, develop, engage and retain valuable talented individuals. To be effective, these processes need to align with the Service's strategic objectives.

The report highlighted some of the Service gaps relative to these areas, some for information and awareness, and some recommend 'initiatives' to facilitate diversity, strategic succession planning, talent management, and structured employee development to further progress SWFRS in achieving its ambition to become a leading Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, recognised as an employer of choice, fostering high performing workplaces.

RESOLVED THAT

- 8.1 The Commissioner noted the content of the report for information and awareness purposes. It was acknowledged that whilst some initiatives are in their infancy, there will be a requirement for further consideration and wider consultation. The Commissioner agreed to the content within the report.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

9. RECRUITMENT AND PROMOTION OVERVIEW 2024-2025

The report presented by People Services Manager Hannah Goodchild provided an overview of the Service's Operational recruitment campaigns for 2024, the Operational recruitment plans for 2025 (including Promotions) and the Current Corporate and pipeline campaigns.

RESOLVED THAT

- 9.1 The Commissioner noted the content of the report and took assurance that continuous improvement is being undertaken to ensure fair and transparent recruitment and promotion processes. Efficiency opportunities are being maximized, whilst prioritising actions to ensure the Service recruits the right people and supports their long-term career progression.

10. DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, COHESION AND EQUITY OVERVIEW

The report presented by Business Partner Matthew Collins provided an overview of all Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity (DICE) advancements that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service have made. Specific reference was made within the report to the Inclusive Action Plan and the Morris Review recommendations following mapping of such in June 2024.

RESOLVED THAT

- 10.1 The Commissioner noted the content of the report.

11. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR PEOPLE COMMITTEE 2024/2025

The Commissioner requested that the Gender Pay Gap (GPG) be presented to the Board of Commissioners in March 2025.

The Commissioner would like to see 'Reflections of the Meeting' added to the agenda going forward.

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

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

**HELD ON FRIDAY 21 FEBRUARY AT 10:00
IN MEETING ROOM 8 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Carl Foulkes, Chair

Kirsty Williams

OFFICERS PRESENT: ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, ACFO Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, ACFO Brian Thompson- Director of Technical Services, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, T/AM Mike Wyatt – Head of Risk Reduction, T/AM Matt Jones – Head of Operations, AM Neil Davies – Head of Training, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, GM Mike Evans

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan and Lisa Mullan, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairpersons announcements.

4. REPORTS FOR DECISION

4.1 PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

Gabrielle Greathead, Interim Monitoring Officer presented the Terms of Reference. Kirsty Williams queried paragraph 1.2.1 around the implementation of the Culture Review timescales due to the author of the Morris Report, Fenella Morris KC stating that upon reflection the timescales were not realistic and were not evidence based. Kirsty Williams addressed paragraph 1.2.2 surrounding the Thematic Review timescales due to the most recent statement from the Cabinet Secretary, who stated that culture and governance is the primary focus. There was

reference around Broadening the Role and the challenges this area faced. Kirsty Williams asked if we could leave the Terms of Reference to ensure that the Commissioners deliver their terms of reference.

Gabrielle Greathead is comfortable to amend the terms of reference more broadly. Brian Thompson added we may deviate from the full implementation of the Thematic Review in some areas and don't want to hold ourselves to the terminology stated in the Term of Reference.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.1.1 The Commissioners approved the Terms of Reference with the amendments to paragraph 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 and for this to be brought back to the Commissioners outside of the Board.

4.2 VISION, MISSION AND VALUES REVIEW

Dominic Mika presented the report requesting approval of the revised Vision, Mission and Values. The Commissioners had reasserted the Core Code of Ethics which underpins the Service's review. Staff engagement had further informed the review which would form the basis of the new strategy.

Alison Reed sought confirmation that appendix 1 showed an adequate level of engagement with staff and the overall direction. Concerns remained that the message was not reaching station personnel, Training and Development and areas within HQ. It was further noted that while we are engaging with new staff, we must re-engage with initial consultees, ensuring that the engagement was effective and proportionate. Dominic Mika advised engagement was an ongoing process and follow ups have been sent.

Carl Foulkes said that we need to ensure there are people on the initial workshops that are on the second round of engagement sessions. Wayne Thomas proposed to utilise the engagement on the strategy to sense check the Vision, Mission and Values. The Commissioners agreed that this will show evidence on how we got to this place and then it will come to a formal sign off along with the strategy.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.2.1 The Commissioners did not sign off on the recommendation as there is a need for re-engagement with the Service more broadly.

4.3 PROGRESS ON DELIVERY OF INDEPENDENT CULTURE REVIEW REPORT RECCOMENDATIONS

Dominic Mika presented the report on the Culture Review recommendations and stated that many of these need to be wider and further work will need to be done than simply the recommendation. The recommended process is that the independent recommendations are assigned to the relevant director as a part of the programme process which will be brought to the Service Improvement Board for updates and next steps. If approved, then it will come to this board for sign off and then to external scrutiny.

Kirsty Williams had no concerns about the process however not all columns were filled in for every recommendation on the report thus not giving assurance that the Service is on track, or the recommendation will be met. To aid assurance that these will be met, then the tables will need to be fully completed. The Transformation Programme Manager is looking at how to move this to the digital space and the next steps are to look at key deliverables from the projects. Alison Reed commented on the process around capturing the updates and the need to engage with the owners/leads of the action to update their progress before bringing it to the board which would then influence the progress.

Carl Foulkes commented that we are 12 months in, and we need to start demonstrating delivery and felt it was important that staff see we are moving forward. It was suggested to mirror the same reporting methods as the Thematic . It was discussed that this board would be the sign off for recommendations and then referred to the Independent Advisory Group (IAG). There is 37 currently signed off, however it was requested for ELT/SLT to complete a formal review of the 37 recommendations and provide a status where we are at and for it to come back to this board to evidence that these have been signed off.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.3.1 The Commissioners approved the process for signing off the recommendations and noted the progress.

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 THEMATIC REVIEW – OPERATIONAL TRAINING UPDATE

Neil Davies, Area Manager Training and Delivery presented an update on against the recommendations and their progress.

- Recommendation 1 is progressing, and this is expected to develop at pace when they have a dedicated individual supporting this work. Neil Davies noted that it may require a job evaluation in the future.
- Recommendation 2 is almost complete and now recommendation 3 can begin.
- Recommendation 4 will soon progress, a job advertisement has been live for a 12 month fixed term multi-media developer to progress the suite of micro-teachings.
- Recommendation 5 is currently in development.
- Recommendation 6 is being investigated.

Recommendation 5 and 6 have financial implications and will need to be referred to the Finance and Audit committee for capital investment. Clarification was sought around feeding the report to the Finance and Audit Committee. Kirsty Williams explained that this committee will note the recommendation, recognise the restraints around the financial aspect and escalate the matter to the correct board. There was a discussion around the objectives of this board to avoid duplication of report writing. Kirsty Williams proposed she leaves the Service Improvement Board as she receives assurance in this committee that the thematic are progressing. The Commissioners would like an understanding of the analysis of the findings of the review. Neil Davies will provide an informal briefing on this to the Commissioners.

RESOLVED THAT

5.1.1 The Commissioners noted the report.

5.2 THEMATIC REVIEW – GRENFELL UPDATE

Mike Wyatt, Area Manager Risk Reduction provided an update on the Grenfell recommendations and noted there has been progress since the report was written. The main point to note is that a high rise team has been created and will focus on the Welsh thematic review. A business plan has been created, and they have reviewed their position together with the action tracker and grouped the remaining actions as >3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months. The dedicated team will gain momentum once the plan is in process and finalised. Rebuilding capacity will see this area of work moving at pace. Kirsty Williams would like to record that she understands while there is a need to complete the recommendations, she appreciated that Mike Wyatt has a bigger ambition than a tick box exercise and this work is clearly meaningful. It was agreed that Mike Wyatt will arrange a meeting with the high rise team and the Commissioners to provide assurance that this is mapped out.

RESOLVED THAT

5.2.1 The Commissioners noted the report.

5.3 THEMATIC REVIEW – OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE UPDATE

Mike Evans, GM presented an update on the Operational Excellence report and key areas to note were:

- Recommendation 2 is on track, guidance is on track and publication around the guidance will be published in April. Awareness training is currently ongoing and over 80% of our operational crews have been reached and 75% of our Fire Control.
- Review and sign off in April and then this will become business as usual; this is just the starting point that we are building from.
- They are receiving the same issue on recommendation 3 of the Training thematic. The multi-media developer post has become critical to standardise the format of the training professionally.
- Carl Foulkes and Kirsty Williams can support if there is not a suitable candidate for the developer role.
- There is momentum on recommendation 2 and 3 and the focus will then shift to recommendation 4 and 5 and progress with improve over the coming weeks.

Mike Evans explained that the aim is to provide a greater degree of scrutiny under ops assurance that can provide meaningful feedback for continuous improvement. It will require wider consideration, and ideas will be presented to SLT. Kirsty Williams thanked Mike Evans for his work to get the Service to this point. Dean Loader added that he sat through some of the awareness training delivered to operational crews and out on station and noted that the feedback was well received and understood.

RESOLVED THAT

5.3.1 The Commissioners noted the report.

5.4 THEMATIC REVIEW – BROADENING THE ROLE OF FIREFIGHTERS IN WALES – UPDATE

Matt Jones, Area Manager Head of Operations provided an overview of the report and key areas to highlight are:

- Recommendation 2 remains controversial, and this is not the right time to be implementing shift patterns. There is a requirement for more solid data.
- Recommendation 1 aims to go live on 7 April 2025 and are

considering blocks of time for On-Call stations which will be looked at later in the year.

- Calendars have been narrowed down from 4 to 1 and the blocks of time will be populated. These will be scheduled a month in advance and is currently being trialed at Barry Fire Station. Engagement with Representatives Bodies has been positive.

Matt Jones has reached out to fire and rescue services in the UK to research how they manage fatigue as this is a critical area of focus. Matt Jones and Dean Loader are looking at existing measures and around ops reset and to give reassurance with evidence to the Commissioners. Kirsty Williams welcomed that we have moved wholeheartedly to the system. Matt Jones and Dean Loader have been in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer over two weeks and will require a risk assessment on 9 hour and 15 hour shifts; the Chief Fire Officer requested a paper specifically on fatigue and this will likely become a formalised document as a part of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Carl Foulkes requested an update paper to come to the Commissioners in 4 weeks. Alison Reed will be supporting this as she is in discussion with the lawyers on fatigue management.

RESOLVED THAT

5.4.1 The Commissioners noted the report.

5.5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR STRATEGIC CHANGE, TRANSFORMATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE 2024/25

There will be 4 meetings in the next financial year which will include updates on the Thematic Reviews and the Culture Review recommendations. A paper will be required on prioritisation to be clear on what we are asking people to do and help the organisation understand what is going on. This will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Kirsty Williams suggested it would be useful to look at what reports are taken to committees to ensure we are not duplicating work and asked these meetings fall in with the Board of Commissioners to ensure manageable report writing workload. It was noted for action for the committee to consider and have a conversation on how these reports are best placed. Kirsty Williams is interested in doing a deep dive on the larger projects.

RESOLVED THAT

5.5.1 The Commissioners noted the forward work programme.

5.5.2 Secretariat has scheduled time with the Monitoring Officer to meet with the Commissioners and the Executive Leadership Team to discuss the Forward Work Programme for 25/26.

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

There were no items that the Chairperson deemed urgent.

7. ANY ITEMS TO REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS COMMITTEE

There were no items to report back to the Board of Commissioners Committee.

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COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 21 MARCH 2025 IN MEETING ROOM 8, SWFRS HQ AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Chair)
Vij Randeniya

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Chief Fire Officer Fin Monahan, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Christian Hadfield – Director of Corporate, Lisa Mullan - Head of Finance, Procurement and P Wayne Thomas - Temporary Head of Corporate Support, Dominic Mika - Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Lee Bunkham – Senior Procurement Officer, Steen Gourlay – TIAA Internal Auditor, Jonathan Maddock – TIAA Internal Auditor, Christian Landeg-John - Advisor to the Commissioners, Scott Morris - Governance Support Officer, Kate Owen – Secretariat.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Assistant Chief Fire Officer Brian Thompson, Director of Technical Services and Kate Havard, Audit Wales

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements from the Chairperson.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 19 DECEMBER 2024

Matters of accuracy:

Minute 7, paragraph 6, insert the word “Rescue” after “Fire and” in the first sentence.

Minute 8, paragraph 2, substitute the word “community” for the word “committee”.

Matters arising:**Minute 7 – Budget Setting Proposal for Consultation 2025/26**

The Head of Finance, Pr [REDACTED] P [REDACTED] updated that further information on additional funding to meet increased National Insurance costs was expected in the first quarter of the next financial year.

Minute 10 – Internal Audit Update report

The Head of Finance, Pro [REDACTED] P [REDACTED] updated that good progress was being made to remedy the issues of inconsistent record keeping and premises certificate management.

The Director of Strategic Change and Transformation reported that the Communications Strategy had now been consulted on widely with staff and the intention was to bring the finalised strategy to the May meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

RESOLVED:

- 4.1 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2024 as a correct record subject to the two amendments detailed above.

5. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

The Action Log was updated as follows:-

- Action 6 Correspondence with National Resources Wales - Complete
- Action 10 Communication Strategy - To go to Board of Commissioners
- Action 11 RTC data post speed limit changes – Complete – see Minute 11

REPORTS FOR DECISION**6. REVENUE MONITORING REPORT 2024-2025**

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented a report detailing the revenue budget position. The report set out the original and revised budget at 31 December 2024, the forecast at 31 March 2025 and a variance analysis. Monitoring information reported was inclusive of grant transactions to provide a full financial picture.

She reported that the forecast exceeded the budget, which had resulted in a projected overspend of £1.145 million for the 2024/25 financial year, compared to £1.658 million reported on 21 September 2024, a reduction of £513,000. The report described the changes since the last forecast.

She drew Commissioners' attention in particular to £81k received from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services for the HMICFRS audit, the Welsh Government grant of £371k to address pay pressures, and the use of reserves in the year to date.

The Chair underlined the need for a medium-term financial plan, to be informed by reshaped delivery models, in order that reserves are not further depleted in the medium term and that the revenue budgets do not overspend. The Chief Fire Officer recognised the need for efficiencies, which the Senior Leadership Team were actively pursuing as part of the development of the 2025/26 Revenue Budget. It was anticipated that a report on the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) would be presented to the Board of Commissioners on 28 March 2025, which would crystallise opportunities for efficiencies in the 2026/27 budget.

The Committee further noted the need to engage early with the local authorities in the Service area in relation to budget planning, as their planning cycle for the 2026/27 financial year would begin in August 2025 – it may be useful to use the Welsh Treasurers Group as a conduit for these discussions. To this end, the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property was tasked with identifying networks to access to support this collaborative work.

In relation to grant monitoring, it was noted that:-

- The Service covered 50% of the costs of a Pension Advisor with the North Wales Service – Mid and West Wales having withdrawn from the shared service
- Regarding the provision of domestic smoke detectors, this was currently supply led, rather than demand led.

RESOLVED:

- 6.1 To note the report and endorse its contents.

7. CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT 2024/25

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented a report detailing the capital schemes position. The report set out the budget position and funding analysis for all approved capital investment planes, phased over more than one financial year (slippage). She reported that the total budget (2023/24 slippage and 2024/25 budget) was £19.4 million, an increase on forecast of £0.6 million since the last meeting, primarily due to the On Call Duty System (OCDS) Station project. The report set out a position statement in relation to eight property projects, together with ICT and Joint Public Service Control (JSPC) projects.

The Committee noted that the Service did not receive direct capital funding from Welsh Government, and that this was currently a statutory position. Notwithstanding, if Services were expected to transform there were opportunities to challenge the status quo and the Chief Fire Officer and the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property undertook to explore options for lobbying for reform of Welsh Government funding.

RESOLVED:

- 7.1 To note the budget and progress of capital schemes.
- 7.2 To approve the alterations and associated movements in funding set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2025/26

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented a report setting out the Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement, which provided the necessary framework within which the Senior Leadership Team managed treasury activities. The Strategy broadly covered two strands – Capital investment and Treasury Management respectively – and allowed the Service to meet its obligations under the Local Government Act 2003 and associated Codes and guidance.

The Committee discussed:

- the management of borrowing (Section 3 of the Strategy), with particular reference to Borrowing Limits and the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream
- the sovereign rating of countries approved for investment
- the bank base rate on which the report had been formulated
- the use of specialist treasury advisors to support the development of the strategy.

It was noted that the specialist advisors had provided initial training to the Commissioners at the start of their term, and that it would be useful to refresh this as part of the 2026/27 budget planning process.

RESOLVED:

- 8.1 To note the report and approve the following:
 - The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS)
 - Capital / Prudential Indicators
 - Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy
 - Borrowing Strategy
 - Treasury Indicators and limits
 - Annual Investment Strategy (AIS)

- 8.2 To authorise the Treasurer to update related strategies and policies as necessary.

9. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PORTFOLIO MANAGEMENT OFFICE (PMO)

The Director of Strategic Change and Transformation presented a report proposing the establishment of a permanent Portfolio Management Office (PMO) in order to build the necessary resource and capability to deliver on the transformation agenda.

It was proposed to create five two-year fixed term contract posts, comprising a Portfolio Manager, three Transformation Programme Managers and a Transformation Project Manager, and the report set out indicative gradings, subject to job evaluation.

The Chief Fire Officer emphasised his support for the proposal as a critical step forward in the delivery of strategic improvement programmes, and the Commissioners present confirmed their support. It was noted that at present funding for the posts, at an annual cost of c£215k, was yet to be identified.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Board of Commissioners approves the following:-

- 9.1 The implementation of a permanent Portfolio Management Office.
- 9.2 The recruitment of personnel to resource the Portfolio Management Office.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT UPDATE

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property introduced a report setting out progress made against the Internal Audit plans for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

The Senior Procurement Officer and Auditors from TIAA updated the Committee on the key findings of the three audits completed since the last meeting, namely:-

- Health and Safety Management
- Compliance Review of Station Visits
- Assurance Review of Fleet Strategy

In relation to the Health and Safety Management Audit, it was reported that Thomas Carroll Consultants had been engaged to undertake a wholesale policy review, and the findings would be reported to the Board of Commissioners in

due course. The Committee were assured that vacancies in the Health and Safety Team had been filled, ownership of actions identified in the audit had been allocated and progress would be reviewed by both the auditors and the Service's audit support function. The Committee requested that to monitor progress be brought to this Committee to assist with scrutiny.

The Chair welcomed the progress made against the Internal Audit reports in 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

- 10.1 To note the internal audit recommendations and work completed to date.

11. PERFORMANCE REPORTS – STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

ACFO Dean Loader presented a report setting out the organisation's performance against the Strategic Performance Indicators, compared to the projected outcomes for the Quarters 1-3 or 2024/25.

He reported that the overall number of fires was down, including in key categories such as schools, which was pleasing to note. Additionally, there had been a decrease in fatalities as a result of road traffic collisions (RTCs), a decrease in the number of RTCs requiring extractions and a marked decrease in the number of serious injuries resulting from RTCs. The timing of these falls meant that it could be directly attributable to the national speed limit reductions introduced by Welsh Government – this data would be collated and shared with Welsh Government.

The Committee noted a recent spike in fatal house fires and were advised that post incident debriefs were being closely analysed to identify any lessons learned.

An increase in special service calls was largely attributable to storm and flood responses. Given that water rescue was now a statutory response, the Committee felt it would be useful for such responses to be recorded in their own right rather than as special service calls, and to have a separate additional performance indicator to that end. The Chief Fire Officer noted further that there were no specific indicators relating to other special category calls which now had statutory footing, in particular marauding terror attacks, and that Welsh Government had no mechanism to measure Services' preparedness. The Committee requested that this feedback about the continuing appropriateness of existing PIs be made to Welsh Government.

The Committee welcomed the performance reported, in particular in relation to RTCs. It was noted that while data at this level was required for government monitoring purposes, the Commissioners would find it useful to have this data presented to them at a more granular level.

RESOLVED

- 11.1 To note the Service's Strategic Performance Indicator totals for Q1-3 2024/2025

12. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the Committee's Forward Work Programme and noted the inclusion of the audit action tracker (Minute 10 refers) going forward.

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

No such business was brought forward.

14. ITEMS TO REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The report considered at Minute 9 – Establishment of a Portfolio Management Office – requires the approval of the Board of Commissioners.

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AGENDA ITEM NO 6

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
02/13 6.1	New Inn Station construction work	Commissioners requested information around the New Inn construction for reassurance around the contract whether to pause the contract while recognising staff impact.	Lisa Mullan	Mike Davies from Property has provided the financial information and guidance note to the Commissioners who have reviewed this. Ongoing as of 16/05/2025
02/13 6.1	Medium-term financial plan	Medium-term financial strategy to be created.	Lisa Mullan	This will be taken to the Finance and Audit Committee September 2025 and then fed into the Board of Commissioners. Added to the Forward Work Programme. Ongoing as of 16/05/2025

02/13 6.1	Efficiency plan	Lisa Mullan to lead on efficiency programme to capture what we have so far and the plan to achieve efficiencies around transformation and report back to the Commissioners.	Lisa Mullan	On agenda for the Board of Commissioners Committee in September 2025. CLOSED 28/03/2025
02/13 6.2	Governance Framework	Dominic Mika and Wayne Thomas to consider a formal review process and timelines of the governance framework.	Dominic Mika and Wayne Thomas	This is included in the framework and refers to continually evaluating the framework and conduct a yearly review. CLOSED 28/03/2025
03/28 6.5	Strategic Performance Indicators	Matt Jones to discuss with Dean Loader and Wayne Thomas on how we can surface the information that is discussed on Service Delivery level to the Commissioners	AM Matt Jones	AM Matt Jones is working with Wayne Thomas to ensure they align with the new strategy and findings from the HMI report to ensure things are captured i.e. response/mobile response. Ongoing as of 23/05/2025
03/28 6.5	Water Rescue and Flooding Key Indicator	Chris Hadfield to prepare a briefing note for the Commissioners to propose to Welsh Government to include Water Rescue and Flooding as a key strategic indicator on the reporting.	ACFO Christian Hadfield Commissioners	Christian Hadfield sent the briefing note to Kirsty Williams who met with Steve Pomeroy from the Welsh Government Fire Branch. A follow up letter was sent from Christian Landeg-John. COMPLETED.

03/28 6.6	Capital Funding	Paper to be brought to a future Finance and Audit Committee setting out potential proposals for Commissioners to consider and discuss with Welsh Government.	Lisa Mullan	Lisa Mullan will discuss further with Lady Wilcox offline. Secretariat Mia Evans has scheduled this for Friday 4 July.
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AGENDA ITEM NO 7

Reports for Decision

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 7.i
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY

SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY REPORTING

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
REPORT PRESENTED BY DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES, ASSISTANT
CHIEF OFFICER, ALISON REED

SUMMARY

Since 1 April 2024, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service has been subject to the Social Partnership duty under the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act (SPPP Act). The Service's first Social Partnership Annual Report is due from 1 April 2025. The report has to be published after the end of the financial year and it should explain what the Service has done to comply with the duty in the preceding 12 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service review and approve the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report for 2024/2025.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The Social Partnership and Public Procurement Act fulfils a Welsh Government commitment to place social partnership on a statutory footing in Wales. It provides a framework to enhance the wellbeing of people in Wales by improving public services through social partnership working, promoting fair work and socially responsible public procurement.

1.2 The key principles and main provisions of the Act are:

- Social Partnership
- Socially Responsible Procurement
- Fair Work
- Sustainable Development

- 1.3 The Act is intended to improve economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of people in Wales by strengthening social partnership within strategic decision making.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is the 2024/2025 Social Partnership Duty Annual Report.
- 2.2 The report contains all relevant information and therefore meets the requirements for publication.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

- 3.1.1 The statement provides a consistent policy approach in line with the Act.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

- 3.2.1 There are a number of public bodies listed in section 6(1) of the Act that are required to meet the wellbeing duty set out in the WFG Act.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

- 3.3.1 There are no implications with this regard.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Service is required to publish its Social Partnership Duty Annual Report for 2024-2025.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service review and approve the Social Partnership Duty Annual Report for 2024/2025.

Contact Officer:	Dean Loader Director of Service Delivery	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Title		

Appendices	
Appendix 1	SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP DUTY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

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

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Social Partnership Duty

Annual Report 2024 | 2025



COURAGE TO ACT
COMPASSION TO CARE

Introduction

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (“SPPP Act”) fulfils a Government commitment placing social partnership on a statutory footing in Wales. On 1 April 2024 the new Social Partnership Duty (“the Duty”) on public bodies came into force in Wales. The Duty is set out in sections 15, 16 and 18 of the SPPP Act. It complements existing well-being duties to which certain public bodies are already subject to under Part 2 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (“WFG Act”).

In carrying out sustainable development, public bodies listed under section 6(1) of the WFG Act, will be required, in so far as is reasonable, to seek consensus or compromise with their recognised trade unions, or, where there is no recognised trade union, other worker representatives, when setting their well-being objectives and making decisions of a strategic nature about the reasonable steps they intend to take to deliver those objectives set under section 3(2) of the WFG Act.

Section 16(2) of the SPPP Act, sets out a number of specific requirements relating to the Duty, which a public body must comply with when ‘seeking consensus or compromise’. The requirements are intended to ensure that trade unions or other representatives of the staff of public bodies are fully and properly involved when a public body sets its well-being objectives, or when making strategic decisions about the reasonable steps the body is taking to meet those objectives.

The SPPP Act states that:

in order to seek consensus or compromise a public body must include its recognised trade unions or other representatives of its staff in the process of setting objectives or making decisions, by (in particular)—

- (a) consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and
- (b) otherwise involving them throughout the process by—
 - (i) providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and
 - (ii) providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Partnership and collaboration are distinctive characteristics of how we seek to work. We recognise that social partnership working provides a means of finding the best solutions to the challenges facing us.

We aim to build consensus and compromise and encourage the participation of our people and our approach continues to focus on pursuing mutual gains within the context of policy development and implementation, or operational change, but not primarily used as forums for information exchange, collective bargaining or consultation.

We recognise there will be occasions where common ground is not possible and if this is the case it will be managed within a culture of respect and problem-solving.

Our role is to deliver proactive preventative services; and reactive fire and rescue services to the people of South Wales in an open, transparent and cost-effective way; acting in the best interests of South Wales and its communities.

In discharging its role, the Service operates within a framework laid down by the UK National and Welsh Government legislation. The delegated day to day management and delivery of the Fire Service's functions is carried out by Officers under the overall control and guidance of the Chief Fire Officer, who discharges these functions in accordance with the policy framework and the determinations of the Commissioners and its Committees. In so doing, the Chief Fire Officer is assisted by the Executive Leadership Team.

Joint Consultative Forums

The Service has several methods of engaging its representative bodies. This includes:

- Regular meetings comprising all representative bodies and the Commissioners.
- Meetings, held on a bi-monthly basis comprising Service officials and the Fire Brigades Union and separately with the Accredited Representative Bodies.
- Informal meetings to discuss matters as they arise.

Over the period of this report, meetings were held on the following dates:

Meetings held with Accredited Representatives (Unison, Unite, GMB)	Meetings held with the Fire Brigades Union
20 June 2024	12 March 2024
2 September 2024	20 June 2024
12 December 2024	12 December 2024
24 February 2025	24 February 2025

Independent Advisory Group

Following the approval of the new Governance Framework the Service will soon be launching a new Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG will perform the vital role of 'critical friend' but will not be a decision-making body. For example, the IAG may be asked to comment on and inform policy and procedures being considered by the Service, as well as operational matters which may be affecting the communities of South Wales.

The group will be independent of the Service, with members drawn from a range of different fields, including the public sector, private sector, cultural change, voluntary sector, inspection, and DICE. The members will provide advice based on their

knowledge and experience, contributing to the vision for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service to be a healthy, efficient and effective fire and rescue service.

The Service is currently reviewing its approach to selection, attraction and recruiting members.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) – Phase One Update

Following approval from the Board of Commissioners, we have now begun Phase One of developing a service-wide Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). This marks an important strategic step in ensuring we are best placed to meet both current and emerging risks across South Wales.

Whilst our Service is familiar with local CRMPs, this service-wide approach allows us to take a more joined up, evidence-based view of risk across all communities. The first phase focuses on data collection and development, drawing on internal incident data, national datasets, local authority insights, and frontline experience.

Risk workshops will be held across the Service to capture the views of staff at all levels, and these will shape a plan that reflects real-world risk.

The CRMP will support better prevention, protection, and response, while helping us make informed, risk-based decisions in a challenging financial climate. It is not about cuts—it is about smarter, community-focused risk management.

We are committed to engaging our Union partners and all staff groups throughout this process and will provide regular updates as the work progresses

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee

The SWFRS Health Safety and Wellbeing (HS&W) committee pulls together key personnel from within SWFRS, with the responsibility for establishing and promoting a positive and proactive Health Safety and Wellbeing culture, delivered via a robust framework to strengthen H&S and Wellbeing governance.

The HS&W Committee within SWFRS specifically oversees the framework and management systems which enhance clarity around roles, accountability, and responsibility throughout the organisation, providing enhanced assurance to the Board of Commissioners and Chief Fire Officer. The HS&W committee provides strategic direction to the subgroups that report up to it, whilst ensuring compliance, in so far as is reasonably practical, with all legislation, national and local reports and reviews that have an impact on SWFRS.

The HS&W committee works with all other internal committees and external stakeholders to ensure the appropriate level of scrutiny and governance is applied to all work emanating in their area and scope of responsibility, and report to the Senior Leadership Team on progress made. The committee attendees include representatives from various key stakeholders across the service, including invites for

all representative bodies. This ensures that issues are raised and actioned which fall within the Health, Safety and Wellbeing arena from representative perspectives.

The committee met on the following dates throughout 2024/2025:

- 31st July 2024
- 17th October 2024
- 21st January 2025

Contaminants Project

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our teams is of high priority. We have taken a significant step forward with the launch of our Comprehensive Decontamination Programme. This initiative is designed to reduce contamination risks, embed best practices across the Service, and provide our crews with the highest level of protection.

Although we have been working in this area for some time, the latest research highlights the need to accelerate our efforts. This programme will fast-track key actions, ensuring we implement meaningful changes more effectively and efficiently.

To drive this work forward, we have made a firm commitment by establishing a dedicated team to lead our service-wide approach to contamination mitigation. We have appointed an individual to support this activity, and this person will be engaged on stations and will be attending incidents to evaluate the changes being made.

Collaboration will be key to our success. The newly formed team and the Contaminants working group will continue to work closely with our unions partners and drawing on the best available research, to implement the necessary changes proportionately.

The Senior Leadership Team and Commissioners see this as a significant step in our ongoing commitment to firefighter welfare

Thematic Review updates

1. Broadening the Role of a Firefighter in Wales

The "Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales" Thematic Review aims to explore and assess the potential expansion of responsibilities and capabilities of firefighters beyond traditional firefighting duties. The report examines various factors, including the evolving nature of emergency response, community needs, and the skills and training of firefighters.

Based on four recommendations, the Thematic Review presents a series of recommendations for consideration by strategic leaders, trade unions, and other stakeholders. These recommendations include developing clear guidelines and protocols for expanded roles, investing in training and resources, and fostering collaboration between fire services and community organisations

The Service continues to demonstrate its commitment to meaningful social partnership by actively involving representative bodies in key areas of policy development and organisational change. In early 2024, the FBU was formally invited to join the Operational Working Group, marking an important step in strengthening collaborative engagement. The group has since met on several occasions, including key meetings in February, April, and June 2024, providing a forum for joint discussion on operational priorities, workforce impact, and service transformation. One of the most significant outcomes of this partnership approach has been the co-development of *Operation Reset*, where FBU representatives contributed constructively to shaping the structure, scope, and implementation timeline of the programme. Their input ensured that the proposals aligned not only with organisational goals but also reflected the concerns and expectations of frontline personnel. This collaborative model has helped build trust, improved transparency, and reinforced the Service's intent to embed the principles of fair work and collective voice in all aspects of operational change.

Operation Reset is a programme in direct response to the Welsh Government's *Thematic Review: Broadening the Role of Firefighters in Wales*. Its core purpose is to realign the operational delivery model to meet the evolving expectations of modern public service while preserving firefighter safety, clarity of role, and operational effectiveness through blocks of time which are interchangeable to meet service needs.

The Thematic Review recognised that the role of a firefighter in Wales has significantly expanded over the past decade. Firefighters are now routinely engaged in prevention, protection, and broader community safety work alongside their core emergency response duties. However, the review also highlighted the need for greater clarity, consistency, and support to ensure that these expectations are sustainable, properly trained for, and aligned with national and local priorities. This has seen the service allocate specific time frames for training and prevention. The blocks have seen an increase in training time available to 3.5 hours per shift.

In response, Operation Reset has been designed to re-establish clear, role-aligned expectations for operational personnel at all levels Crew Manager, Watch Manager, and Station Manager anchored firmly to the demands of a 21st-century fire and rescue service. The programme includes the delivery of structured, values-based leadership engagement, clear operational standards, enhanced support for development, and improved training availability. It is a reset not only of expectations, but of culture, responsibility, and the relationship between strategic intent and frontline delivery.

Importantly, Operation Reset has been developed through a collaborative, social partnership model. Engagement with the FBU and representative bodies has been integral throughout, with their inclusion in the Operational Working Group ensuring that proposals are shaped by the lived experiences of staff. This has allowed the programme to secure broad support while remaining agile enough to adapt to ongoing feedback from the workforce.

By embedding the principles of the Thematic Review into day-to-day operations, Operation Reset aims to create a shared understanding of role, enhance firefighter engagement, and ensure that SWFRS is equipped to meet the diverse risks and needs of the communities it serves both now and in the future.

Local Pension Board

The Local Pension Board provides oversight and assistance to the Scheme Manager on matters relating to the Firefighter Pensions Schemes. The role of the Local Pension Board as defined by Sections 5 (1) and (2) of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013, is to:

- Assist the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority as Scheme Manager:
 - To secure compliance with the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) regulations and any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pensions Scheme(s)
 - To secure compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) by the Pension Regulator
 - To secure effective and efficient governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes
 - In such other matters as the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) regulations may specify
- Secure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme(s) for the Firefighters' Pension Fund.
- Provide the Scheme Manager with such information as it requires to ensure that any member of the Local Pension Board or person to be appointed to the Local Pension Board does not have a conflict of interest.

Considering the above, the Local Pension Board is not a decision-making body in relation to scheme management and administration but instead makes recommendations to assist in such activities.

The Board meets at least three times per year and as well as comprising representation from the employer/scheme manager, it also includes representation from the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire Leaders Association and the Fire and Rescue Services Association.

Board members receive appropriate training throughout the year.

The Board has provided a forum for the sharing of information between the employer and member representatives of the Firefighter Pensions Schemes. This has been particularly key in relation to the national projects relating to the implementation of McCloud and O'Brien, as well as the onboarding arrangements to the National Pensions Dashboard project.

Procurement and Contracting

The Welsh Fire and Rescue Service's Procurement Strategy 2025-2030 seeks to align our procurement activity with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales)

Act 2023. This strategy is designed to take encourage stakeholders to consider the long-term implications of each procurement activity and sets out key strategic contracts on an All Wales Fire Sector basis.

Working collaboratively with our neighbouring Services we seek to adopt a strategic approach to procurement which will underpin our efforts to unlock efficiencies and achieve value for money. Integrating the principles of sustainable development and e-procurement through our activity can optimise the positive impact of responsible procurement, ensuring not only compliance but achieving well-being benefits and taking a sustainable approach wherever possible.

A key objective within the strategy is to not only obtain optimum value for the service on terms of whole life cost and quality outcome through effective sourcing, supply and performance monitoring but also to provide benefit to society, the economy and the environment both now and in the future.

All prescribed contracts incorporate social value considerations as a standard evaluation criteria. This aims to consider how economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being may be improved through the goods, works and services that we procure. All opportunities with a value of above £30,000 inclusive of vat are advertised through the Welsh Government Sell2Wales portal in order to maximise the supplier base and attract local SME's. To further support and attract SME's, consideration is given to lotting strategies at the defining the need stage for relevant procurements, aimed at providing greater opportunities to compete for public sector contracts.

The Service has adopted the Welsh Government's commitment to pay the Real Living Wage as contained in the Code of Practice on Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. As such, relevant procurements contain clauses around fair work practices expecting suppliers to take a similar approach in relation to ethical working practices.

The South Wales FRS procurement team are committed to ensuring the service makes strategic, ethical and informed commercial decisions aligned to organisational goals, ensuring fairness, openness and transparency through procurement activity.

Comments from the Trade Unions in response to the Social Partnership report

Comments from the Fire Brigades Union:

At the time of writing we can agree that the above has taken place to the degree that we have been informed of changes and implementation of new strategies, we challenge the notion that we are collaborated with and have input, meetings feel more like briefings. Minor changes are made at our request but despite sometimes unnecessarily heated discussions where we are voicing the views of our members or simply applying the rules we are bound by, whether that be grey book or FBU rule book, we are rode roughshod over.

A familiar tactic being applied in 3 out of the 4 meetings is to invite us to agenda items for discussion then send out emails during or just before the meeting in order to dilute our stance and any discussion around the points we have raised, or as with the email

that was sent containing this document, give us impossible time scales to work to under the proviso that for some reason we hadn't received it when it was first sent. We do not feel that these tactics or practices align with SPPP act as stated:

- (a) consulting them at a formative stage of the process, and
- (b) otherwise involving them throughout the process by—
 - (i) providing sufficient information to enable them to properly consider what is proposed, and
 - (ii) providing sufficient time to enable them to adequately consider what is proposed and respond

We the FBU want to help shape a better service for the communities of south wales whilst ensuring the best possible working conditions for our members under the terms and conditions agreed with the NJC but feel of late meetings have been choreographed in order to appear to meet the above requirements. The CFO has made a commitment to work with us and it is our hope that more collaboration can be achieved.

Conclusion

The Service welcomes the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 and is committed to working in partnership with its recognised Trade Unions in making decisions of a strategic nature.

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 7.ii
6 JUNE 2025

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

AUDIT WALES ENQUIRIES TO 'THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE' – DRAFT RESPONSE

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE TREASURER
REPORT PRESENTED BY THE TREASURER

SUMMARY

This report presents the 2024-25 audit enquiries letter from Audit Wales and seeks the Commissioners review and endorsement of the responses submitted on behalf of both management and those charged with governance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board of Commissioners;

- Review the contents of the Audit Wales letter.
- Endorse the proposed responses to Appendices 1 to 3 for submission to Audit Wales by the required deadline of 30 June 2025.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 As part of the external audit process for 2024-25, Audit Wales has issued a formal request for documented responses on governance areas relevant to the audit of the Authority's financial statements. These include:

- Fraud risk and management oversight
- Compliance with laws and regulations
- Related party relationships and disclosures

The responses have been compiled in consultation with relevant officers and reflect current governance arrangements and internal controls.

2. ISSUE AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 Those charged with governance are accountable for the accuracy and quality of the Authority's financial reporting. The respective responsibilities towards the financial statements are set out in the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and of Audit Bodies, which states that:

"The financial statements, which comprise the published accounts of the audited body, are an essential means by which it accounts for its stewardship of the resources at its disposal and its financial performance in the use of those resources. It is the responsibility of the audited body to:

- *put in place systems of internal control to ensure the regularity and lawfulness of transactions;*
- *maintain proper accounting records; and*
- *prepare financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position of the body, its expenditure and income and that they are in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and accounting policies."*

- 2.2 The responsibilities of the Authority in respect of the financial statements are also summarised as part of statements made within the Statement of Responsibilities contained within the statement of account. This is signed on the Authority's behalf by the Treasurer.
- 2.3 The responses contained within this report provide assurance that robust systems and procedures are in place to manage the risk of fraud, ensure legal compliance, and identify and disclose related party transactions.
- 2.4 The Finance and Audit Committee continues to exercise oversight through its scrutiny of financial information, audit findings and risk therein.
- 2.5 No material fraud or legal non-compliance has been identified during the period under review.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Completion and submission of the audit enquiries is a standard requirement in line with the statutory external process.

5 RISK

- 5.1 Timely submission ensures continued compliance with audit requirements and supports a clean audit opinion for 2024/25.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That the Board of Commissioners;
- Review the contents of the Audit Wales letter.
 - Endorse the proposed responses to Appendices 1 for submission to Audit Wales by the required deadline of 30 June 2025.

Contact Officer:	Lisa Mullan Head of Finance, Procurement & Property
Background Papers	Appendix 1 - Audit Enquiries to those Charged with Governance

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Lisa Mullan
Head of Finance, Procurement & Property
South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Fire Service Headquarters
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Llantrisant
CF72 8LX
Via email

Reference: SWFRA2024-25/Audit Enq.

Date issued: 16 April 2025

Dear Lisa

Audit enquiries to those charged with governance and management

The Auditor General's Statement of Responsibilities sets out that he is responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements taken as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. It also sets out the respective responsibilities of auditors, management and those charged with governance.

This letter formally seeks documented consideration and understanding on a number of governance areas that impact on our audit of your financial statements. These considerations are relevant to both the management of the Authority and 'those charged with governance'.

I have set out below the areas of governance on which I am seeking your views:

1. Matters in relation to fraud
2. Matters in relation to laws and regulations
3. Matters in relation to related parties

The information you provide will inform our understanding of the Authority and its business processes and support our work in providing an audit opinion on your 2024-25 financial statements.

For ease of reference, I have attached the information that you provided for 2023-24 so far as practicable, and I would be grateful if you could update the attached table in **Appendix 1 to Appendix 3** for 2024-25.

The completed **Appendix 1 to Appendix 3** should be formally considered and communicated to us on behalf of both management and those charged with governance by **30 June 2025**. In the meantime, if you have queries, please contact me on 02920 829305 or at gillian.gillett@audit.wales

Yours sincerely

Gillian Gillett

Audit Manager

Matters in relation to fraud

International Standard for Auditing (UK) 240 covers auditors' responsibilities relating to fraud in an audit of financial statements. This standard has been revised for 2022-23 and future audits.

The primary responsibility to prevent and detect fraud rests with both management and 'those charged with governance', which for the Authority is the Governance & Audit Committee. Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, should ensure there is a strong emphasis on fraud prevention and deterrence and create a culture of honest and ethical behaviour, reinforced by active oversight by those charged with governance.

As external auditors, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. We are required to maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit, considering the potential for management override of controls.

What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures, we are required to consider the risks of material misstatement due to fraud. This includes understanding the arrangements management has put in place in respect of fraud risks. The ISA views fraud as either:

- the intentional misappropriation of assets (cash, property, etc); or
- the intentional manipulation or misstatement of the financial statements.

We also need to understand how those charged with governance exercises oversight of management's processes. We are also required to make enquiries of both management and those charged with governance as to their knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud, management's process for identifying and responding to the risks, and the internal controls established to mitigate them.

Enquiries of management – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>1. What is management's assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated due to fraud?</p> <p>What is the nature, extent and frequency of management's assessment?</p>	<p>We consider the risk to be minimal and are not aware of any fraud that would impact materially the financial statements. Robust internal controls, internal audit process and annual reviews including key financial controls and counter fraud policies exist to reduce risks in this area.</p> <p>Some internal controls are practiced on a transaction basis such as segregation of duties and financial reconciliations of systems and information, others are undertaken less frequently and annually, e.g., financial comparative analysis, completion of the CIPFA disclosure checklist, audit of key financial controls etc. Underpinning these are applicable policies and processes</p>	<p>We consider the risk to be minimal and are not aware of any fraud that would impact materially the financial statements. Robust internal controls, internal audit process and annual reviews, including key financial controls and counter fraud policies exist to reduce risks in this area.</p> <p>Internal controls are practiced daily on a transactional basis such as segregation of duties, financial reconciliations of systems and information, others are undertaken less frequently and annually, e.g., financial comparative analysis, completion of the CIPFA disclosure checklist, audit of key financial controls etc.</p> <p>Underpinning these are applicable policies, processes and guidance.</p>
<p>2. Do you have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the audited body?</p>	<p>Yes, 1 case of unproven fraud/theft by an employee during the financial year of 2023/24 that is being progressed. This relates largely to the use of the Services credit card with a value in the region of £16k.</p>	<p>There have been no reported instances of actual or suspected fraud since 1st April 2024.</p>

Enquiries of management – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>3. What is management's process for identifying and responding to the risks of fraud in the audited body, including any specific risks of fraud that management has identified or that have been brought to its attention?</p>	<p>Robust systems of internal controls exist and are tested through a programme of planned programme of internal audits each year. Financial regulations, there is a policy and resource framework relating to Anti-Fraud and Whistleblowing in addition to procurement procedures that provide an operating system for all personnel.</p> <p>Policies include the Whistleblowing Policy, Anti- Fraud and Corruption Policy, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. Where wrongdoing is suspected arrangements are in place to ensure that it is thoroughly investigated.</p> <p>Personnel have previously completed fraud awareness and the sharing of potential fraud attempts is active bolster vigilance. These controls have successfully identified previous cases of fraud /theft.</p>	<p>Robust systems of internal controls exist and are tested through an annual programme of internal audits that cut across areas of the organisation on both a risk and cyclical basis.</p> <p>There is a policy and operating framework for all personnel that includes the Financial Regulations, Anti-Fraud and Anti-Bribery Policy, Public Interest Disclosure Procedure (Whistleblowing), the Fraud Response Plan (FRP), Contract Standing Orders (CSO), Procurement Procedures, Hospitality and Gifts Policy and Scheme of Delegations. Where wrongdoing is suspected arrangements are in place to ensure that it is thoroughly investigated.</p> <p>Personnel have completed fraud awareness and the process of sharing fraud attempts is in place to bolster vigilance.</p> <p>To support the above, the Finance Team have set up a fraud page for employees. This provides guidance on banking best practice, common scams and a range of curated external resources.</p>

Enquiries of management – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
4. What classes of transactions, account balances and disclosures have you identified as most at risk of fraud?	Purchases made through the Services' credit card carry a higher risk, in addition to purchasing activities undertaken through the revenue and capital budgets.	Purchases made through the Services' credit card carry a higher risk, in addition to purchasing activities more generally and staff expense claims.
5. Are you aware of any whistleblowing or complaints by potential whistle blowers? If so, what has been the audited body's response?	<p>A total of 76 complaints received in 2023-2024. (111 letters of thanks received during 2023/24). There were 56 cases that qualify as disclosures or concerns items during 2023-2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHISTLE BLOWING – 0 • FRS SPEAK UP – 53 • RAISING CONCERNS EMAIL – 2 	Verbal update to be provided
6. What is management's communication, if any, to those charged with governance regarding their processes for identifying and responding to risks of fraud?	The Anti-Fraud and Corruption policy, Whistleblowing policy, fraud response plan and associated organisational procedures exist and provide the necessary reporting guidelines.	The above referenced policy and procedure framework is in place to guide and protect all personnel and the public.

Enquiries of management – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>7. What is management's communication, if any, to employees regarding their views on business practices and ethical behaviour?</p>	<p>The Senior Leadership Team through consultation with the middle manager cohort has adopted a comprehensive set of values which have been disseminated to all staff with guidance on how these values should be exhibited. These values are supported by a suite of policies and procedures which are being reviewed through working groups and when finalised, will be communicated to staff in various ways.</p> <p>A standards and expectations policy has been drafted through engagement with middle leaders which sets out the standards that all employees are expected to meet in several areas related to conduct and behaviour. This complements Appendix 5 of General Standing Orders which outlines Officers code of conduct, applicable to all staff.</p>	<p>The Change and Transformation Team through consultation and engagement with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and employees, has ensured the formal adoption of the NFCC's Core Code of Ethics and a set of values that are in unison with the Services new Vision and Mission.</p> <p>There are existing supporting policies and procedures in place although these are being substantively reviewed as identified by the Morris Report.</p> <p>A standards and expectations policy has been drafted through engagement with middle leaders which sets out the standards that all employees are expected to meet in several areas related to conduct and behaviour. This complements Appendix 5 of the General Standing Orders which outlines Officers code of conduct, applicable to all staff.</p>
<p>8. Are you aware of any instances of actual, suspected or alleged fraud within the RCT Pension Fund</p>	<p>We are not aware of any fraud within the RCT pension fund since 1st April 2023.</p>	<p>We are not aware of any fraud within the RCT pension fund since 1st April 2024.</p>

Enquiries of management – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
(service organisation) since 1 April 2023?		

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
1. Do you have any knowledge of actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the audited body?	<p>There have been 5 allegations of fraud / since April 2023 and all. Fraud Response Plan has been activated in all cases.</p> <p>Status of the 5;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 active investigations 1 no evidence to support allegation 1 resolved through internal processes <p>Systems are effective in identifying cases although additional workforce education is required to support.</p>	<p>There have been 2 allegations of fraud since April 2024 although no evidence to support allegations.</p> <p>Systems appear effective in identifying cases although additional workforce education is required to support the identification and reporting processes in this area.</p>
2. What is your assessment of the risk of fraud within the	Risks are minimal and we are not aware of any fraud that would impact materially the	Risks are minimal and we are not aware of any fraud that would impact materially the financial

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to fraud

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>audited body, including those risks that are specific to the audited body's business sector?</p>	<p>financial statements. Robust internal controls, internal audit process and annual reviews including key financial controls and counter fraud policies exist to reduce risks in this area.</p> <p>The finance team particularly, receive awareness and training updates from internal audit and banking providers to ensure vigilance against financial fraud. Instances of attempted fraud through the creditor's ledger are logged and shared for awareness and understanding.</p>	<p>statements. Robust internal controls, internal audit process and annual reviews including key financial controls and fraud policies exist to reduce risks in this area, as outlined above</p> <p>The finance team particularly, receive awareness and training updates from internal audit and banking providers to ensure vigilance against financial fraud. Instances of attempted fraud through the creditor's ledger are logged and shared for awareness and understanding.</p>
<p>3. How do you exercise oversight of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> management's processes for identifying and responding to the risk of fraud in the audited body, and the controls that management has established to mitigate these risks? 	<p>The Fire Authority's, Finance, Audit & Performance Management Committee superseded by the Welsh Government (WG) Commissioners, Finance & Audit Committee, undertake this role.</p> <p>The relevant committee scrutinises the corporate risk register on which it receives quarterly reports.</p> <p>They also scrutinise internal audit reports to ensure risks are managed and controls are robust.</p>	<p>The Fire Authority's, Finance and Audit Committee (FAC), undertake this role.</p> <p>The FAC scrutinises the corporate risk register quarterly and internal audit reviews as these are completed throughout the year to ensure risks are managed, controls are robust, and management take responsibility for actioning improvements which are documented in the periodic reports from TIAA.</p>

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to fraud		
Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
	A key consideration of the Fraud Response Plan is the reporting of actual frauds to Committee and their respective Chair.	A key consideration of the Fraud Response Plan is the reporting of actual frauds to Committee and liaison with their respective Chair.

Matters in relation to laws and regulations

International Standard for Auditing (UK and Ireland) 250 covers auditors' responsibilities to consider the impact of laws and regulations in an audit of financial statements.

Management, with the oversight of those charged with governance, is responsible for ensuring that the Authority's operations are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations, including compliance with those that determine the reported amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.

As external auditors, we are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement due to fraud or error, taking into account the appropriate legal and regulatory framework. The ISA distinguishes two different categories of laws and regulations:

- laws and regulations that have a direct effect on determining material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements
- other laws and regulations where compliance may be fundamental to the continuance of operations, or to avoid material penalties

What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures we are required to make enquiries of management and those charged with governance as to whether the Authority is in compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Where we become aware of information of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance we need to gain an understanding of the non-compliance and the possible effect on the financial statements.

Enquiries of management – in relation to laws and regulations

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>1. How have you gained assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with? Are there policies and procedures in place?</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer has a general advisory role to the Fire and Rescue Authority / WG Commissioners as well as serving as Director of Corporate Services. He and the Head of Corporate Support are supported by a legal Services officer and specialist external legal advisors.</p> <p>In their role as Responsible Finance Officer (s112) the Treasurer to 'those charged with governance' also ensures compliance in relation to financial reporting. The Treasurer is supported by a qualified and experienced finance team.</p>	<p>The Monitoring Officer has a general advisory role to the Fire and Rescue Authority which currently comprises WG Commissioners.</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer and the Head of Corporate Support are supported by specialist external legal advisors where applicable.</p> <p>In their role as Responsible Finance Officer (s112) the Treasurer to 'those charged with governance' (TCWG) also ensures compliance in relation to statutory, financial reporting.</p>
<p>2. Are you aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws or regulations? Is the entity on notice of any such possible instances of non-compliance?</p>	<p>Management are not aware of any noncompliance with relevant laws or regulations in 2023/24.</p>	<p>Management is not aware of any non-compliance during 2024/25.</p>

Enquiries of management – in relation to laws and regulations

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
3. Are there any potential litigations or claims that would affect the financial statements?	Material litigations or claims are disclosed or recorded as contingent liabilities in the financial statements.	Material litigations or claims are disclosed as contingent liabilities in the annual statement of account.
4. Have there been any reports from other regulatory bodies, such as HM Revenues and Customs which indicate non-compliance?	Management is not aware of any such non-compliance.	Management is not aware of any such non-compliance.
5. Are you aware of any non-compliance with laws and regulations within RCT Pension Fund (service organisation) since 1 April 2023?	Management is not aware of any such non-compliance.	Management is not aware of any such non-compliance.

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to laws and regulations

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>1. Are you aware of any non-compliance with laws and regulations that may be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the entity?</p>	<p>We are not aware of any instances of noncompliance with laws or regulation in 2023/24. The South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 came into force 6 February 2024 which nominated 4 Commissioners to undertake the governance function previously undertaken by the Fire Authority. Whilst this represents a change in those who govern the Service, it is not a fundamental change in operations of the entity.</p>	<p>We are not aware of any instances of non-compliance during 2024/25.</p>
<p>2. How do those charged with governance, obtain assurance that all relevant laws and regulations have been complied with?</p>	<p>The Fire and Rescue Authority / Commissioners have adopted a system of sub committees and working groups by which governance is exercised through this framework which has facilitated scrutiny of the processes and decisions to ensure compliance.</p>	<p>The Fire and Rescue Authority have adopted a system of sub committees and working groups through which governance is exercised and scrutiny facilitated.</p>

Matters in relation to related parties

International Standard for Auditing (UK) 550 covers auditors' responsibilities relating to related party relationships and transactions.

The nature of related party relationships and transactions may, in some circumstances, give rise to higher risks of material misstatement of the financial statements than transactions with unrelated parties.

Because related parties are not independent of each other, many financial reporting frameworks establish specific accounting and disclosure requirements for related party relationships, transactions and balances to enable users of the financial statements to understand their nature and actual or potential effects on the financial statements. An understanding of the entity's related party relationships and transactions is relevant to the auditor's evaluation of whether one or more fraud risk factors are present as required by ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, because fraud may be more easily committed through related parties.

What are we required to do?

As part of our risk assessment procedures, we are required to perform audit procedures to identify, assess and respond to the risks of material misstatement arising from the entity's failure to appropriately account for or disclose related party relationships, transactions or balances in accordance with the requirements of the framework.

Enquiries of management – in relation to related parties

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
1. Have there been any changes to related parties from the prior year? If so, what is the identity of the related parties and the nature of those relationships? Confirm these have been disclosed to the auditor.	Related parties have remained substantially the same and are disclosed in detail in the statement of account.	The process for recording related parties has remained the same, notwithstanding the substantial change in the SLT. The nature of such connections and their financial effect, is disclosed in the annual statement of account.
2. What transactions have been entered into with related parties during the period? What is the purpose of these transactions? Confirm these have been disclosed to the auditor.	Details of related parties are disclosed in the statement of account. An audit trail has been maintained within our working paper files to support this.	Details of related parties are disclosed in the annual statement of account. An audit trail has been maintained within our working paper files to support this.
3. What controls are in place to identify, account for and disclose related party transactions and relationships?	An annual disclosure for the Statement of Accounts is required for all senior officers, any officer with budget responsibility in addition to Fire Authority members / Commissioners to declare any related party transactions in accordance with IAS 24.	The Finance Team organise the annual return process for Related Party Disclosures. This is a routine disclosure in the annual Statement of Account, required for all senior

Enquiries of management – in relation to related parties

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
	<p>At each AGM members sign a declaration of interests which is also held on file and is cross referenced to the related party disclosure for consistency and completeness.</p>	<p>officers, any personnel with budget responsibility and Fire Authority members.</p> <p>Commissioners and principal officers also sign a declaration of interest which is available to view on the Services' website which is cross referenced to the related party disclosure process outlined above.</p> <p>The new procurement regulations will also require disclosure from individuals organising significant tender processes on a contract by contract basis – this will elevate control in this area.</p>
<p>4. What controls are in place to authorise and approve significant transactions and arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with related parties, and • outside the normal course of business? 	<p>The same controls as for any significant transactions, i.e., Finance, Procurement and HR processes, segregation of duties / authorisation, internal risk assessments, internal audit, public reporting to tcwg.</p> <p>Outside normal business, items are discussed at SLT and if appropriate a report taken to tcwg in line with our constitutional requirements.</p>	<p>The same controls as for any significant transactions, i.e., Finance, Procurement and HR processes, segregation of duties / authorisation, internal risk assessments, internal audit, public reporting to TCWG.</p> <p>Outside normal business, items are discussed at SLT and if appropriate a report taken to TCWG in line with our constitutional requirements.</p>

Enquiries of those charged with governance – in relation to related parties

Question	2023-24 Response	2024-25 Response
<p>1. How those charged with governance, exercise oversight of management's processes to identify, authorise, approve, account for and disclose related party transactions and relationships?</p>	<p>Through Fire Authority / FAPM / F&A and Commissioner scrutiny, forward work programmes. Annual reporting of the annual statement of accounts and audit of the same.</p>	<p>Through Commissioner scrutiny at Board level and through the various committees and oversight structures. Additionally, through the scrutiny and approval of the various forward work programmes which work to identify cyclical, regulatory and governance reporting and approval requirements.</p> <p>The annual statement of accounts also summarises and presents 'disclosed' related party information for Commissioner scrutiny.</p> <p>This area will be strengthened with an annual report summarising the status and changes to the declarations of interest submissions to ensure this remains in active oversight. This will be implemented by the new Monitoring Officer & Director of Corporate Support in 2025.</p>

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

Reports for Information and Assurance

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.i
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CHRISTIAN HADFIELD

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE CONTAMINANTS PROGRAMME

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER CHRISTIAN HADFIELD

REPORT PRESENTED BY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER CHRISTIAN HADFIELD

SUMMARY

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) has actively monitored emerging research and growing awareness of the effects of fire contaminants products of combustion, on South Wales Fire & Rescue Service personnel.

This report will provide Commissioners with an update on the progress of the introduction of a Contaminants Work Activity, and how SWFRS will further mitigate and manage the complex risks associated with fire contamination.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Commissioners note the report and the content of the Contaminants Work Activity (Appendix 2)

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In July 2022, studies carried out by the World Health Organisation suggested that firefighters have an increased risk of physical health issues due to exposure to toxic fire contaminants. As research remains ongoing in this area, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has not yet released a formal view or direction to Fire & Rescue Services. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service aims to be able to respond to NFCC guidance immediately as and when issued.

- 1.2 Fires generate a complex mixture of toxic, irritant, and carcinogenic chemicals, the composition of which depends on the materials involved and fire conditions. These substances can be released as particulates, including aerosols, dust, fibres, smoke, and fumes or as gases and vapours.
- 1.3 The health impact of exposure depends on both the toxicity of the contaminant and the route of exposure. Toxicants can be categorised based on their specific adverse effects, including:
 - Carcinogens – substances that cause cancer.
 - Teratogens – substances that can harm a foetus if exposure occurs during pregnancy.
 - Sensitisers – substances that trigger an allergic hypersensitivity reaction.
 - Irritants – substances that react with moisture on or within the body, causing inflammation.
- 1.4 Fire and rescue personnel may be exposed to toxic contaminants through multiple pathways, including inhalation, skin absorption, and ingestion.
- 1.5 Through cross-contamination, fire contamination can also potentially affect third party providers (i.e. contractors, Babcock), members of the public entering fire stations and the families and personal contacts of those exposed.

2. PROPOSAL

- 2.1 It should be acknowledged that this is a complex and high-risk area, and one which SWFRS is aspiring to get right to ensure firefighter health and welfare is consistently protected from the risks of fire contaminants
- 2.2 We propose to undertake a comprehensive review and implementation of activities surrounding contaminants to assess and address the contaminants risks faced by our staff. This plan will enable us to gain a clear, data-driven understanding of the evolving risks and the impact of fire effluent toxins on firefighter health, and how these risks can be mitigated
- 2.3 The holistic organisational impact of managing fire contaminants means a collaborative 'whole Service' approach will be adopted throughout the activities, across all levels of the organisation and with Representative Bodies.

2.4 Our contaminants activities will focus on 5 key headlines; these being:

- Our People
- Our workspaces
- Our Equipment & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- The Cleaning Pathway
- Policy

2.5 This will help the Service to understand current risks, how these are likely to change in the future, and the best ways to manage resources that respond to the risks of contamination.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

A full and comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken to understand the impacts of contamination.

3.1.2 Communication plan

The Service will produce a comprehensive communications strategy to accompany the contaminants activities, which will constantly be reviewed and refined to meet the need of both internal and external stakeholders.

3.1.3 Workforce comments

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) support the activity areas and are a member of the contaminates working group which influences the policy and would like the activity areas to commence as soon as practicable.

The FBU has agreed to the activity with the caveat that they are able to collectively consult on its development once the policy has been live for a period to evaluate its effectiveness.

The activity supports both the FBU DECON campaign and the FBU commissioned report entitled 'Minimising firefighters' exposure to toxic effluents – Interim Best Practice', published by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN).

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 Legal

The organisation is required to comply with Health and Safety law to manage risks and take practical steps to protect workers and others from harm. The proposal within this report adopts best practice to ensure the Service is also deploying the latest approaches to keep people safe.

As research and evidence evolve, the fire and rescue sector may experience litigation with reference to how organisations have sought to protect people from the risks posed by fire contaminants. The proposals within this report seek to ensure that the Service is in the best possible place to evidence its initiative-taking approach in protecting the health and safety of our people.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is focusing on fire-related contaminants and their impact on firefighter safety and health, leading to potential inspections and stricter standards. These initiatives are driven by the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) categorising firefighting as carcinogenic to humans, sparking a need for increased protection

HSE are planning inspections which could cover a range of procedures and practices, from precautions at the scene of a fire, to how PPE and contaminated workwear are cleaned. The full HSE plan is scheduled to be published imminently. We will be engaging with the HSE and invite them to visit the Service prior to any formal inspection programme.

To address these complexities, a full legal impact assessment will be conducted as the activity is refined and developed further.

3.2.2 Health, Safety & Wellbeing

The contaminants risk assessment will be reviewed by the Health and Safety team and the control measures identified will be proportionate to the known risks of exposure to the toxic products of combustion.

It is important to recognise that whilst there is a correlation between smoke exposure and firefighter cancer this linkage needs further research and that there are other known factors, such as poor diet, excessive alcohol consumption, smoking tobacco products and poor sleep that have been shown to significantly increase the risks of cancer development for individuals.

3.2.3 Financial

In the 2025/26 financial year £3m has been secured via our organisational reserves to fund a permanent de-contamination facility at Cardiff Gate Training Centre.

This budget was agreed at the Finance and Audit Board in February 2025, with the support of the Treasurer, and the Commissioners will be aware of this agreement.

As our contaminants mitigation planning continues to develop, we will actively seek and welcome opportunities for grant funding and collaboration with partner organisations to support and advance our work activity. In parallel, a dedicated financial investment plan is being developed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this activity. Once complete, this plan will be presented to the Finance and Audit Board for their consideration and approval.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 Human Resources

The Contaminants Team has been developed within the existing salary budgets, ensuring no additional staffing growth is required.

The team comprises one Station Manager (operating on the flexi-duty system) and one Watch Manager.

The cost of the Station Manager role is currently being offset by the vacancy in the Control Room Manager post, which sits within the Resilience and Planning Team under ORM.

The Watch Manager position is being temporarily seconded from ORM.

The activity is scheduled to run for a minimum of 12 months and will be reviewed at that point, with continuation dependent on the achievement of its objectives.

This resourcing model supports the effective delivery of the activity while ensuring both financial sustainability and operational continuity.

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Service has tackled the challenge of fire contaminants for many years, the proposals (Contaminants Work Activity: Appendix 2) outlined within this report builds on this good initial work while taking stock of the new research and understanding of contaminant behaviour and impacts on personnel.
- 4.2 A dedicated resource has been temporarily structured for a minimum of 12 months to maintain links with National and International research to enable SWFRS to keep pace with a complex and evolving landscape, and to continually assess our progress to ensuring best practice mitigations are in place to protect against the risks of fire contaminants.
- 4.3 The risk associated with fire contaminants is documented in the Corporate Risk Register under entry 255 – Exposure to Contaminants. The designated risk owner is Assistant Chief Fire Officer Christian Hadfield.
- 4.4 The work activity outlined within this report are Service-wide and therefore evaluation method for each will necessitate a different approach. However, the Health & Safety Committee and the Board of Commissioners (BOC) will both function as forums to monitor the successful delivery of this work activity.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Commissioners note the report and the content of the Contaminants Work Activity (Appendix 2).

Contact Officer:		Christian Hadfield Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
Title: Scientific reports: <u>Contamination of UK firefighters' personal protective equipment and workplaces</u>	Jan 2023	University of Central Lancashire
Title: FBU- Decon https://www.fbu.org.uk/campaigns/decon-fire-contaminants	2023	FBU

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Research Background
Appendix 2	Contaminates Work Activity

Appendix 1- Research Background

Research has provided important insights into the characteristics of fire- related contamination, including its toxicity and the potential health risks it poses to fire and rescue personnel. Notable findings include:

2020: The University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN), commissioned by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), published a “best practice” report to help fire and rescue services minimise firefighter exposure to contaminants. The report highlights that while building regulations ensure the safety of materials in residential, commercial, and industrial settings, there are no requirements to assess how these materials change when burned. Consequently, toxic fire effluents remain unmeasured and unregulated, putting firefighters at heightened risk of exposure and adverse health outcomes.

2022: The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the World Health Organisation (WHO), classified occupational exposure as a firefighter as carcinogenic to humans. The classification was based on sufficient evidence linking firefighting to cancer, with mesothelioma and bladder cancer identified as having the strongest associations. There was also limited evidence linking firefighting to colon, prostate, and testicular cancers, melanoma of the skin, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

2023: A study on Scottish firefighters’ occupational disease and mortality rates (2000–2020) found that Scottish male firefighters had an excess cancer mortality rate compared with the general Scottish male population. Findings indicated that Scottish firefighters were three times more likely to die from malignant neoplasms (cancerous tissue growth).

2023: A four-part scientific report on firefighter cancer incidence, PPE, workplace contamination, mental health, culture, and awareness highlighted the risks of prolonged exposure to contaminated PPE. Remaining in soiled garments increases exposure through inhalation (as toxins off-gas) and skin absorption (as contaminants permeate fabric). The report also linked inadequate contamination control measures, such as failing to separate clean and dirty PPE or neglecting decontamination protocols, to an increased risk of developing cancer.

Recommended interventions include:

- Maintaining strict clean/dirty PPE separation and designated station zones.
- Implementing personal contamination control measures (e.g., avoiding eating while in PPE, changing workwear immediately post-incident).
- Promoting a culture of compliance with decontamination practices at both individual and organisational levels.

The Senior Coroner's "Report to Prevent Future Deaths" (16 September 2018) made in connection with their investigation into the deaths following the Grenfell Tower fire (which was directed at NHS England) raised the following concerns:

- That those subject to smoke and dust inhalation are at risk of developing health conditions in particular respiratory illness after particulate and poison inhalation.
- That there may have been exposure to asbestos during and after the fire that could possibly cause late onset health issues such as mesothelioma.
- That first responders need to be given access to guidance and/or information that would help them to understand what the health consequences of could be being exposed to the hazardous environment of the site of the fire.

Appendix 2: Contaminants Work Activity

Contaminants Work Activities Implementation Plan (2025–2027)

Our People

Area of Work	Headline	Phase	Department	Finance
Risk Assessment	Conduct Bow Tie risk assessment for contaminant exposure, including a UCLAN gap analysis.	Year 1 Priority 1	Contaminants Team / Health & Safety / Operational Assurance	Existing H&S budget
Awareness & Training	Launch service-wide awareness campaign and updated training	Year 1 – Q2–Q4	Contaminants Team / Training Department	Contaminants budget
Recruit Training	Integrate bespoke input into recruit training	Year 1 – Q3	Contaminants Team / Training Department	Contaminants budget

Health Screening Research	Develop University research partnership on firefighter health screening	Year 1 – Q3–Q4 (development), Year 2 (implementation)	Contaminants Team / Medical & Research / Occupational Health / ACFO	External research grants / partnership funding
Exposure Recording	Develop digital solution for firefighter exposure logging	Year 1 – Q3–Q4 (design), Year 2 (implementation)	Contaminants Team / Digital / Data / Ops Assurance	Business case
Tactical Officer Kit Management	Review and improve officer kit transport & storage practices	Year 2 – Q1	Contaminants Team / Ops Support / Fleet	Revenue budget
Fire Investigation PPE & RPE (Respiratory Protective Equipment)	RPE review for Fire Investigation team + develop bespoke health screening	Year 2 – Q2	Contaminants Team/ Fire Investigation Team/ Occupational Health.	RPE: PPE budget / Health screening Business Case.

Our Workspaces

Area of Work	Headline	Phase	Department	Finance
Estates Contamination Flow	Align building design & refurbishments with contamination control principles	Ongoing	Contaminants Team / Estates Team	Capital Programme
Fleet & Engineering Workspace Review	Assess and upgrade Fleet facilities for contamination control.	Year 2 – Q1	Contamination Team / Estates / Fleet	Business case required.
Cardiff Gate training centre. BA de- contamination facility	Purpose built facility.	Year 2	CT / Estates/ CG	£3 Million secured.

At scene de-contamination process.	Introducing a sustainable de-con process for specific operational incidents	Year 1 Priority 2	Contaminants Team / HazMat Group	Within current financial structures
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Our Equipment and PPE

Area of Work	Headline	Phase	Department	Finance
Welfare Unit	Replace Welfare Unit with next-generation decontamination vehicles	Year 2 – Q2–Q4	Contaminants Team / Response / Fleet	Vehicle replacement programme
Clean Cab Project	Remove combustion-exposed kit from crew cabs in new fleet	Year 1 – Q4 into Year 2	Contaminants Team / Fleet / Response	Within fleet procurement budget
Lightweight PPE	Replace and upgrade lightweight PPE.	Year 2 – Q2	Contaminants Team / PPE Lead/ ORM	Capital allocation secured

Structural PPE	Maintain double issue PPE and review provision for cleaning rotation	Ongoing – Year 1–2	Contaminants Team / PPE Lead / Procurement	Capital for stock; revenue for maintenance
Workwear	Assess and increase workwear allocation due to washing demand.	Year 1 – Q4	Contaminants Team / Procurement / PPE Lead/ Uniform committee	Revenue – may require uplift
Equipment Cleaning	Feasibility study into BA/helmet washers and dryers	Year 1 – Q3–Q4	Contaminants Team / Fleet / PPE Team	Business case pending
Respiratory Protection Equipment (RPE)	Review of RPE specification and usage protocols	Year 2 – Q1	Contaminants Team / PPE Lead / Ops Support	PPE budget

The Cleaning Pathway

Area of Work	Headline	Phase	Department	Finance
Centralised Decontamination Facility	Feasibility study and business case for centralised PPE & equipment cleaning	Year 1 – Q3–Q4 (study), Year 2 (decision)	Contaminants Team / Ops Support / Logistics / Estates	Business case required
Deep Clean Capability	Feasibility study for deep cleaning vehicle locker/pump bays	Year 1 – Q4	Contaminants Team / Fleet	Business case required
BA Maintenance Modernisation	Review BA maintenance systems and propose updated provision	Year 2 – Q1–Q2	Contaminants Team / PPE / Engineering / ORM	Business case required

Policy and Procedure

Area of Work	Headline	Phase	Department	Finance
Contaminants Policy	Launch Contaminants Policy and guidance to underpin work programme	Year 1 Priority 3	Contaminants Team / Health & Safety.	Internal resource

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.ii
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

ORAL STATEMENT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER FIN MONAHAN OBE DFC
PhD

SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED AND PRESENTED BY THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

SUMMARY

This report provides a transcript to support the oral update by the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Commissioners are advised to review this report for insights into the significant changes happening at SWFRS.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Firstly, I want to take this opportunity to thank members of the Service and the Commissioners for integrating me into the organisation so rapidly and effectively. I have now visited more than 97% of the operational and corporate staff and contractors who work in watches and teams across the Service. I have participated in exercises, attended incidents and joined Service members for competitions, events, and public engagements, and in training as a recruit at Cardiff Gate to get a feel for life in the Service. I have also spoken to many people across the Service on a one-to-one basis who have spared their time to provide me with thoughts about the positive aspects of the Service and their challenges, frustrations, hopes and fears. This period has given me a valuable insight into operations, support activities and the structures, processes, policies and systemic issues confronting us.

- 1.2 There remain many challenges but there are also many positives that shine through. I am grateful for the professionalism, dedication, and compassion I see daily from our operational, corporate, and contracting staff as they fulfill their responsibilities around the clock, regardless of whether, to serve the 1.6 million people of South Wales. There is much to do, but we are moving in the right direction. Indeed, we are now accelerating, and I am confident that the transformation we are undergoing will achieve the ambitious vision we have set out for the Service. The main reason for my optimism is that so many of our people are eager for change. Nevertheless, I am under no illusion about the required scale of change and the pace at which we need to deliver that change.
- 1.3 Following the Fenella Morris KC report and the Welsh Government series of thematic reviews, I was appointed. In my second week, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services completed its inspection of South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. After six months of writing up, the latter report was published last week. These reports and inspections have delved into our service in detail and made for difficult reading. They clearly outline many areas of concern that require improvement or new approaches. However, since the HMICFRS inspection 6 months ago, following my arrival, we have been extremely busy. I will now go into some of those details.

2. STRATEGY

- 2.1 Following my arrival, we developed a new overarching Strategy, based on a tried and tested 'ends, ways and means' methodology. This complex work has been completed in just 3 months and has included extensive testing across the Service. From my records, I cannot see that the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service had an overarching strategy like this previously. This strategy starts with an ambitious new vision for developing the Service in the future and following extensive consultation with our people, we have revised the mission and values and developed a new motto: *'Courage to act. Compassion to serve'*.
- 2.2 The strategy has identified 10 key areas to develop the organisation with 60 work strands to deliver on those 10 areas. These work strands have been prioritised according to resources and time. They set out a holistic approach to providing the 10-point Step Forward Transformation Program, the Fenella Morris KC culture report recommendations, the Welsh Government thematic reviews and recommendations from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies Fire and Rescue Service. This careful strategy is a significant step in developing SWFRS in both the short and long term in a well-considered and cost-conscious manner.

2.3 **Governance.** The Service has reviewed and improved its internal governance arrangements to provide effective scrutiny. This includes the development of:

- A new governance framework.
- An internal improvement board.
- A Strategic Change and Culture Committee.
- A Culture and Connection board to support social partnership and staff voice will be launched in June.
- An Independent Advisory Group is recruiting externally for volunteer positions for experts to advise at the strategic level to offer their advice on what I seek to be a transformation that will represent a beacon of cultural change and operational excellence in the sector.

2.4 **Step Forward Transformation Programme.** The Step Forward Transformation Programme lies within the strategy. This is a significant piece of work that will deliver on 9 key areas, with a particular focus on changing the culture in the organisation. As part of this work, the Service has established a new Portfolio Management Office with transformation programme managers to improve the way we manage projects and improve them now and in the future. This approach has been proven to be effective in many other organisations, including the fire and rescue sector. Indeed, I am surprised that an organisation that necessarily has so many projects on the go at any one time did not have a PMO and did not have any programme management software. With these now in place, we will be turbocharging the delivery of the 60 lines of effort in the strategy. This is a significant step forward and will also contribute to our thrust on reducing bureaucracy and streamlining the processes and policies within the organisation.

2.5 **Strategic Plan.** The strategy has also provided the overarching guidance for the shorter-term Strategic Plan. That includes new strategic themes that align with the effective delivery of our approaches to our Prevention, Protection and Response capabilities. This is crucial for fulfilling the HMICFRS and Welsh Government thematic reviews.

2.6 **Performance and Risk.** We now have a new Performance Management Framework and a new approach to risk. Together, these have unlocked significant progress in developing a new Service-Wide Community Risk Management Plan that examines the risks to our community.

- 2.7 **Leadership Academy.** The Leadership and Personal Development Academy is building partnerships and a training syllabus with organisations at the cutting edge of inclusive leadership development. This will allow us to fill the leadership gap that, from our analysis, was a major contributor to the culture failing in the Fenella Morris KC report.
- 2.8 **People.** Above all, though, the strategy recognises that our people are our greatest asset. The service we provide to the people of South Wales fundamentally depends upon them as does the success of the major transformation journey we are on. It will not be lost on the Commissioners that the last 18 months have been a very demoralising time for SWFRS. Morale has been at rock bottom and took another dent just last week with the release of the HMICFRS report. Thus, central to my leadership of the organisation is the need to think about culture in our strategy and to invest in our people. I offer some tangible examples of major changes we have made recently that will improve morale:
- Developed an innovative new approach to provide compensation for public holidays for our operational staff which is under consultation with the representative bodies.
 - Built a new fatigue management system for corporate and operational staff. This has been extremely complex from a legal perspective but will shortly go for representative body consultation. This is designed to protect our people and reduce their fatigue and stress levels.
 - Established a structured approach to honours and awards to ensure that the hard work and bravery of our people is not only recognised within the organisation but is also considered for Welsh Government and Royal recognition. Citations for the amazing work of our people have already been raised through this new approach at national level.
 - Developed a review of the promotion and talent management system that is being presented to the representative bodies this week. This is a major source of discontent that requires fundamental reform.
 - Designed a new Personal Standards Unit to transform how we conduct our disciplinary and grievance system to make it clearer, faster and more effective. That is going through final review and will be presented for representative body consultation.
 - We have introduced a new ACAS mediation programme that is already being used to have good effects to deal with personnel issues as early as possible and to reduce the number of grievance cases we have that arise from minor issues.
 - We are making the Service more family friendly to recognise the support that families give to our personnel. As a result, we have successfully trialed family days on stations to recognise the support our families make to the Service.

- We have embarked on a programme to really understand and invest in the traditions, customs, history, humour, language, symbols, and identity of all of the sub-cultures of the Service. This will allow us to invest in the spirit of service whilst modernising and instilling the new values that we have established to ensure that life through our service is rewarding and something to be proud of. We owe this to our corporate and operational staff because we regularly ask them to do extraordinary things in the line of duty.

2.9 **Bureaucracy.** A major concern of mine is the level of bureaucracy that hampers progress in the organisation. Red-tape reduction is a thrust of the strategy that will allow the organisation to unlock capacity and accelerate transformation. As part of that we have a new legal team working at pace to review and modernise the outdated policies and procedures that hamper our ambition. We have also recently employed a Chief of Staff whose role is to oversee the effective functioning of the Headquarters which, in my view, despite people working extremely hard, are siloed, fragmented and inefficient. That has led to a significant morale problem at the core of the organisation. We are turning around.

3. OPERATIONS

3.1 **HMICFRS.** The HMICFRS assessment of SWFRS performance, including how efficient and effective the Service is, and how it looks after its people, was completed in November 2024. A draft report was presented to SWFRS to check factual accuracy. The final report identified many areas that need addressing operations as well as broader matters related to the way we run our service. This was difficult reading for many in the Service and will, doubtless, cause another dip in morale that is already fragile. However, the self-assessment led by the Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, who previously served as an HMICFRS inspector, has already identified many of the areas for improvement. Action plans that will address these are already incorporated in the strategy and we will pass an action plan to HMICFRS 28 days after the publication of the report.

3.2 To our staff across the organisation who are feeling a dip in morale, I send out a message of reassurance. This does not phase me; indeed, I welcome it. This report provides us with the information and guidance that we need to deliver on our vision, which is *‘to work together to be an outstanding fire and rescue service protecting South Wales today and ambitiously innovating for tomorrow’*. With this information and by executing on our strategy we can become an outstanding Service. I am sure of that.

- 3.3 **Thematic Reviews.** We have made major headway in attaining the recommendations across the four Thematic Reviews. SLT recently agreed to following a substantial business case to release funds to purchase £270,000 of operational equipment following extensive research into new training methodology and the development of new doctrine. This purchase will achieve key recommendations regarding the operational effectiveness of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's response to dwelling fires.
- 3.4 In terms of meeting the thematic review recommendations, we will achieve:
- 100% of the recommendations from the Grenfell thematic review by 1 Sep 2025.
 - 100% of the recommendations from the training thematic review by 31 Dec 2025.
 - All recommendations for broadening the role thematic review except for shift equalisation, which is extremely complex and has been subsumed into a much bigger and broader piece of work that we are doing in relation to fatigue management.
 - 100% of the recommendations from the operational effectiveness review by 1 September 2025.
- 3.5 **Operational Assurance.** We are overhauling our operational assurance process following research, benchmarking and significant workforce engagement. This will lead to more expedient and effective identification of trends on the incident ground and will allow the organisation to move quickly to implement necessary changes to tactics, equipment and procedures. This will also improve the response and safety of our communities and crews and also pivot us towards being a more effective learning organisation and will enhance the way we maintain operational standards across the organisation. We are also adopting a Just Culture approach that is used in other high risk operational industries, notably aviation and oil and gas. This will also enhance the way we debrief, identify lessons and conduct our risk analysis.

4. RISKS

- 4.1 **Risks to our communities.** Risk is a major area of concern for HMICFRS. The last time risk to the community was considered holistically was in 2013 when a fire cover review was conducted. Since then, road networks have changed, there is a greater number of high rises in our area, there are more housing estates, the speed limits on the roads have been reduced, extreme weather patterns have intensified, the population demography has risen and changed, and lithium battery use has increased exponentially. These factors affect our speed of response and our overall capacity. Thus, we have embarked on a broad-ranging Community Risk Management Plan. I underline that there are no preconceived notions going into this important piece of work and that any developments or changes that emerge from it will be entirely evidence-based and transparent.
- 4.2 **Risks to our people.** We have rolled out a new bowtie risk management system which takes an entirely new approach to managing the risks to our people to ensure they are protected as they go about their duties. This is particularly focused on risk to life and serious injury, and it has already highlighted some areas of risk that had not previously been accounted for such as fatigue management.

5. EVENTS AND NEWS

- 5.1 Time is limited today but I offer a snapshot of some Service news for awareness of the Commissioners to highlight the hard work being invested by our people into their Service and the community.
- 5.2 **Sport.** South Wales Fire and Rescue Service reached the national Fire and Rescue final last month in Scotland. Meanwhile, one of our firefighters, Jenni Scoble, has represented Wales in the 6 nations and will now go on to play in the World Cup.
- 5.3 **Youth Engagement and Global Collaboration.** The National Fire Cadet Games are coming to Cardiff on 25 July 2025, to be hosted by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Planning is progressing well, with strong collaboration across partners to deliver a dynamic and inspiring event for youth cadets from across the UK.
- 5.4. Fire Cadets from Bridgend, Abergavenny, and Roath were selected, following a competitive process, to represent SWFRS and the UK at the Bulgaria Youth Symposium on 29th May 2025. This international opportunity enhances youth leadership, builds global networks, and aligns with our commitment to fairness and development.

- 5.5 **Ukraine Convoy.** The Service participated in its third Ukraine Convoy organised through the Fire Aid Charity and the Home Office in which 32 fire appliances and over 2000 pieces of equipment were sent out to Ukraine. South Wales Fire and Rescue Service sent 8 appliances.
- 5.6 **999 Day.** Our first 999 Day this year took place at Maesteg on 17 May. This involved an enormous amount of work by corporate and operations staff and was a resounding success. I recommend Commissioners and others listening today to attend one of the 3 upcoming events being held over the summer.
- 5.7 There are many more events taking place across the Service. I would like to thank all staff who give so generously of their time to make our Service more than just a place of work.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Last week the release of the HMICFRS report was, to many, another morale blow to the Service. However, I should like to remind our staff that it was 6 months ago. We are in a new era now. Much has changed since the inspection was done. As I mentioned earlier, it gives us valuable information to work on to improve in our search for excellence. From our early assessment, the strategy already covers the work required in this latest report. However, we are now doing detailed analysis to ensure that we really do cover everything.
- 6.2 So to you all, my message is one of positivity. Look at the strategy, keep your chins up and maintain your faith. It will be hard, but we will achieve our vision. We will work as one to become an outstanding fire and rescue service protecting South Wales today and ambitiously innovating for tomorrow.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Commissioners are advised to review this report for insights into the significant changes happening at SWFRS.

Contact Officer:		CFO Fin Monahan OBE DFC PhD Chief Fire Officer
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact

Appendices	
Appendix 1	South Wales Fire and Rescue Service Cultural Training Data

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APPENDIX 1

SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE CULTURAL TRAINING DATA

1.1 Conflict resolution training – 88 managers completed; 1 session left in June taking us to total 100 trained.

1.2 Taking Care of Behaviours training.

- Pilot sessions validated this innovative product.
- All new Whole-Time recruits on the last course undertook this training.
- 8 Group Managers complete (x22 due to be trained in total).
- All SLT to receive training on 7 May 25 as part of SLT strategic leader development package.
- On-Call recruit training is being developed as an on-line module.

1.3 Disciplinary & Grievance training

- Delivered: 20 trained (50 to be trained in total). Train the trainer course is underway.
- Target for 31 July 2025:
 - 7 WDS station
 - 2 RDS stations
 - 45 Station Managers/Commanders.
- Target for 31 October - complete workforce to be trained.

1.4 Media and Comms culture campaigns.

- Taking Care of Behavior, Bullying & Harassment, Workplace Sexual Harassment, Vexatious allegations, Public Harassment, Reporting Concerns campaigns underway.
- Developing media video content to reinforce messaging via microteaches.

1.5 Additional culture training/initiatives.

- Bullying Harassment and Victimisation for instructors at Cardiff Gate and Cadets - all Crew Mgrs, Watch Managers to be trained by the end of October 2025
- Conflict resolution training – 88 leaders trained (100 to be complete by the end June).

- Mandatory training:

70% - Inclusive Language 1,214 (of 1,734)

76% - Unconscious Bias 1,333 (of 1,733)

43% - Inclusive Leadership 329 (of 758)

76% - Safeguarding 1,313 (of 1,727)

- DICE Champions network – 35 signed up.
- Developed 12 mandatory 'leadership behaviours' masterclasses that are to be mandated to qualify for promotion in Promotions Reform project:
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Conducting Personal Reviews (inc difficult conversations)
 - Inclusive Language
 - Unconscious Bias
 - Inclusive Leadership
 - Safeguarding
 - Just Culture and FAIR Model
 - Taking Care of Behaviours
 - Managing wellbeing and mental health
 - Dignity at work
 - Coaching and mentoring
 - Handling workplace investigations



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

COMPLETED MANDATORY TRAINING

70%

INCLUSIVE
LANGUAGE

1,214 (of 1,734)

76%

UNCONSCIOUS
BIAS

1,333 (of 1,733)

43%

INCLUSIVE
LEADERSHIP

329 (of 758)

76%

SAFEGUARDING

1,313 (of 1,727)

DICE CHAMPIONS
NETWORK

35 Signed up

CONFLICT RESOLUTION
TRAINING

88 managers
completed it
(100 by the end June)

DEVELOPED 12 MANDATORY 'LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS' MASTERCLASSES:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict Resolution • Conducting Personal Reviews • Inclusive Language • Unconscious Bias • Inclusive Leadership • Safeguarding • Just and Fair Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking Care of Behaviours • Managing wellbeing and mental health • Dignity at work • Coaching and mentoring • Handling workplace investigations |
|---|---|

COURAGE TO ACT, COMPASSION TO CARE

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.iii
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE GROUP MANAGER, RESILIENCE AND PLANNING

EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, DEAN LOADER
REPORT PRESENTED BY GROUP MANAGER, PETER HOWARD-JONES

SUMMARY

The Resilience and Planning Team are responsible for several key elements to meet the organisation's legislative responsibilities under both the Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 and Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004. This report seeks to provide an overview of the Emergency Planning and preparedness undertaken by the Resilience and Planning team about:

- Major Event Planning
- Operational Planning for High Risk COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) sites
- Service Wide Business Continuity Planning
- Coordination of Departmental Business Continuity Planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation is that the Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service note this report as providing an update on progress.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Update on Progress

Major Event Planning

- Maintain multi-agency blue-light partnerships with both South Wales and Gwent Police Forces and Welsh Ambulance Service through weekly meetings to maintain holistic oversight on upcoming major events, ensuring a collaborative and proportionate approach to event planning.

- Maintenance and overview of the Services' events matrix, assessing fire safety legislation requirements, threat, and risk whilst maintaining business as usual activities and ensuring proportionate command overview of events.
- Planning has now been initiated for the UEFA 2028 European Football Championship, collaborating with blue-light partners. This work is very much in its infancy and it is anticipated that a project plan will be developed within the next quarter. This significant project will require engagement across a number of service areas and will seek to mitigate appropriate anticipated risks and threats identified.

Operational Planning for high risk COMAH sites

- Engagement with local stations and commanders to ensure the review and updates for operational tactical plans.
- Maintaining relationships with COMAH risk sites to ensure relevant changes are reflected to ensure operational preparedness.
- Support to Operations and Local Resilient Forum partners through awareness training and exercising at COMAH sites.

Service Wide Business Continuity Plans (BCPs)

- All service plans have been reviewed; Power, Pandemic, Adverse Weather, Industrial Action and Fuel Plans.
- Work is ongoing to improve highlighted elements through the review process across plans. e.g. petrol and power resilience.
- Auxiliary firefighters and control operators are being recruited to build numbers that will allow for maximum establishment.
- Continued focus on Industrial Action (IA) planning with contracted Incident Command provider.
- Current Recruitment process ongoing of Auxiliary Firefighters and Control Operators to build numbers to maximum establishment.
- The IA exercise for Strategic management is planned for Summer 2025 to test and further develop the existing plan.
- Completion of no-notice service wide Cyber exercise in February 2025 to test departmental BCPs in line with highlighted risk within Welsh

Government risk reporting. This exercise saw departmental BCPs enacted which effectively maintained organisational performance.

Co-ordination and testing of Departmental Business Continuity

Plans (BCPs)

- Professional Qualification achieved. Certificate Business Continuity Institute (CBCI) is working towards becoming an associate member the Business Continuity Institute (AMBCI).
- Investigating external Business Continuity (BC) training to increase organisational understanding to develop BCPs effectively.
- Departmental Business Impact Assessment activity has been captured and is being tracked. 13 departments have now completed analysis.
- The Resilience and Planning team Resilience Direct BC page is being developed to provide a resilient repository for BC plans and other essential policy documents.
- Work to improve visibility of departmental Business Impact Assessments (BIA) and BCP through monitoring on internal performance management software, including end-to-end activity. This will consist of the departments themselves preplanning BC activities.
- A training pack has been developed to raise awareness of BC responsibilities as a CCA Category 1 responder. It will be hosted on the internal staff training platform Ehyb.
- Face-to-face sessions are planned for National BC week aimed at managers with BIA and BCP responsibility. These sessions will be delivered in May 2025.

2. ISSUES

No significant issues to report in this period. There is ongoing management of workload to ensure progress is maintained on this project.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation is that the Commissioners for SWFRS note this report as providing an update on progress.

Contact Officer:	GM Peter Howard-Jones	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact

Appendices	
	None

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.iv
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

ANNUAL UPDATE 2024-2025 PEOPLE COMMITTEE

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

PRESENTING OFFICER ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER ALISON REED,
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE SERVICES

SUMMARY

This report informs Commissioners of the range of activity shared with the People Committee for either information or decision during the financial year 2024-2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners note the work of the People Committee.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report summarises the work that the People Committee has undertaken over the last 12 months.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 As Commissioners will be aware, the People Committee was established to demonstrate the Services commitment to ensuring that the Service has a well-equipped, skilled and motivated workforce, that is able to work safely and whose composition reflects the diverse communities it serves.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

Relevant impacts were identified and included within the reports identified at Appendix 1.

- 3.2

Regulatory, Strategy and Policy
Relevant impacts were identified and included within the reports identified at Appendix 1.
- 3.3

Resources, Assets and Delivery
Relevant impacts were identified and included within the reports identified at Appendix 1.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1

That Commissioners note and comment on the information presented to the People Committee.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1

That Commissioners note the work of the People Committee.

Contact Officer:	Alison Reed Director of People Services	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Title		

Appendices Appendix 1 Annual People Committee Update
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APPENDIX 1

REPORTS AND CIRCULARS RECEIVED BY THE PEOPLE COMMITTEE 2024/25

The People Committee met on the following dates during 2024/25:

- [25 July 2024](#)
- [28 November 2024](#)
- [7 February 2025](#)
- [27 March 2025](#)

The reports received by Commissioners at the meetings are listed below:

- **Alignment of the Service's Inclusive Action Plan and Strategic Equality Plan to the Morris Report Cultural Recommendations**
 - The report shared details of a mapping exercise undertaken to ensure the Service's Inclusive Action Plan aligned to the recommendations set out in the Morris Report. It also mapped the Strategic Equality Plan 2023-26 and the Commissioners Terms of Reference and the thematic reviews to ensure a coordinated approach.
- **Occupational Health Unit (OHU) Activity Report – 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**
 - This Occupational Health Unit (OHU) activity report spanned the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The report provided data on the Services expenditure, updates on occupational health initiatives and an outline of strategic development.
- **Annual Report on Grievance and Discipline activity for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**
 - This report provided a summary of grievance and discipline matters investigated by the Resolution Unit during the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. It also provided some trend analysis over the period of 2015 to 2024.
- **Whistleblowing/Complaints/Compliments/Concerns Report**
 - This report provided an overview of whistleblowing disclosures, complaints and compliments received by the Service during the financial year 2023/24. It also presented an overview of concerns raised through the FRS Speak-Up service since its introduction in April 2023. Due to the sensitive nature and GDPR considerations associated with this information, all information presented was anonymised.
- **Annual Review of Training, Learning and Development 2023/2024**
 - This report provided an overview of the Training & Development department's performance during 2023/2024, which includes highlight from each of the training lead areas that are delivered by Cardiff Gate Training & Development Centre (CGTDC). It also highlighted activity, development and advancements for the Service's Learning & Development team within 2023/2024.

- **Annual Review of Recruitment 2023/2024**
 - The report provided an overview of the activity of the Services recruitment function within 2023/2024. This included attraction, engagement and recruitment and selection activities.
- **Job Evaluation**
 - The Service undertook a job evaluation exercise between 2020 and 2022. Following this, the Service introduced a period of 12 months whereby no further job evaluations were to be undertaken unless they were new posts or where a department had undertaken a formal restructure. This report updated Commissioners on the outcomes of the original evaluation and provided forward plans for the scheme.
- **Gender Pay Gap 2024**
 - The report presented the data in relation to the GPG figures for 2024 and the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service.
- **Sickness Absence and Wellbeing Overview**
 - The report provided information on the Service's sickness absence statistics for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. Where appropriate, it also stated relevant comparisons against previous year's performance.
- **Formalisation of a Talent Management Programme**
 - The report highlighted some of the Service gaps relative to these areas, some for information and awareness, and some recommended 'initiatives' to facilitate diversity, strategic succession planning, talent management, and structured employee development to further progress SWFRS in achieving its ambition to become a leading Fire and Rescue Service in the UK, recognised as an employer of choice, fostering high performing workplaces.
- **Recruitment and Promotion Overview 2024-2025**
 - The report provided an overview of the Service's:
 - Operational recruitment campaigns for 2024
 - Operational recruitment plans for 2025 (inc promotions)
 - Current Corporate and pipeline campaigns
- **Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity Overview**
 - The report provided an overview of all Diversity, Inclusion, Cohesion and Equity (DICE) advancements that South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) have made. Specific reference was made to the Inclusive Action Plan and the Morris review recommendations following mapping of such in June 2024.
- **Pay Policy Statement 2025/6**
 - The report shared the forward-looking statement for approval by Commissioners.

- **Pre-recruitment Governance**
 - The report introduced pre-recruitment governance process to ensure effective and efficient use of resources as well as recruitment practices.
- **NFCC Commissioned Report: Independent Challenge and Support Panel**
 - The Independent Challenge and Support Panel was established at the request of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to provide scrutiny, challenge, support and advice to the NFCC on its culture and inclusion improvement work, including delivery against the NFCC Culture Action Plan. This report shared the final report and findings.
- **Agile Working Framework**
 - The report provided an update on the work to develop an agile working framework and the approach to implementation.

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.v
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT & PROPERTY

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY INTERIM TREASURER

REPORT PRESENTED BY LISA MULLAN HEAD OF FINANCE,
PROCUREMENT & PROPERTY

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report on the work of the Finance & Audit Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Commissioners note the work undertaken by the Finance & Audit Committee during the municipal year.

1. ISSUE

- 1.1 Commissioners will be aware; the Finance & Audit Committee was established to demonstrate the Authority's commitment to the efficient and effective deployment of public resources and the attainment of related performance targets.
- 1.2 The Finance & Audit Committee is responsible for:
 - the planning and management of the Authority's financial resources, including authorising expenditure, virement of funds and donations of equipment or other property within the remit of the Authority's Financial Regulations.
 - overseeing the financial reporting process and scrutiny of financial performance, including the extent that this affects the Authority's exposure to risk and weakens the control environment.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 contains the Annual Report of the Work of the Finance & Audit Committee.

2. IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Community and Environment

2.1.1 This report does not have any community and environment implications.

2.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

2.2.1 There are no regulatory, strategy or policy implications arising out of this report.

2.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

2.3.1 There are no resource, asset or delivery implications to this report.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Commissioners note the work undertaken by the Finance & Audit Committee during the municipal year.

Contact Officer:	Lisa Mullan - Head of Finance, Procurement & Property
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Background Papers:	Date	Source/Contact
None		

Appendices:	
Appendix 1	Annual Report of the Work of the FA Committee

Appendix 1

REPORTS RECEIVED BY THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE (FAC) 2024/25

The FAC met on the following dates during 2024/25:

- [19 April 2024](#)
- [26 July 2024](#)
- [20 September 2024](#)
- [19 December 2024](#)
- [21 March 2025](#)

Annual and ad-hoc reports received by Commissioners at committee meetings are listed below:

- **Community Safety Funding 2024 – 2025 19 April 2024, ACFO Technical Services**
 - The revenue grant funding receivable from Welsh Government (WG) is being reduced in community fire safety programmes by £128k to South Wales Fire and rescue Service (SWFRS). This funding directly impacts Arson Reduction and Innovations inactivates by £108k and £20k respectively. Commissioners were asked to agree and provide revenue budget support of £20k for a period of 6 months, for the continuation of two distinct arson reduction activities impacted by the loss of grants, these being the out of hours services for Domestic Violence and Cylinder Retrieval.
- **Register of Gifts & Hospitality 2023-2024 – 19 April 2024, ACO Corporate Services**
 - The report provided Commissioners with an overview of the gifts and hospitality recorded on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality for the 2023 - 2024 financial year.
- **Business Plan Actions Report 2023-24 Quarter 3 – 19 April 2024, ACO Corporate Services**
 - This report provided Commissioners with an overview of the Business Plan Actions Report Health Check 2023 – 2024 Quarter 3 (1st October – 31st December 2023). The report goes on to consider the findings in the context of the unprecedented actions taken by WG to replace the Local Authority Councillors with Commissioners as the Fire Authority, shortly after this reporting period. The report also describes the proposal to strengthen the planning and reporting processes within the Service to provide more balanced and accurate reporting in the future.

- **Revenue Outturn Report 2023/24 – 26 July 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property**
 - Subject to the external audit process, the report outlined the revenue outturn position for the financial year 2023/24 and resultant impact on reserves.
- **Capital Outturn Report 2023/24 – 26 July 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property**
 - The report provided the capital outturn position for the year ended 31 March 2024, the financing arrangements and the budget slippage required to complete capital schemes in 2024/25. In addition, a treasury management update was provided for the first quarter of 2024/25.
- **Audit Enquiries to Those Charged with Governance and Management (Audit Wales) – 26 July 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - This report detailed a draft response to the Audit Wales paper requesting information from 'Those Charged with Governance' as part of the assurance and audit process for the statutory Statement of Accounts 2023/24.
- **Appointment of the Head of Communications and Engagement – 26 July 2024, Director of Strategic Change and Transformation**
 - The report presented, the Service must prioritise communication and engagement with staff, partners and communities to ensure transparency, clarity and timeliness of messaging. This request to extend the permanent staffing establishment follows the appointment of a temporary Director of Strategic Change and Transformation and the further identification of areas of improvement that will play a key role in the success of delivering cultural and process improvements.
- **Annual Audit Plan 2024 (Audit Wales) – 26 July 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement and Property**
 - The Auditor general has completed his planning work and consequently drafted the attached audit plan which their statutory responsibilities as SWFRSs their obligations under the Code of Audit Practice. The plan sets out the work audit teams of focus during 2024. The plan also sets out the estimated audit fee payable to Audit Wales, audit team details and key dates for delivering activities and planned outputs.
- **Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24 – 26 July 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - This report provides the Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2024 which will be subject to the external audit process outlined in the above audit plan.

- **Performance Report – Strategic Performance Indicators 2023-2024 – 26 July 2024, ACFO Service Delivery**
 - The report presents a consideration of the Services performance against the Strategic Performance Indicators compared to the predicted outcomes for 2023/2024.
- **2023/24 Annual Treasury Management Review – 20 September 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - To consider the results of treasury management activities for the year ending 31 March 2024, in accordance with the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24.
- **Finance Team Restructure – 20 September 2024, Interim Chief Fire Office**
 - This report provides an overview of a plan to restructure the finance team and realign capacity and expertise with Service needs. This report was produced as a response to the Service's inability to attract and recruit experienced and qualified finance professionals into several vacant roles in the finance team
- **Audit Wales Certificate of Compliance – Improvement Plan 2024/25 – 20 September 2024, T/Head of Corporate Support**
 - The Wales Fire and Rescue Service Circular number: W-FRSC (2021)07 requires Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales to continue to report against the Local Government Measure 2009 until a new National Framework and revised arrangements have been introduced. As a result of the Auditor Generals work, they believe that the Authority has discharged its duties under section 15(6) to (9) of the Measure and has acted in accordance with WG guidance sufficiently to discharge its duties.
- **Redevelopment of New Inn Fire Station – 19 December 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - Following a procurement tender process, this report requests approval and formal award of the contract for demolition and construction of New Inn Fire Station in line with the constitution and contract standing orders. Contract award will allow the project to proceed as planned.
- **Treasury Management Mid Term Report 2024/2025 – 19 December 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - The Treasury Management Mid-Term Review Report provides an update on the Authority's treasury activities for the period 1 April – 30 September 2024 and in doing so considers this position within the framework of the treasury management strategy statement (TMSS).
- **Revenue Budget Consultation Report 2025/26 – 19 December 2024, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - This report presents budget information in preparation for consultation with Local Authorities and setting the 2025/26 revenue budget. The report provides context and identifies options for budget setting considering the Fire Authority's increasing cost base, pressure on the current financial year's budget and the challenges faced by our Local Authority funders.

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

- **The Auditor General's Governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities Report and the Authority's Management Response – 19 December, T/Head of Corporate Support**
 - As part of the Auditor General's local government studies programme in 2023/24, the governance arrangements across the three Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales were reviewed. A summary report was published in September 2024, which included recommendations that would ensure that weaknesses in the current governance model could be addressed. The Authority provided a management response to the necessary recommendations on 24th September 2024.
- **Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 – 21 March 2025, Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - The Annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement and associated information is required to be approved in advance of the new financial year. The strategy provides the necessary framework from which officers will manage treasury activities and the Fire Authority will assess performance and manage risk.
- **Establishment of a Portfolio Management Office (PMO) – 21 March 2025 Director of Strategic Change and Transformation**
 - The report suggest the Service must prioritise how it builds its capacity for change and transformation. The report outlines this could be achieved through suitable resourcing and development of capability and capacity to effectively manage portfolio, programmes and projects. Furthermore, by establishing a permanent Portfolio Management Office (PMO) the Service will develop clear business cases for change and improvement that show what the impact, costs, benefits and outcomes of improvements will be and make sure they are evaluated properly. This will also improve how we communicate the progress of the transformation programmes and underpin reporting. The report follows the appointment of the Director of Strategic Change and Transformation and the further identification of areas of improvement that will play a key role in the success of delivering cultural and process improvements. The point of timelines being in place was made to highlight that full and sustainable implementation of all the recommendations within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) culture and values review and any other associated reports can be met, as part of the Service's wider transformation and improvement programmes.

Cyclical reports received by Commissioners at every meeting are listed below;

- **Revenue Monitoring report 2023/24 and 2024/25 Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - The revenue monitoring report provides details of the annual revenue budget and associated information for the year ending 31 March 2025 and is updated at various points throughout the year, i.e. finance and audit committee dates.

- **Capital Monitoring report 2023/24 and 2024/25 Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - The capital monitoring report provides details of the capital budget, transactions to date and the forecast year end position for the year ending 31 March 2025 and is updated, as above.
- **Internal Audit Progress update 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 Head of Finance, Procurement & Property**
 - This report updates Commissioners on progress being made against the Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24.
- **Performance Report – Strategic Performance Indicators 2024-2025 ACFO Service Delivery**
 - To consider the organisation's performance against the Strategic Performance Indicators compared to the projected outcomes for each quarter in 2024/2025.

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SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.vi
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE & TRANSFORMATION

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC CHANGE,
TRANSFORMATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE &
TRANSFORMATION

PRESENTING OFFICER THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE &
TRANSFORMATION, DOMINIC MIKA

SUMMARY

This report is the annual report on the work of the Strategic Change Transformation Culture Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Commissioners note the work undertaken by the Strategic Change Transformation and Culture Committee.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the Welsh Government intervention to transfer the governance functions of the Fire Authority to four appointed Commissioners, their terms of reference included implementation of “all the recommendations of the review of SWFRS culture and values within deadlines stipulated in it” and full implementation of Thematic Reviews.
- 1.2 Through the development and introduction of a new Governance Structure and approval of our new Governance Framework, the Strategic Change Transformation and Culture Committee was established on 21 February 2025.

- 1.3 The Committee provided governance and scrutiny for the newly established Service Improvement Board: Culture and Service Improvement Board: Thematic.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The Committee demonstrates the Commissioners commitment to ensuring that the Service is well-equipped, skilled and motivated to discharge the recommendations laid out in the Morris Review and the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser and Inspector for Wales (CFRAI) Thematic Reviews as well as any other transformation and cultural change work.
- 2.2 The Committee will serve to assist Commissioners in discharging their own terms of reference as set out by Welsh Government specifically those in relation to the implementation of the recommendations of the review of SWFRS culture and values and the CFRAI's thematic reviews.
- 2.3 The Committee is responsible for reviewing and/or scrutinising and/or challenging where necessary decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the discharge of recommendations laid out in the Morris Review and the CFRAI's Thematic Reviews.
- 2.4 Reviewing and/or scrutinising and/or challenging where necessary, decisions made, or actions taken in connection with the transformational change programme or any other transformation or culture change work;
- 2.5 Monitoring the implementation of cultural change by the Service; and
- 2.6 Receiving departmental updates from Communication and Engagement, Planning, Performance and Statistics, ICT and the Transformation Team.

3. REPORTING

- 3.1 The Committee will provide a six-monthly progress update to the Board of Commissioners specifically on the discharge of recommendations laid out in the Morris Review and the CFRAI's Thematic Reviews. These will include:
 - Thematic Review – Operational Training Update
 - Thematic Review – Grenfell Update
 - Thematic Review – Operational Excellence Update
 - Thematic Review – Broadening the role of Firefighters in Wales Update

- Update on Cultural Review recommendations
 - Prioritisation of projects and tasks within the Transformation Programme
 - Highlight reports from Transformation Programme
 - Departmental Updates
- 3.2 The Committee will provide a general annual report to the Board of Commissioners on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.
- 3.3 Following the establishment of the board of 21 February 2025, the proposed Terms of Reference for Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee were approved. Our Vision, Mission & Values Review was presented and Commissioners provided scrutiny. The progress on delivery of Independent Culture Review Report Recommendations was presented.
- 3.4 Following this the Service has provided update on prioritisation of programmes and projects within the transformation programme, continued updates from the Thematic reviews. Updates on the new Communication and Engagement Strategy, Planning Performance, Risk and Statistics Team and comprehensive updates on the progress made towards cultural improvements.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Community and Environment

- 4.1.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – Key programmes of work are dedicated to these areas.
- 4.1.2 Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act – Delivering culture change supports the general principles of the WFGA and positive ways of working.
- 4.1.3 Socio Economic Duty – Changes delivered will support effective governance and decision making.
- 4.1.4 Consultation and Communications – A dedicated programme of work is designed to improve this area.

4.1.5 Consultation with Representative Bodies – Implementation of this proposal for sign-off of completed recommendations provides for Rep Body input on progress and dissemination of outcomes.

4.1.6 Impact Assessment – Equality Impact Assessment will reflect this process when agreed.

4.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

4.2.1 Governance and Strategy and Policy and Procedure programmes directly align to improvement in these areas.

4.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

4.3.1 This report does not require allocation of additional resources. Specific resources will be requested aligned to dedicated programmes and through dedicated papers.

5. **EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 This report is the annual report on the work of the Strategic Change Culture Committee for the year 2024/2025.

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 That Commissioners note the work undertaken by the Strategic Change Transformation and Culture Committee.

Contact Officer:	Dominic Mika Director of Strategic Change & Transformation	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee Papers	16 May 2025	https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2025/05/Strategic-Change-Transformation-and-Culture-Committee-Friday-16-May-2025-Rolling-Document.pdf
Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee Papers	21 February 2025	https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2025/02/Strategic-Change-Transformation-and-Culture-Committee-Friday-21-February-2025-Rolling-Document.pdf

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.vii
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE AREA MANAGER, RISK REDUCTION

SWFRS AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM (AFA) RESPONSE CHANGE UPDATE

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, BRIAN THOMPSON
REPORT PRESENTED BY AREA MANAGER, MIKE WYATT

SUMMARY

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) launched its revised Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response model on January 6, 2025. This model provides operational response to residential premises, specialised housing, schools, and heritage sites. We continue to monitor and assess the impact of the change moving forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation is that the Commissioners for SWFRS note this report as providing an update on progress.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Update on Progress

1.1.1 Our response strategy for AFAs changed on January 6, 2025. Our AFA response model ensures an emergency response to all residential premises, including specialised housing such as sheltered accommodation and extra care facilities, schools, educational facilities, and heritage sites at all hours. This fully aligns with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MWWFRS).

1.1.2 Our AFA webpage is still live. It continues to provide information and guidance on the changes and allows stakeholders to raise questions.

1.1.3 We have transitioned to a monitor and review phase of the project, during which we continue to evaluate the changes' impact on the community, stakeholders, and the Service.

1.1.4 The go-live date for NHS premises was the 7th of April 2025. This delay allowed sufficient time for these premises to revise policies and review their fire response procedures.

1.2 Exemption Process

1.2.1 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) lead for Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) has guided six categories of risk of non-attendance at AFA's. These categories are:

- Individual fire risks – Prevention intervention
- Societal risk – Protection intervention
- Firefighter fire risk – Response intervention
- Environmental fire risk – Response/ Specialist/ Partner intervention
- Heritage risk – Protection/ Response/ Specialist/ Partner intervention
- Community fire risk – Bespoke intervention

1.2.2 The Service has used the NFCC guidance to determine whether an exemption should be granted. To achieve this, we have expanded on each factor to determine what facilities and existing procedures each building has and applied a scoring system to the responses. This may include a fully trained, dedicated fire response team. The Service has also considered the number of UwFS each building has had over the last three years.

2. ISSUES

2.1 The Service continues to receive and respond to exemption requests. The impact of fires on economic and social value within these requests is regularly highlighted as a risk. However, our exemption process does not deem it a separate risk category; instead, it is intrinsically linked to risk reduction in all six categories. By its nature, reducing fire risk in each category will reduce the economic or social value impact risk.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 **Community and Environment**

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

There will be no impact on faiths or beliefs, including sensitive times of day or year. This change in procedure neither benefits nor disadvantages anyone with any protected characteristic.

3.1.2 Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act:

This change positively contributes to the Act by continuing to respond to schools and heritage sites.

3.1.3 Socio-Economic Duty

The changes to our AFA response strategy will ensure that all domestic residences continue to receive an emergency response.

3.1.4 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

3.2 **Regulatory, Strategy and Policy**

3.2.1 The British Standard for Fire Alarms, in Clause 19 and subclause 35.2.7, states the need to avoid delay in summoning the fire and rescue service when a residential care premises' fire detection and fire alarm system operates.

3.2.2 The proposed response change to AFAs includes a continued unfiltered or unchallenged 24-hour response to residential care premises; therefore, the proposed model has no impact on the British Standards.

3.2.3 Service Policy Updates are being made to CM-04 mobilising procedures, OP-09.008 - Unwanted Fire Signal Reduction, SOP 6.18.

3.2.4 National Policy. The majority of UKFRS are currently updating their AFA response policies. The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is creating a national guidance working group for reducing UwFS. SWFRS is represented by this NFCC working group.

3.3 **Resources, Assets and Delivery**

3.3.1 Human Resources and People Development

A project team has been established and consists of members from the Operations department, Business Fire Safety (BFS), Control, Service Performance and Communication (SPC), and Media and Communications.

- 3.3.2 Assets and Resources
- An education and engagement campaign will incur promotion and media costs. A budget has been agreed.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 From January 6th to April 29th, we attended 1,148 incidents, compared with 1,917 during the same period in 2024. This is an overall reduction of 769 calls or 40%, with further reductions anticipated following the go-live date for NHS premises on April 7th.
- 4.2 To date, 14 exemption requests have been received, 11 of which were granted and 3 declined. Appendix 1 provides full details of these.
- 4.3 Next Steps

4.3.1 We will continue to monitor and review the number of calls and react accordingly to any identified trends.

4.3.2 We continue to respond to all requests for exemptions.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The recommendation is that the Commissioners for SWFRS note this report as providing an update on progress.

Contact Officer:	Brian Thompson ACFO Technical Services	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
Time for Action. A report exploring the impact of false alarms in Wales.	2015	Welsh Gov.
Fire False Alarm Reduction – South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.	May 2023	Audit Wales.
NFCC – Developing a risk methodology, other building fire, draft report version 3	March 2023	NFCC
Appendices		
Appendix 1 – Exemption Requests		

Report Title: AFA Response Change Proposal – Update for Commissioners (May 2025)

APPENDIX 1 – Exemption Requests

	Name of Building	Address	Building use	AFA's Last 3 years	Possible Mitigating Factors	Other Information	Exemption Decision Yes/no
1	Cardiff Royal Infirmary	Glossop Road, Cardiff, CF24 0SZ	Cardiff Royal Infirmary provides outpatient services for multiple health care provisions serving up to 660 outpatients of varying dependency levels.	36	Grade II listed.	Non-sleeping building	Yes - Granted
2	St David Hospital	Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff, CF11 9XB	A PFI hospital with four inpatient Gerontology wards and up to 100 beds. Other Departments include: ECAS - Elderly Care Assessment Service, Children's Centre, CAMH Unit (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Unit), General outpatient departments	8	SWFRS have placed an exemption on residential care/nursing homes as part of their new AFA response model. St David's community A hospital would resemble this form of facility with	Inpatient and outpatient facilities serve up to 500 patients daily. Approximately 280 members of staff during daytime hours, with reduced staff covering the four inpatient wards at night (4 staff per	Yes - Granted

			(Physiotherapy, SALT, Occupational Therapy & Podiatry) Dental care and education.		identified life risk and reduced staffing levels at night, with no dedicated on-site Fire response teams.	ward).	
3	Barry Hospital	Colcot Road, Barry, CF62 8YH	Inpatient and Outpatient facility serving up to 300+ patients daily. 2 inpatient wards, up to 40 beds. Other Departments include: Cariad Unit – Young Onset Dementia Services, Vale Locality Mental Services Outpatients, Minor Injuries, X-Ray and Outpatients.	8 (27)?	SWFRS has placed an exemption on residential care/nursing homes as part of their new AFA response model. Barry Community Hospital would resemble this form of facility with identified life risk and reduced staffing levels at night, with no dedicated on-site Fire response teams	Two inpatient Gerontology wards, one of which is Mental Health Services for Older Persons (MHSOP), with up to 40 beds spread across both wards.	Yes - Granted
4	Canolfan Iechyd Genomic Cymru (CIGC)	Cardiff Edge Business Park Longwood Drive	Facility which houses 3	4	Urgent testing for cancer	Non-sleeping building	Yes - Granted

		Whitchurch Cardiff CF14 7YU	National genomic health organisations. The All-Wales Medical Genomics Service (AWMGS) provides genomic medicine services to the entire population of Wales. This includes a national testing service, hosting regional clinical services and clinic spaces for Southeast Wales, and serving patients with cancer and rare diseases. The laboratory also provides urgent prenatal testing, which, if delayed, could lead to 'wrongful births' for families who have genetic conditions.		and genomic defects would not be possible, leading to delayed access to lifesaving and life-prolonging therapies. This would impact a particularly vulnerable patient cohort across the whole of Wales.		
5	Maelfa Health & Wellbeing Centre	Round Wood Llanederyn Cardiff CF23 9PF	Outpatient facility serving a multitude of healthcare provisions. The	4		This facility provides multiple community services that	Yes - Granted

			building provides access to GPs and consultants for various health provisions plus treatment rooms.			cannot easily be relocated. The loss of the facility could mean community residents would not be able to receive the required healthcare provisions, which would detrimentally impact residents' health across Cardiff and the Vale. There are also no dedicated fire response teams, and an L1 fire alarm system was installed to ensure the earliest fire warning. The building has produced a low number of recorded AFAs	
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						over the last 12 months.	
6	Rookwood Hospital	Fairwater Road Llandaff Cardiff CF5 2YN	An outpatient facility for approximately 120 patients daily.	31	Losing the provision on this site would include the loss of the Artificial Limbs and Appliances Centre, where patient critical work for manufacturing and fitting artificial limbs is carried out. ALAS Services are commissioned on an all-Wales basis, with this site being one of only three in Wales.	Parts of the Hospital site are Grade II listed and would sit within the new SWFRS AFA response model. Even considering the societal risks for healthcare provisions, the site does not operate a full fire response team function with limited staffing levels at certain times. A continued response to this facility would also be in line with the SWFRS' new AFA response model for attending heritage buildings.	Yes - Granted

7	St Mary's Pharmaceutical Unit	20 Field Way Cardiff CF14 4HY	Approximately 40 staff members operate between 0730-1730 hrs, Monday-Friday, and Saturday am only. Pharmaceutical production, manufacture and storage. Additionally, Clinical Engineering maintain, repairs and tests clinical appliances on the upper floor of the premises. Chemotherapy for all Cardiff and Vale patients is prepared on site. Commercial suppliers would be a contingency; however, due to their complexity and shelf life, not all products can be outsourced. Additionally, the capacity within the	0	Parenteral Nutrition for adults, children and neonates is prepared on site for Cardiff and vale patients and again the contingency of commercial suppliers is fragile and short notice response would be limited. Physical assets (equipment on site) approx. £3million to replace. Medicines stock £2million annual turnover for the non-sterile and sterile manufacturing unit hence stock of over £200k always held. Medicines stock Chemotherapy,	Non-sleeping building.	Yes - Granted
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			commercial sector is limited and cannot be guaranteed at short notice – Cancer patients would be significantly impacted.		Clinical trials and Advanced Therapies will be worth over £ 1 million on-site. Clinical engineering maintains various medical devices and equipment, including dialysis machines, patient monitors and ventilators.		
8	Prince Charles Hospital	Gurnos Road Merthyr Tydfil CF47 9DT	Twenty-four inpatient wards are situated across all floors, with approximately 30 patients per ward. A&E Trauma department, Outpatient facility, Heli-Pad service, Macmillan Services.	124	With PCH's high-rise construction and current construction developments, it is not reasonably practicable to move towards a standard PDA response. A single pump attendance to any AFA at this facility would substantially reduce the risk,	EN 79'10 served on PCH 02/12/2010. With extensive construction works taking place since 2010, PCH is a working hospital within a construction site, this continues to pose extensive fire management issues daily. Extensive works are currently	No - Not Granted

					reduce full PDA responses, and limit disruption to SWFRS core functions.	(2025) taking place adjacent to and throughout the main theatre / ITU departments. The building has a 24/7 fire response team.	
9	Princess Of Wales Hospital	Coity Road Bridgend Mid Glamorgan CF31 1RQ	General District Hospital, with an A&E trauma unit. 22 inpatient wards situated on the ground and first floor, approx. 30 patients per ward.	37	With POWH's current construction developments, moving towards a standard PDA response is not reasonably practicable. A single pump attendance to any AFA at this facility would substantially reduce the risk, reduce full PDA responses, and limit disruption to SWFRS core functions.	EN4/19 served 05/04/20219 withdrawn 02/01/2025 due to risk removed because of structural works. Structural roof repairs were identified throughout POWH, and an extensive construction programme is in place. The building has a 24/7 fire response team.	No - Not Granted

10	Royal Glamorgan Hospital	Ynysmaerdy, Llantrisant, CF72 8XR	General District Hospital, with A&E trauma unit.	45	Given the unique service provided by this installation, it is not reasonably practicable to move towards a standard PDA response. A single pump attendance to any AFA at this facility would substantially reduce the risk, reduce full PDA responses, and limit disruption to SWFRS core functions.	The building has a 24/7 fire response team.	No – Not Granted
11	Chepstow Community Hospital	Tempest Way Chepstow Monmouthshire NP16 5YX	The 32-bed hospital consists of primary, community, secondary, and adult social care services delivered from one location and, as such, is a new approach to providing care. In addition to hospital services, the building	8	Exemption is requested because the design, management and services provided at this property and the challenges faced in the event of a fire are identical to	32 sleeping risk. No fire response team.	Yes - Granted

			also houses two GP practices (Mount Pleasant and Town Gate Surgeries).		those of a Residential Care Home.		
12	Twyn Glas	Twyn Glas, Bryn Rd, Blackwood NP12 3LZ	Twyn Glas is a care in the community home provided by ABUHB for the treatment, care and support of up to 5 adults with profound learning disabilities combined with complex physical and sensory disabilities.	6	Exemption is requested because the design, management and services provided at this property and the challenges faced in the event of a fire are identical to those of a Residential Care Home.	5 people are sleeping. Similar to residential care. No fire response team.	Yes - Granted
13	Velindre Cancer Centre	Velindre Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF14 2TL	Velindre Cancer Centre is a specialist treatment, teaching, research, and development centre for non-surgical tertiary oncology services for patients across south-east Wales: The majority of services are	15	Outside regular hours [19:00 to 07:59 (Mon – Fri), weekends and holidays], the site has one occupied area (first floor ward) and has reduced staffing [7 staff plus one security] who are response for the	30 inpatients. Community loss.	Yes - Granted

			<p>outpatient diagnostics and treatment (radiotherapy and chemotherapy), but the site has a 30-bed inpatient ward. Building occupancy is variable, but there are more than 500 members of the general public on site during regular hours, with up to 32 sleeping patients overnight. The site houses the Velindre Oncology Academy, which provides specialist training to NHS staff. The site has an Aseptic Suite which manufactures, stores, and distributes chemotherapy [cytotoxic] drugs [up to £1m value].</p>		care of up to 30 patients; therefore, any care staff taken off the ward reduces the provision of care (including advanced life support) to dependent patients.		
14	Welsh Blood Service Headquarters	Ely Valley Road Talbot Green PONTYCLUN	The site processes and manufactures blood and blood	0	The site is key to the collection, processing, and	Key national loss.	Yes - Granted

		CF72 9WB	<p>products for the NHS in Wales and beyond, with up to 70% of Welsh Blood stocks on site at any one time.</p> <p>WBS are the primary buyer and supplier of other blood-derived medicines (immunoglobulin), which are irreplaceable on behalf of NHS Wales. The transplantation laboratory [WTAIl] is the only laboratory of its type in Wales, delivering a number of critical specialist services to support transplantation in Wales.</p> <p>The site houses the WBS fleet, including mobile donation trailers.</p> <p>Therefore, as a single national service any temporary or</p>		<p>distribution of blood products to NHS Wales and beyond; as noted, WBS are a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act and the primary supplier of blood and other blood-derived products for the NHS in Wales and also provides mutual aid, when required, to other parts of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>The site also provides critical services to support organ transplants across Wales and the UK [WTAIl], with the sole laboratory in Wales.</p>		
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			<p>prolonged loss of provision will immediately impact on the availability of blood and blood products, including lifesaving urgent blood via blue light delivery to actively bleeding patients and for routine surgeries immediately impacting on patients in Wales. Mutual aid from across the border will not easily be available on this scale without significant implications on blood stocks across the UK.</p>				
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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 8.viii
6 JUNE 2025

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT AND PROPERTY

ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2025 – AUDIT WALES

THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

REPORT APPROVED BY HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT AND
PROPERTY, LISA MULLAN

REPORT PRESENTED BY HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT AND
PROPERTY, LISA MULLAN

SUMMARY

This report presents the Draft Audit Plan 2025 issued by Audit Wales for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. It outlines the scope, timing, and fee structure of the statutory audit work to be undertaken in the 2025-26 financial year.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Commissioners note the contents of the Draft Audit Plan 2025.
2. Subject to any comments raised by Commissioners, it is proposed that the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property be authorised to provide final feedback to Audit Wales and agree the final version of the Audit Plan on behalf of the Authority.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Auditor General for Wales is required to audit the financial statements of the Authority and assess whether it has made proper arrangements to secure value for money in its use of resources. The Draft Audit Plan 2025 sets out the approach to financial and performance audit work for the year ahead.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 presents the plan in draft.

2. ISSUE

2.1 In summary the plan covers:

- **Audit of Financial Statements** - including key risks around management override, pension liabilities, asset valuations, and the adoption of IFRS 16.
- **Performance Audit Work** - focusing on financial sustainability and compliance with the Well-being of Future Generations Act.
- **Audit Fee** - estimated at £91k.
- **Audit Timetable** - runs from planning in February 2025 to reporting by 31 October 2025.

2.2 The final plan will be agreed following any feedback or discussion.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 None directly arising from this report.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 The plan ensures compliance with statutory audit obligations and contributes to robust governance and accountability.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 The audit fee of £91,111 is provided for within existing budgets.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That Commissioners note the content of the Draft Audit Plan 2025.

4.2 Subject to any comments raised by Commissioners, it is proposed that the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property be authorised to provide final feedback to Audit Wales and agree the final version of the Audit Plan on behalf of the Authority.

Contact Officer:	Lisa Mullan Head of Finance, Procurement and Property	
Background Papers:	Date	Source / Contact
Draft Audit Plan 2025	2025	Audit Wales

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South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – Audit Plan 2025

Audit year: 2024-25

Date issued: April 2025

Document reference: XXXXA2025

This document is a draft version pending further discussions with the audited and inspected body. Information may not yet have been fully verified and should not be widely distributed.

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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay. Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

Introduction



Adrian Crompton

Auditor General
for Wales

I am pleased to share my 2025 Audit Plan. The Plan sets out how I will undertake your audit.

My audit team has developed the Plan following a structured and risk-based planning process, which will remain ongoing throughout the audit. My [Code of Audit Practice](#) provides further detail on how my audit and certain other functions are to be carried out by my auditors.

At the core of all our work is our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of professional integrity, objectivity, independence and audit quality. Our three lines of assurance model (page 21) sets out how we will ensure those standards of quality are met. Our latest annual quality report, [Audit Quality Report 2024](#), provides more information about our audit quality arrangements.

My audit team will work constructively with your staff to understand the issues you are facing, ensure the audit process operates as smoothly as possible, and provide valuable insights about any areas for improvement.

My local performance audit work programme, as outlined in this Plan, sits alongside other [national audit work](#) that may include coverage of your organisation. Local performance audit work may also inform wider national reporting.

Should you have any questions about your audit my audit team will be happy to discuss them with you. They will also keep you regularly updated as work progresses.

Our aims and ambitions

Our purpose



Assure people that public money is being managed well



Explain how that money is being spent



Inspire the public sector to improve

Our vision



Fully exploiting our unique perspective, expertise and depth of insight



Strengthening our position as an authoritative, trusted and independent voice



Increasing our visibility, influence, and relevance



Being a model organisation for the public sector in Wales and beyond

Our areas of focus



A strategic, dynamic, and high-quality audit programme



A targeted and impactful approach to communications and influencing



A culture and operating model that enables us to thrive

You can find out more about Audit Wales in our [Annual Plan 2024-25](#) and Our [Strategy 2022-27](#).

Financial audit work

Audit of financial statements

I am required to issue a report on your financial statements (and the Firefighters Pension Fund) which includes an opinion on their 'truth and fairness' and their proper preparation in accordance with accounting and legal requirements.

I will also report by exception on a number of matters which are set out in more detail in our Statement of Responsibilities.

In addition to my responsibilities for auditing the Authority's financial statements, I also have responsibility for responding to questions and objections about the accounts from local electors (additional fees will be charged for this work, if necessary).

There have been no limitations imposed on me in planning the scope of this audit.

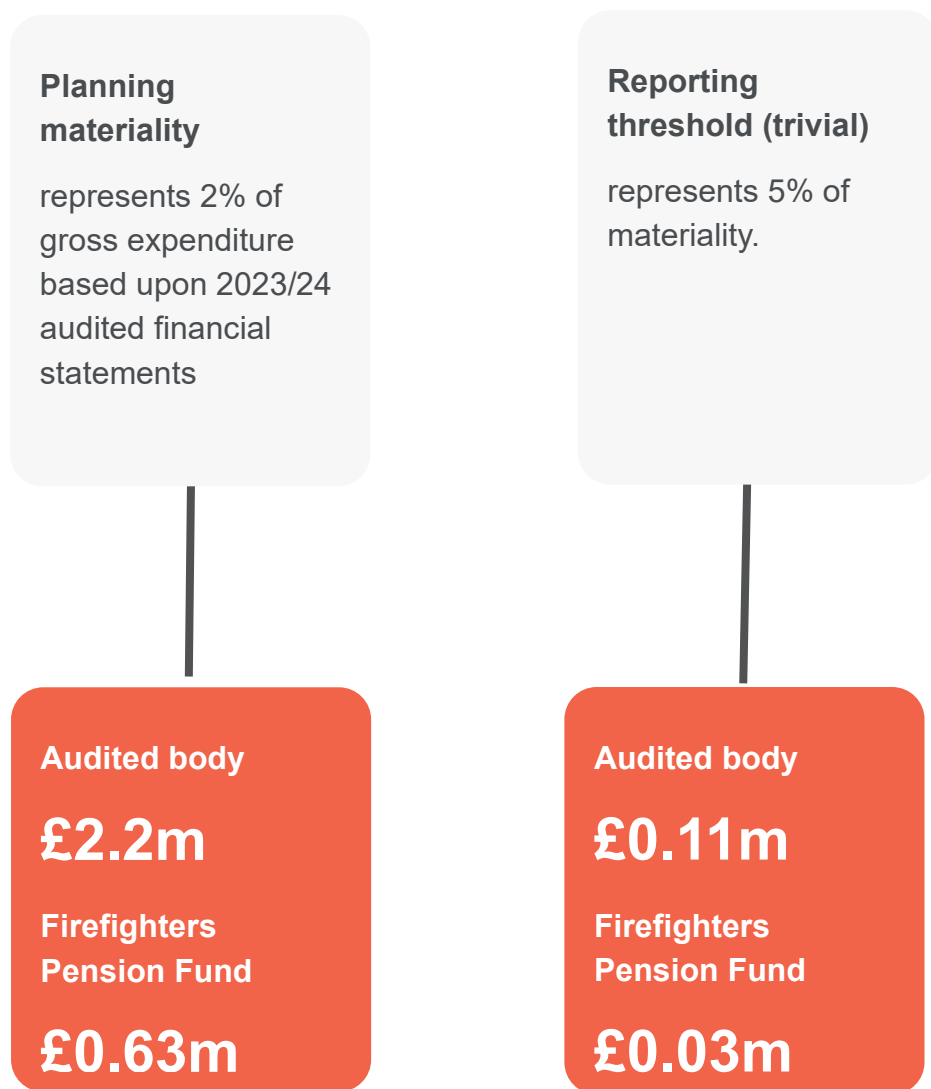
Financial statements materiality

I do not seek to obtain absolute assurance on the truth and fairness of the financial statements and related notes but adopt a concept of materiality. My aim is to identify material misstatements, that is, those that might result in a reader of the accounts being misled. Materiality applies not only to financial misstatements, but also to disclosure requirements and adherence to the applicable accounting framework and law.

I set planning and performance materiality to:

- Determine the level of misstatement that could cause the user of the accounts to be misled;
- Assist in the scoping of our audit approach and resultant audit tests;
- Determine sample sizes;
- Assess the effect of known and likely misstatements in the financial statements; and
- Report to those charged with governance any unadjusted misstatements above a trivial level, our reporting threshold.

The levels at which I judge such misstatements to be material is set out below.



There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the user of the accounts, and we have set a lower materiality level for these:

Remuneration disclosures £1,000	Related party disclosures £10,000
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My audit team will assess materiality levels throughout the audit.

Significant financial statements risks

Significant risks are identified risks of material misstatement for which the assessment of inherent risk is close to the upper end of the spectrum of inherent risk or those which are to be treated as a significant risk in accordance with the requirements of other International Standard on Auditing (ISAs). The ISAs require us to focus more attention on these significant risks.

Risk of management override

The risk of management override of controls is present in all entities. Due to the unpredictable way in which such override could occur, it is viewed as a significant risk [ISA 240.32-33].

Our planned response

My audit team will:

- test the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments made in preparing the financial statements;
- review accounting estimates for bias; and
- evaluate the rationale for any significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

Other areas of focus

I set out below other identified risks of material misstatement which, although not determined to be significant risks as above, I would like to bring to your attention.

Valuation of pension fund net liability/surplus

The Local Government Pension scheme (LGPS) and Firefighters Pension Scheme pension fund liability as reflected in the financial statements are material estimates.

The nature of this estimate means that it is subject to a high degree of estimation uncertainty as it is sensitive to small adjustments in the assumptions used in its calculation.

The impact of economic conditions, particularly interest rate levels also has a significant impact on the liability, at 31 March 2024 for example, the liability was in fact a surplus, primarily due to higher interest rates.

There are also several legal cases potentially impacting on the valuation of the net liability.

There is a risk therefore that the liability/surplus is materially misstated.

Our planned response

My audit team will:

- evaluate the instructions issued by management to their management experts (actuary) for this estimate and the scope of the actuary's work;
- assess the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the actuary who carried out the valuations;
- assess the accuracy and completeness of the information provided by the Authority to the actuary to estimate the liability;
- test the accuracy of the pension fund net liability and disclosures in the financial statements with the actuarial report from the actuary;
- assess the reasonableness of the assumptions made by the actuary by reviewing the report of the consulting actuary (auditor's expert) and undertaking any additional procedures required; and
- assess whether any legal cases could have a material impact on the net liability, and if so, confirm that this has been appropriately recognised and disclosed within the financial statements.

Valuation of land and buildings

The value of land and buildings reflected in the balance sheet and notes to the accounts are material estimates.

Land and buildings are required to be held on a valuation basis which is dependent on the nature and use of the assets. This estimate is subject to a high degree of subjectivity, depending on the specialist and management assumptions, and changes in these can result in material changes to valuations.

Assets are required to be revalued every five years, but values may also change year on year, and there is a risk that the carrying value of assets recognised in the accounts could be materially different to the current

value of assets as at 31 March 2025, particularly in the current economic environment.

My audit team will:

- review the information provided to the valuer to assess for completeness
- evaluate the competence, capabilities and objectivity of the professional valuer
- test a sample of assets revalued in the year to ensure the valuation basis, key data and assumptions used in the valuation process are reasonable, and the revaluations have been correctly reflected in the financial statements; and
- test the reconciliation between the financial ledger and the asset register.

Remuneration disclosures

Remuneration paid to senior officers and commissioner allowances continues to be of high interest and is material by nature.

There have been several new permanent and interim appointments to senior posts during 2024-25.

There is a risk that these are not appropriately disclosed in the financial statements. Therefore, there is a risk that even low value errors in the disclosure could result in a material misstatement.

Our planned response

My audit team will:

- understand the movements in the senior management team during 2024-25;
- ensure that remuneration and allowances disclosed are consistent with supporting evidence;
- ensure that amounts paid are consistent with amounts approved; and
- ensure that disclosures are complete based on the team's knowledge and are prepared in accordance with requirements.

Implementation of International Accounting Standard (IFRS) 16 - Leases

Local Government bodies are required to adopt IFRS16 Leases from 1 April 2024.

This significantly changes the accounting treatment and disclosures required for leased assets and means that most leases will result in an asset and liability on balance sheets.

There is a risk that the requirements of the IFRS are not appropriately adopted and as a result the financial statements are materially misstated.

Our planned response

My audit team will:

- review the Authority's working papers to ensure that all leases falling within the scope of the Standard have been included in calculations;
- test a sample of asset and liability calculations to ensure that the assumptions are reasonable, and the calculations have been correctly prepared; and
- confirm that asset and liability values have been correctly accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.

Related party disclosures

The financial statements must disclose any related party relationships along with the transactions and balances between the Authority and the other body/party.

The Authority has many relationships that could be considered a related party. Many are well known for example, Welsh Government as funder.

However, where related party relationships arise via individual officer or member relationships, there is likely to be less transparency regarding these relationships. These transactions are of high interest and are considered to be material by their nature

There is a risk of material misstatement due to incomplete or inaccurate disclosures, even where these are of relatively low value.

Our planned response

My audit team will:

- review the Authority's process for identifying related party relationships and associated transactions and balances;
- undertake procedures to confirm the completeness of related party relationships; and
- ensure disclosures are complete, accurate, consistent with evidence and are in accordance with the Local Government Code.

Financial statements audit timetable

Below is a timetable showing the key stages of the audit and our key audit deliverables that we will provide to you.

Exhibit 1: Financial statements audit timetable

Planning February 2025	Planning meeting High level risk assessment procedures Fraud risk assessment Accounting estimates planning IT environment risk assessment
Interim March to April 2025	Information flows Detailed risk assessment procedures IT controls review Develop testing strategy Early sample testing Draft Audit Plan
Fieldwork June to August 2025	Update risk assessment Audit of financial statements to include narrative report and annual governance statement Complete audit testing Evaluate audit findings Audit closure meeting
Reporting TBC By 31 October 2025	Audit of Accounts Report Recommendations for improvement Present findings to those charged with governance Auditor General certification Annual Audit Summary Post project learning








Performance audit work

Proper arrangements

As set out in the Code of Audit Practice, I must satisfy myself that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources ('value for money'), and conclude accordingly.

I do this by undertaking an appropriate programme of performance audit work each year. I base my work programme on an assessment of risks of the Authority and the wider Local Government sector in Wales not having the proper arrangements in place, with the work typically focusing on the areas of greatest risk.

In designing the programme, my auditors must have considered corporate and service level arrangements, including:

-  Strategic planning
-  Financial planning
-  Performance and risk management
-  Workforce planning
-  Asset management
-  Collaborative working
-  Overall governance.

My auditors will also have taken account of relevant work that is being undertaken or planned by other audit, regulatory and inspection bodies at the Authority.

I conduct my performance audit work using the ISSAI 3000 standard developed by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). INTOSAI is a global umbrella organisation for the performance audit community. It is a non-governmental organisation with special

consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

Well-being of future generations

Section 15 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (the Act) requires me to carry out examinations of public bodies for the purposes of assessing the extent to which a body has acted in accordance with the sustainable development principle when setting well-being objectives and taking steps to meet those objectives.

The **Sustainable development principle** is defined as acting in a manner...

...which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

To do this, they must take account of the '**five ways of working**'.



Long-term



Prevention



Intergration



Collaboration



Involvement

I must carry out these examinations at each public body covered by the Act at least once during a specified period.

These could be stand-alone examinations as part of my performance audit programme. However, where relevant and appropriate to do so, my auditors will integrate the work required into other planned performance audit work for the Authority. My auditors will continue to engage closely with the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales to help coordinate our respective activities.

Local Government Measure 2009

Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, I must also satisfy myself that the Authority has put in place arrangements to make

continuous improvements, including related plans and reports and to assess whether the Authority is likely to (or has) met these requirements.

Planned performance audit work

I set out below details of my performance audit work.

Financial sustainability

The public sector faces significant financial challenges in the short, medium, and long term that will require actions from all bodies. We have recently examined the financial sustainability of other local government bodies to gain insight and support bodies in responding to these challenges.

We intend to review the Authority's arrangements to secure value for money when planning for its financial sustainability.

Indicative timescales

Autumn 2025

Timing of Performance Audit Work

My team will work with officers in the Authority to arrange exact timescales for the individual projects and will be communicated regularly. My auditors aim to substantially complete the performance audit work set out in this plan by the end of June 2026.

Other statutory audit functions

In addition to the audit of the accounts, I have statutory responsibilities to receive questions and objections to the accounts from local electors. The Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 sets out these responsibilities:

- Section 30 Inspection of documents and questions at audit; and
- Section 31 Right to make objections at audit.

As this work is reactive, I have made no allowance in the fee below. If I do receive questions and objections, my auditors will discuss the potential impact on audit fees with the Head of Finance, Property and Procurement.

Audit fee

In January 2025 we published our [2025-26 Fee Scheme](#) following approval by the Senedd Finance Committee which details the average increase to fee rates of 1.7%.

The actual fee that any individual audited body will pay depends not just on our fee rates but on the quantum of work and the skill mix required.

Your estimated total audit fee: £91,111

Planning will be ongoing, and changes to my programme of audit work, and therefore my fee, may be required if any key new risks emerge. I shall make no changes without my auditors first discussing them with the Head of Finance, Property and Procurement. **Exhibit 2** sets out a further breakdown of your estimated audit fee.

I base my audit fee on the following assumptions:

- The agreed audit deliverables set out the expected working paper requirements to support the financial statements and include timescales and responsibilities.
- The audit requirements of my individual performance audit projects are met by the audited body, or suitable alternative arrangements are put in place that satisfy the needs of my audit team.
- No matters of significance, other than as summarised in this plan, are identified during the audit.

Exhibit 2: Breakdown of my estimated audit fee for 2025 (and 2024 for comparison)

Estimated fee for 2025 (£)¹

Audit of financial statements ² £73,387	Performance audit work ³ £17,724
Total fee: £91,111	

Actual fee for 2024 (£)

Audit of financial statements £72,160	Performance audit work £17,428
Total fee: £89,588	

¹ The fees shown in this document are exclusive of VAT.
² Payable November 2024 to October 2025
³ Payable April 2025 to March 2026.

Audit team

My audit team will continue to work and engage remotely using technology, but some on-site audit work will resume where it is appropriate to do so.

Audited bodies have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of Audit Wales staff when they are on your premises.

The main members of my team, together with their contact details, are summarised in **Exhibit 3**.

Exhibit 3: My local audit team

Engagement Director	Gary Emery gary.emery@audit.wales	
	Financial Audit	Performance Audit
Engagement Lead	Kate Havard kate.havard@audit.wales	Gary Emery gary.emery@audit.wales
Audit Manager	Gillian Gillett gillian.gillett@audit.wales	Timothy Buckle timothy.buckle@audit.wales
Audit lead	Julie Owens julie.owens@audit.wales	Charles Rigby charles.rigby@audit.wales

I can confirm that my team members are all independent of the Authority and your officers.

Audit quality

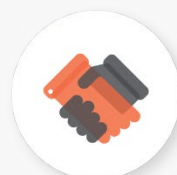
Our commitment to audit quality in Audit Wales is absolute. We believe that audit quality is about getting things right first time.

We use a three lines of assurance model to demonstrate how we achieve this. We have established an Audit Quality Committee to co-ordinate and oversee those arrangements. We subject our work to independent scrutiny by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales and our Chair of the Board, acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2024](#).



Our People

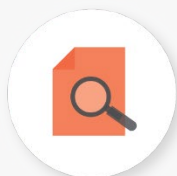
- Selection of right team
- Use of specialists
- Supervisions and review



Arrangements for achieving audit quality

Selection of right team

- Audit platform
- Ethics
- Guidance
- Culture
- Learning and development
- Leadership
- Technical support



Independent assurance

- EQRs
- Themed reviews
- Cold reviews
- Root cause analysis
- Peer review
- Audit Quality Committee
- External monitoring

Supporting you

Audit Wales has a range of resources to support the scrutiny of Welsh public bodies, and to support them in continuing to improve the services they provide to the people of Wales.

Visit our [website](#) to find:



Our [publications](#) which cover our audit work at public bodies.



Information on our upcoming work and forward work programme for [performance audit](#).



[Data tools](#) to help you better understand public spending trends



Details of our [Good Practice](#) work and events including the sharing of emerging practice and insights from our audit work.



Our [newsletter](#) which provides you with regular updates on our public service audit work, good practice, and events.



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We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh and English.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.

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Board of Commissioners Committee FWP 25/26					
Expected Date of Report	Report Title	Purpose of Report	Information and Assurance or Decision	Lead Director/Contact Officer	Progress
6 June 2025	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
6 June 2025	Social Partnership Annual Report	For approval of the Social Partnership Annual Report	Decision	ACO People Services, ACFO SD Contact Officer: Alison Reed Dean Loader Lisa Mullan	
6 June 2025	Audit enquiries to those charged with governance and management	A letter from Audit Wales formally seeking documented consideration and understanding on several governance areas that impact on their audit of the Authority's financial statements.	Decision	Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

6 June 2025	Emergency Planning Update	To provide an overview and assurance on work undertaken on emergency planning (to include an update on business continuity planning and the Service's involvement in local resilience forums etc)	Information and Assurance	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Peter Howard-Jones	
6 June 2025	Annual updates from 2024-2025 from People Committee, Finance & Audit and Strategic Change Transformation & Culture Committee	To provide an overview of works undertaken at each Committee throughout 2024/25	Information and Assurance	Contact Officers: Alison Reed Dominic Mika Lisa Mullan	
6 June 2025	Contaminants update	To provide Commissioners with an update on the work undertaken regarding Contaminants to date	Information and Assurance	Contact officer Christian Hadfield	
6 June 2025	AFA Policy Update	To provide Commissioners with an update on the AFA Policy	Information and Assurance	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Mike Wyatt	
6 June 2025	Audit Plan 2025	To present the Draft Audit Plan 2025 issued by Audit Wales for the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.	Information and Assurance	Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
31 July 2025	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
31 July 2025	Health & Safety Annual Report	To advise Commissioners on the Health & Safety performance of the organisation	Information and Assurance	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	

31 July 2025	Review Strategic Risk Q1	To advise Commissioners of the Strategic Risks of the organisation and how these are being treated, managed or reduced.	Information and Assurance	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
31 July 2025	Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	For Commissioners to approve the Service's Biodiversity Action Plan	Decision	Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
31 July 2025	Community Safety Update	To provide Commissioners with an annual departmental update	Information and Assurance	ACFO TS Contact Officer: Mike Wyatt	
31 July 2025	Business Fire Safety Update	To provide Commissioners with an annual departmental update	Information and Assurance	ACFO TS Contact Officer: Mike Wyatt	
31 July 2025	Leadership and Management Academy	To provide Commissioners with an overview of the Service's Leadership Academy along with its aims and objectives.	Information and Assurance	Contact Officers: Alison Reed Dominic Mika	
31 July 2025	ELT roles and responsibilities and departmental structures	To present Commissioners with an organisational chart	Decision	Contact Officer: ACFO Christian Hadfield	
26 Sept 2025	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
26 Sept 2025	Review of On call Strategy	To provide Commissioners with an update on SWFRS on call strategy	Information and Assurance	Contact Officer: Matt Jones	

26 Sept 2025	Half Yearly Update on Thematic Review Progress	To provide Commissioners with a six-monthly update on work undertaken regarding Thematic Reviews	Information and Assurance	ACFO TS Contact Officer: Mike Wyatt, Neil Davies Matt Jones Mike Evans	
26 Sept 2025	Half Yearly Update on Culture Review Progress	To provide Commissioners with a six-monthly update on work undertaken regarding the Morris Review Recommendations	Information and Assurance	Director of SCTC Contact Officer: Dominic Mika	
26 Sept 2025	Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report	To provide Commissioners with the annual Welsh Language Report	Decision	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
26 Sept 2025	Statement of Accounts	For Commissioners to receive the ISA 260 Report from the Appointed Auditor and to note the audited statement of accounts	Information and Assurance	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
24 Oct 2025	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
24 Oct 2025	Mid Term Health & Safety Report	To provide a six-monthly update on the Health & Safety performance of the organisation	Information and Assurance	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	
24 Oct 2025	AFA Policy Update	To provide Commissioners with an update on six months of AFA stats following the policy change	Information and Assurance	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Mike Wyatt	

24 Oct 2025	Annual Improvement Plan	For Commissioners to consider and approve the annual improvement plan	Decision	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
19 Dec 2025	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
19 Dec 2025	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Draft Report	To consider the IRPW's draft Annual Report	Decision	Monitoring Officer	
19 Dec 2025	2026/2027 Budget Consultation Report	To assist in determining the appropriate capital and revenue budget required to meet the Service's requirements for the financial year.	Decision	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
13 Feb 2026	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
13 Feb 2026	Report on Responses to the Statutory Consultation on our Annual Improvement Objectives for 2026/27	To provide an update to Commissioners on feedback received from the Statutory Consultation on the services' Annual Improvement Objectives for 2026/27.	Information and Assurance	T/Head of Corporate Support Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
13 Feb 2026	Annual Budget Setting report 2026/27	To set the annual net and revenue budget	Decision	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	

13 Feb 2026	Carbon Reduction Plan and Progress Reports	To advise Commissioners on the progress towards the actions set out in the Carbon Reduction Plan	Information and Assurance	Director of Corporate Support Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
13 Feb 2026	Review of Strategic Risk Register Q3	To advise Commissioners of the Strategic Risks of the organisation and how these are being treated, managed or reduced.	Information and Assurance	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
27 March 2026	Chiefs Organisational Update	Standard Item to update Commissioners on organisational updates	Information and Assurance	CFO	
27 March 2026	Gender Pay Gap Report 2025	To update on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service	Decision	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
27 March 2026	Pay Policy 2026/27	To consider the Service's Pay Policy Statement in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.	Decision	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
27 March 2026	Annual Strategic Plan	For Commissioners to approve publication of the Strategic Plan	Decision	ACO CS Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
27 March 2026	Setting Statutory Strategic Performance Indicators and Strategic Objectives	To set the targets for the following financial year.	Decision	ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	

27 March 2026	Internal Audit - Annual Plan Report 2026/27	To provide an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes based on the internal audit work undertaken during the financial year. This will support the statement of internal control.	Decision	Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
27 March 2026	Calendar of Meetings for next municipal year 2026/27	To present Commissioners proposed dates of Board & Committee meetings for the next municipal year.	Information	Monitoring Officer	

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AGENDA ITEM NO 9

**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	
	Attendees are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 and the Local Government Act 2000.	
3.	Chairperson's Announcements	
4.	Matters to be raised from Commissioner Sub Committees	
5.	To receive the minutes of;	
	a. Board of Commissioners of South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Committee Meeting held on Friday 28 March 2025	5
	b. People Committee Meeting held on Friday 07 February 2025	15
	c. Strategic Change, Transformation and Culture Committee held on Friday 21 February 2025	19
	d. Finance and Audit Committee held on Friday 21 March 2025	27
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7.i	Social Partnership Duty Reporting	41
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8.iv	Annual Update 2024-2025 People Committee	113
8.v	Annual report of the work of the Finance & Audit Committee	119
8.vi	Annual report Strategic Change and Transformation Culture Committee	127
8.vii.	SWFRS Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) response change update	131
8.viii.	Annual Audit Plan 2025 – Audit Wales	149
8.ix.	Forward Work Programme for Board of Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service 2025/2026	177
9.	To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent (Part 1 or 2)	185