

COMMISSIONERS FOR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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

Thursday 26 September 2024, 1000hrs

**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/CCM_26_09_24

**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

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

3. Chairperson's Announcements
4. To receive the minutes of;
 - a. Board of Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Meeting held on Thursday 29 August 2024. 3
 - b. Finance and Audit Committee Meeting held on Friday 26 July 2024 9

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Signature of Monitoring Officer:



MEMBERSHIP

Commissioners:

C	Foulkes
V	Randeniya
Baroness	Wilcox
K	Williams

COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

MINUTES OF THE COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 AUGUST 2024 AT 1000 HRS IN MEETING ROOM 08 AND REMOTELY VIA TEAMS

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

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

OFFICERS PRESENT: T/CFO Stuart Millington, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACFO Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, T/ACFO Brian Thompson - Director of Technical Services, Dominic Mika – Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Gabrielle Greathead – Interim Monitoring Officer, T/AM Mike Wyatt – Risk Reduction, Christian Landeg-John – Advisor to Commissioners, Wayne Thomas – T/Head of Corporate Support, Laura Grogan – Lead Communications, Attraction and Engagement Officer, Jennifer Sambell – Senior Accountant

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were not Chairperson's announcements.

3. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF

a. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 JUNE 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes from Thursday 6 June 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

b. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 9 AUGUST 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes from Friday 9 August 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

c. FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 19 APRIL 2024

The Commissioners agreed the minutes from Friday 19 April 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

4. UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

CFO Millington provided an update on the Firefighter Pensions, minute number 21/22 – 17.3.3. We are making progress on this, and the Service is in a good position. The Service is now waiting for a letter from HMRC. The group agreed this can be removed from the action log for the Board of Commissioners and will be monitored separately.

5. REPORTS FOR DECISION

5.1 PROPOSED STRATEGIC THEMES AND OBJECTIVES 2025/2026

Wayne Thomas, Temporary Head of Corporate Support presented the strategic themes and objectives 2025/2026 report. The purpose of the report is to give an overview of what the strategic themes are and the broad level of objectives will be that we will be consulting on. Wayne Thomas confirmed that this document will be a live document which will be updated and ties in with the Transformation Programme. The Annual Improvement Plan is in draft and will be brought to the October Board of Commissioners prior to publication.

There was a discussion around how the consultation would look like in practice. Wayne Thomas explained that a plan is currently in draft which will go out to the public. We will begin with our staff and our stakeholder register. We will be looking at our calendar for public facing events, links with working groups and the use of social media. It will be reviewed periodically to ensure we are getting the engagement we require. Laura Grogan will look at tying this into the activity plan to avoid the risk of staff becoming overloaded with consultation.

Vij Randeniya queried whether the volume of consultation responses was high enough to demonstrate significant change as they are low. Wayne Thomas explained that the pool is lower for the pre-consultation and is targeted for staff and our partners who has a vested interest in the Service and they can factor in outcomes of these to their planning meetings. There has not been a significant response from the public in the last two years and so there is a big piece of work to promote interest but accept it is a challenge gaining public responses.

Kirsty Williams raised the theme of Communication that has been fed back. Dominic Mika explained that communication around consultation and having a

robust plan is being picked up in the key themes for the improvement plan.

RESOLVED THAT

- 5.1.1 The Commissioners approve the proposed draft Strategic Themes and objectives in Appendix 1 for engagement events and publication in the “Consultation Document” - Stage 2 of the Annual Improvement Plan on the SWFRS Internet site by 31 October 2024.
- 5.1.2 The Commissioners approve delegation to the Director of Strategic Change and Transformation and Temporary Head of Corporate Support to review and refine the draft Strategic Themes and objectives as necessary for the public consultation.

6. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

6.1 HEALTH & SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

Dean Loader, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer provided a summary of the Health and Safety Annual Report for 2023/2024. The report provides a strategic overview of what the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team has undertaken over the last 12 months and gives an in-depth overview of statistics and context around the data.

There have been some challenges around the team structure due to recruitment. There have been two recruitment drives for the Health and Safety Manager position but no appointable candidates. HR will be looking at evaluating the job description and have a draft prepared for an external consultant to review. It was considered that they may need to adapt and look at the role as a developmental role with job increments. The Commissioners would welcome regular updates on the position of the vacancy.

Kirsty Williams asked how we are supporting mental health and suggested that there is opportunity to support health promotion and early prevention. The Health and Safety report doesn't pick up on Your Health delivery group that works closely with our Occupational Health Unit (OHU) and HR to look at mental health. Dean Loader aims to capture the work into the Health and Safety report and will provide an update to the Board of Commissioners on Your Health in 3 months.

Vij Randeniya queried whether the information from the OHU fed into the programme of work and whether contaminants is a part of this programme of work. Dean Loader explained it does feed in the work programme and there is a separate working group for contaminants which is chaired by an Area

Manager due to the level of strategic overview of the group.

Vij Randeniya commented that we have more incidents in RIDDOR and more accidents on areas we can control. Dean Loader provided context around the RIDDOR reporting mechanism. Vij Randeniya queried whether it would be beneficial to have comparative data for like-for-like groups. Dean Loader and Wayne Thomas can obtain the data to provide further context on this.

Lady Wilcox asked if there is engagement with the unions around the Health and Safety reporting. As part of the Health and Safety Committee, union representatives are invited to attend to sit but there is not consistent attendance however a copy of the minutes is circulated to them following the committee meeting.

CFO Millington highlighted we have success with people reporting minor injuries but in an organisation with a positive Health and Safety culture, there is a high level of near miss reporting to mitigate the accidents happening. There was a big piece of work done in North Wales to achieve higher levels of near miss reporting around education and awareness and simpler ways to report which we will consider as an area of focus for us. There was a discussion around celebrating 50 years of Health and Safety at work and an opportunity to encourage reporting on near misses.

It was discussed whether attacks on crews should be incorporated to the Health and Safety report rather than being separate. Carl Foulkes said he is relaxed on how it's presented, but it would be useful to see them together.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.1.1 The Commissioners approve the Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/2024 with an amendment to page 54.
- 6.1.2 The Commissioners approve the publication of the report on the front page of our internet site.
- 6.1.3 The Commissioners requested an update on Your Health group in 3 months' time.
- 6.1.4 The Commissioners would welcome regular updates on the status of the Health and Safety Manager vacancy.

6.2 STRATEGIC RISK REPORT

Wayne Thomas presented the Strategic Risk Report which provides an overview of the Strategic Risk Register which is underpinned by the

Departmental Risk Register. There are currently 16 risks on the register, 12 are rated as high risk with 4 medium risks which are reviewed on a quarterly basis by a risk owner who is a member of the Executive Leadership Team. There are 2 existing risks (Pensions Change Impact and Brexit) which were on the strategic risk register that have been downgraded to departmental risk and is being considered by Heads of Service.

Vij Randeniya raised that having a target risk score will add much value as we can see it as a threshold to bring it down. Wayne Thomas agreed that it is a good way of showing how close we are to mitigating the risk. Kirsty Williams commented that the significant level of governance change within the organisation presents a risk and this might be considered by Senior Leadership Team (SLT) whether governance or future governance should be added as a risk for consideration. Carl Foulkes added that it is worth a conversation at SLT level around recruitment and reputational risk and how comfortable we are with this. CFO Millington agreed on both points and will have a conversation offline and consider what is appropriate for departmental risk or strategic risk.

RESOLVED THAT

- 6.2.1 The Commissioners noted the risks contained within the Strategic Risk Report 2024/2025 Quarter 1 (Appendix 1), along with the associated risk controls.

6.3 UPDATE ON UNWANTED FIRE SIGNAL RESPONSE

Mike Wyatt, Temporary Area Manager provided a verbal update on the Unwanted Fire Signal (AFA's). Work to date includes the completion of all the programme documents and background work. The communication strategy is a live document and includes a new AFA webpage that provides information and guidance on the changes for our stakeholders. Stakeholder letters have been created bilingually which are waiting to be released, alarm receiving letters have been written bilingually and have been approved. Correspondence will be sent electronically with a hard copy to the 3 Health Boards, Shared Services Partnerships, all Local Authorities, Care Inspectorate Wales, Welsh Government, Further Educations i.e. University South Wales, Cardiff University, Community Housing and top 100 worst offenders for our AFA's. PSB's will be informed in person along with a briefing note. Social media posts have been written and will be live once correspondence has been deployed along with a press release write up. An animation is being created for our website. Leaflets have been created for crews to hand out at AFA's with a QR code that will be live from September and a dedicated email address has been set up ready for people to respond to the correspondence or ask queries. We will be responding to enquiries from September and plan to arrange in person

meetings with people who want to meet with us from October to December.

Our strategy will be education and engagement and this will commence in September. The main issue has been around the high level of workload this has generated in conjunction with a number of large projects that are ongoing. There is consideration on sending out communications in languages other than English and Welsh, however our website does have a facility to translate the pages into any other languages. Lady Wilcox stressed the importance of consultation and engagement with the public and our stakeholders.

6.4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE 2024/2025

The Forward Work Programme is being updated to remove past reports that have already come to the Board. We are on track for our areas of focus for the next meeting in September.

7. 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 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 JULY 2024
IN MEETING ROOM 8, SWFRS HQ OR REMOTELY VIA TEAMS**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Baroness Wilcox of Newport (Chair)
Kirsty Williams

OFFICERS PRESENT:- CFO Stuart Millington, ACO Alison Reed – Director of People Services, T/ACFO Dean Loader – Director of Service Delivery, Dominic Mika - Director of Strategic Change and Transformation, Lisa Mullan – Head of Finance, Procurement and Property, Mr S Gourley – TIAA Internal Auditor, Kate Havard – Audit Wales, Carywn Rees – Audit Wales

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chair's announcements.

**3. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF FINANCE AND AUDIT
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 APRIL 2024**

Lady Wilcox agreed the minutes from 19 April 2024 as a true record of discussions and no matters arising.

Lady Wilcox wanted to note on record her congratulations to the Finance team for winning their award at the Finance Wales Awards.

4. REPORTS FOR DECISION

4.1 REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property provided an outline the revenue outturn position for the financial year end 2023/24 and the resultant impact on reserves. The report presents a summary of the revenue outturn for the year ending 31 March 2024. The statutory

accounts are subject to external audit and therefore a final position will not be definite until the audit process is complete.

Lisa Mullan drew the Committees attention to appendix 2 where we forecasted an overspend and have managed that throughout the year to come to this position. Lisa Mullan presented to the Committee the most significant changes of overspend and underspend within the Service for the financial year since she last brought this to the Committee in April.

Kirsty Williams queried whether JPSC rent should be included in our reserves and whether this should be a core cost. Lisa Mullan explained that our Joint Fire Control takes up occupation in the Police building where our lease ended 8 years ago and therefore we are seeing the amortisation into the budget.

The Commissioners take a lot of assurances from Lisa Mullan's explanations and thanked her for the hard work in putting the report together.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.1.1** The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service note the report and agreed the content subject to the external audit with Audit Wales.

4.2 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented the capital outturn position for the year ended on 31 March 2024. The report demonstrates the financing arrangements and the budget slippage required to complete capital schemes in 2024/25. Lisa Mullan provided a treasury management update for the first quarter of 2024.

Lady Wilcox noted that she takes comfort from appendix 4 knowing that there are no breaches and we remain in the guidelines.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.2.1** The Commissioners for South Wales Fire and Rescue Service noted the report and approved the budget slippage as detailed in the appendix 1.

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

Audit Wales presented a report detailing a draft response to the Audit Wales paper on 'Those Charged with Governance' when approving financial statements.

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property explained that standard questions are given to us for assurance purposes around fraud, regulation and law and related parties. The appendix provides an overview of what we are trying to do and sets out our responses in the three distinct areas.

Kirsty Williams queried where there is a policy in place around fraud, that when identified, a learning review or a lessons learnt session is conducted from cases that arise for extra safeguarding and suggests that this is formally included to show there is a review to quantify and demonstrate learning points and there is an audit trail. Lisa Mullan accepted this suggestion.

RESOLVED THAT

4.3.1 The Commissioners confirm its response to the Audit Wales enquiries detailed in appendix 1.

4.3.2 The Commissioners would formally like to implement a learning review following any fraud cases that arise and this is documented for an audit trail.

4.4 APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

The Director of Strategic Change and Transformation presented a report requesting to appoint a permanent Head of Communications and Engagement to support the sustained cultural and service improvement. Dominic Mika explained that this role will be an integral part of the Strategic Leadership Team and will be key in improving internal and external Service communications for our staff and our communities to show the positive things we are doing. People Services will be reviewing the job description and personal specification prior to publication to amend minor word changes.

Kirsty Williams wanted an outline around paragraph 3 in the job description and what does it mean in terms of on-call arrangement. Dominic Mika explained that fire and rescue services will normally have 24 hour on call arrangement to support communications but we rely on our communications team to do work out of hours or on weekends when necessary, so the postholder may be in charge of reviewing or improving the provision.

Kirsty Williams commented whether marketing is a suitable word to use in paragraph 10 of the job description. CFO Stuart Millington explained that this is in terms of communication elements of marketing for example working in collaboration with other department leads to market or target communications by utilising the appropriate media avenues.

RESOLVED THAT

- 4.4.1** The Commissioners note the report, the associated job description and personal specification.
- 4.4.2** The Commissioners note their recommendation to add any amendments to the post template that is deemed necessary.
- 4.4.3** The Commissioners agree the recruitment for the post for an immediate permanent Head of Communications and Engagement.

5. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

5.1 AUDIT WALES ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2024

Kate Harvard, the Audit Director on the Financial Audits from Audit Wales provided an overview of our annual audit plan and focuses on performance aspect. Kate explained despite the draft written on the document, the report is now final with an amendment for one date on page 78 of the pack. Kate explained we are ahead of the statutory deadline for the next report and on track for the financial audit side.

Carwyn Rees, the Performance Audit Manager from Audit Wales provided an overview of the performance side. The biggest piece they will be undertaking next year is a project around how the council set their wellbeing objectives. There is one piece outstanding from last year around prevention work that the Fire Authorities due to staff sickness and reappointments and they will be looking to pick up both pieces of work in the autumn and will report on this towards the end of the year. The last piece of work is a much smaller piece around the Local Government Measure where they confirm there are improvement plans in place and performance reports have been put together in line with the act.

Kate Harvard would like to formally record her thanks to Lisa Mullan and her team for their cooperation to produce the audit plans.

RESOLVED THAT

5.1.1 The Commissioners note the immense work that has gone on to produce these audit plans.

5.2 DRAFT STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24

The Head of Finance, Procurement and Property presented the Draft Statement of Accounts report for the year ending 31st March 2024. The report gives an annual retrospective of our financial position. Lady Wilcox commented that the report was very detailed and entirely transparent, and thanked Lisa and her team for producing such a comprehensive document.

RESOLVED THAT

5.2.1 That Commissioners receive the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and note the audited Statement of Accounts will be presented to them following the completion of the external audit process by Audit Wales.

5.2.2 The Commissioners approve the report for information.

5.3 INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS REPORT & AUDIT ACTION UPDATE

Steen Gourlay from TIAA presented an audit report to update the Commissioners on the progress being made against the Internal Audit Plans for 2023/24.

There are 2 areas of audit that are being undertaken; EV Charging and Sustainability. There were discussions around Sustainability Officers and we are in a good position as we have one in the Service. CFO Stuart Millington noted that we are currently giving attention to environmental issues and has spoken to Lisa Mullan about improving our action planning which will include collaboration with other services. We are also aiming to modernise our fleet to be less reliant on fossil fuels to contribute to our aspirations of becoming carbon neutral.

Lisa Mullan owns environmental issues under her portfolio and has a carbon reduction plan which we report on annually, which can be presented to the Commissioners in the autumn months.

RESOLVED THAT

5.3.1 That Commissioners note the internal audit recommendations and the work completed to date.

5.4 PERFORMANCE REPORT – STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2023/24

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer Dean Loader presented the organisation's performance against the Strategic Performance Indicators compared to the predicted outcomes for 2023/2024.

It was noted that the total fires attended has decreased within 10% and highlights deliberate fires are significantly reducing which provides a good indicator on the good work our stations and reduction team are doing.

It was noted in point 2.6 that we have seen an increase in assisting other agencies such as WAST. The CFO has a meeting with the CEO of WAST next week and can take him through the areas what we are assisting with which is mostly medical calls.

Dwelling fires are directly linked with the Thematic Review and there is work going on around this relating to the prevention and education. The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor is going to be looking at tactics and whether we can further enhance our training. There was a discussion surrounding the dwelling fire increase and Dean Loader provided clarification that the increase was down to the incident that happened in Ely. Kirsty Williams stated it looks positive on how we have improved from previous years which was welcomed and noted that we still have improvements. Kirsty Williams also wanted to share how impressed she was with the Fire Cadet Instructors in Ely and their commitment to proactively address the figures in Ely. CFO Stuart Millington stated that the recent open day was very well attended by the community and he had good feedback from the families.

RESOLVED THAT

5.4.1 The Commissioners note the Service's Strategic Performance Indicator totals for 2023/2024.

5.4.2 The Commissioners approve the publication of the Service's Strategic Performance Indicators for 2023/24.

5.5 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE 2023/24

CFO Stuart Millington explained there has been a degree of slippage in certain areas of reporting however statutory items that needs to be reported on has been brought to the Committee on time. The Forward Work Programme will be revised prior to the next meeting. Some of those who are responsible for the statutory reports are sick but this will be picked up by others. The department risk register will be picked up in the next meeting.

RESOLVED THAT

5.5.1 The Commissioners note the comments regarding the Forward Work Programme.

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

There were no further items of business to consider that Lady Wilcox deemed urgent.

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AGENDA ITEM NO 5

UPDATE ON OUTSTANDING ISSUES ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
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Minute No	Item	Action	Leading Officer	Current Status:
08/24 6.1	Your Health Delivery Group	ACFO Dean Loader to present an update on Your Health to the Board of Commissioners in 3 months.	ACFO Dean Loader	Required in December 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting.
08/24 6.1	Health and Safety comparison data	ACFO Dean Loader and Head of Corporate Services Wayne Thomas to look at comparison data and provide further context.	Wayne Thomas	In progress.

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AGENDA ITEM NO 6

Reports for Decision

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

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AND
TRANSFORMATION**WELSH LANGUAGE STANDARDS – ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT
2023/2024****THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION**REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AND
TRANSFORMATION
PRESENTING OFFICER - TEMPORARY HEAD OF CORPORATE SUPPORT,
WAYNE THOMAS**SUMMARY**

Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 the organisation must publish an annual progress report which evaluates its ongoing compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. The report should demonstrate how the organisation has promoted and facilitated opportunities to use the Welsh language, ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Commissioners:

1. Approve the contents of the Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report 2023/2024 and the subsequent publication of the report on the organisation's website.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, all Public Service organisations in Wales are required to comply with Welsh language standards which ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language. The Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016 were introduced to the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales on 30th September 2016.

- 1.2 The organisation is required by the Welsh Language Commissioner to publish an annual report that provides an overview of how the organisation has continued to comply with the Welsh Language Standards during the previous financial year. The report must be published annually before 30th September.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 There are 150 Welsh Language Standards currently in place, which are categorised into four broad areas.

- 2.1.1 **Service Delivery Standards** - These Standards focus on the use of Welsh when delivering services and ensuring that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language as the organisation provides services to the public.

- 2.1.2 **Policy making standards** - These Standards ensure that organisations consider the effect, if any, that policy decisions will have on an individual's ability to use the Welsh language when engaging with the Service.

- 2.1.3 **Operational standards** - These standards focus on promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language within the organisation's internal administration processes.

- 2.1.4 **Record keeping standards** – These standards focus on keeping records for compliance with the requirements of the standards, in areas such as staff Welsh language skills, training, complaints, and recruitment.

- 2.2 The Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report 2023/2024 provides an overview of actions that the organisation has undertaken to comply with the different classes of Standards during the financial year.

- 2.3 It is also a mandated requirement that the report contains:

- 2.3.1 The number of employees who have Welsh language skills

- 2.3.2 The number (and percentage if relevant) of staff members who attended specific training that must be provided in Welsh if it is available in English (namely training on recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints and disciplinary procedures, induction, dealing with the public and health and safety)

2.3.3 The number of new and vacant posts categorised as those where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, not necessary, or need to be learnt.

2.3.4 The number of complaints the organisation received about each class of Standards.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion – The organisation, as a Public Service in Wales, has a duty to ensure that services are available to the public and staff in a manner where the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

3.1.2 Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – Ensuring that we actively promote the Welsh Language and continue to make our services available in a manner where the Welsh Language is not treated less favourably than English contributes to the well-being goal of “A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language”.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

3.2.1 Legal – The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 mandates that Public Bodies in Wales comply with the Welsh Language Standards and publish an annual progress report to demonstrate actions that have been undertaken to ensure this.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

3.3.1 Human Resources and People Development – Providing Welsh Language training to employees is outlined as a requirement within the Welsh Language Standards.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report 2023/2024 provides an overview of activities that the organisation has undertaken during the financial year to maintain compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

- 4.2 The organisation continues to strive to ensure that both Welsh and English languages are treated equally, and that people feel comfortable requesting that all our services, such as enquiries, job applications and interviews, be conducted in either language. The organisation’s aim is to actively contribute to the Welsh Government’s “Million Speakers by 2025” strategy.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that Commissioners:

- 5.1.1 Approve the contents of the Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report 2023/2024 and the subsequent publication of the report on the organisation’s website.

Contact Officer:	Wayne Thomas Temporary Head of Corporate Support	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
None		
Appendices		
Appendix 1	Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report 01 st April 2023 - 31 st March 2024	



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Welsh Language Standards

Annual Monitoring Report

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

This document is also available in Welsh.

Introduction

South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) is pleased to publish its 2023/2024 Welsh Language Standards Annual Monitoring Report. The Service has continued to monitor its progress against the Standards throughout the past year and has continued to offer quality bilingual services. We continue to strive to ensure that both Welsh and English languages are treated equally, and that people feel comfortable requesting that enquiries, job applications and interviews be conducted in either language. Our aim is to actively contribute to the Welsh Government's "**Million Speakers by 2025**" strategy.

The Welsh language is key to our modern Welsh identity and here at SWFRS we very much want to be part of that.

USEFUL LINK:

**Million Speakers
by 2025**



SCAN ME



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Background to the **Welsh Language** Standards

Under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, all public service organisations in Wales are required to comply with language duties, which ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language.

The duties encourage promotion of the Welsh language, the use of Welsh within internal administration and require that provision is made for the accessibility of Welsh to the public. Section 44 of the 2011 Measure permits the Welsh Language Commissioner to issue a Compliance notice, requiring a body to comply with one or more Standards specifically applicable to it. The Welsh Language Standards (No. 5) Regulations 2016 were then introduced to the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales on 30th September 2016.



In accordance with section 44 of the 2011 measure, the purpose of the Welsh Language Standards is to provide:

- Clarity for organisations on the Welsh language
- Clarity for Welsh speakers on what services they can expect to receive in Welsh
- Greater consistency in Welsh language services and improvement of quality for users Standards applied to South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

A total of **150 Welsh Language Standards** are now in place within the following categories:

72

Service Delivery Standards that focus on the use of Welsh when delivering services, and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language as we provide services to the public.

15

Policy Making Standards that ensure that the Service consider what effect, if any, our policy decisions will have on an individual's ability to use the Welsh language when engaging with South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

53

Operational Standards that focus on promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language in our internal administration processes.

10

Record Keeping Standards that require the Service to keep records for compliance with the requirements of the standards in areas such as staff Welsh language skills, training, complaints, and recruitment.

Implementing the **Welsh Language** Standards and Monitoring Compliance

The responsibility for the Authority's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards lies with the Executive Leadership Team and the Heads of Service. As a public body the Service is required to self-regulate for the Welsh Language Commissioner. This involves monitoring our compliance with the Welsh Language Standards and ensuring that we provide enough opportunity for people to use the Welsh language when working with us or using our services.

The Authority is required to record periodically how we comply with the Welsh Language Standards and how we engage with members of the public. Recording this detail enables us to demonstrate how we maintain compliance. Monitoring compliance with the Standards also involves publishing an Annual Monitoring Report on the external website by 30th September each year.



The content of this report is as follows:

- The way in which the Service has complied with the different classes of Standards
- The number of employees who have Welsh language skills – Standard 147
- The number (and percentage if relevant) of staff members who attended specific training that must be provided in Welsh if it is available in English (namely training on recruitment and interviewing, performance management, complaints and disciplinary procedures, induction, dealing with the public and health and safety) – Standard 148
- The number of new and vacant posts categorised as those where Welsh language skills are essential, desirable, not necessary, or need to be learnt – Standard 151
- The number of complaints the organisation received about each class of Standards – Standard 143





Welsh Language Standards website page

The Service has a dedicated Welsh Language Standards page featured under 'Who we are' on the Service's website menu. The page contains information explaining the Welsh Language Standards along with links to the Authority's Compliance notice, Implementation Plan and Annual Monitoring Report. Details are provided for the website user explaining how to register a complaint or compliment regarding compliance with the Standards and contact details are provided for queries regarding our Service and the Welsh language.

USEFUL LINKS:

[Welsh Language Standards](#)



[Procedure for complaints and compliments regarding the Welsh Language Standards](#)



Welsh Language Translation Services

The Service has its own in-house Translation team with two permanent members of staff. The team operate as part of the wider Media and Communications department and play a key role in ensuring the Service continues to deliver the highest standard of bilingual content for all stakeholders. During the past year the team have again made an outstanding contribution to the Service, providing prompt translation for a range of materials including complex technical documents, business plans, reports, video and social media messaging.



Total number of words for 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Words translated: 81,452

Words proof read: 165,075

Our translators continue to provide informal support to individual staff members who identify as Welsh learners and wish to practice their skills in the workplace. This support helps colleagues to build their confidence at speaking and writing through the medium of Welsh.







Number of hits received to **Welsh Language** website pages

The Service's external website is fully bilingual and actively offers all visitors the option of accessing its content through the medium of Welsh or English. The performance of the Welsh language version of the site during April 2023 – March 2024 in comparison with the English version is recorded in the table below:

southwales-fire.gov.uk

Criteria	Welsh website		English website	
	2023/2024	2022/2023	2023/2024	2022/2023
Unique page views	8,200	7,420	501,000	544,281
Users	5,000	3,948	171,000	189,929
Most popular page	Latest Vacancies	Latest Vacancies	Latest Vacancies	Latest Vacancies

Analysis of interactions with **Social Media** pages

The Service has taken steps to ensure all its promotional and safety campaigns via its social media channels are as readily available to Welsh language speakers as they are to English language speakers. This has been achieved by creating separate channels for both languages, with a Welsh language dedicated twitter account @TanDeCymru and a Welsh language dedicated Facebook page. Below is some performance data for each of the channels for April 2023 - March 2024.

Facebook

Criteria	@TanDeCymru		@SWFireandRescue	
	2023/2024	2022/2023	2023/2024	2022/2023
Followers (Apr-Mar)	454	421	45,665	41,138
New Likes (Apr-Jun)	5	27	1,141	1,119
New Likes (Jul-Sep)	13	23	1,257	786
New Likes (Oct-Dec)	6	16	760	609
New Likes (Jan-Mar) ²	9	7	1,369	621

² Reporting period 2024



X formerly Twitter

Criteria	@TanDeCymru		@SWFireandRescue	
	2023/2024	2022/2023	2023/2024	2022/2023
Followers (Apr-Mar)	281	241	38,276	37,637
Tweets	1,518	1,664	1,761	2,045
Likes	615	653	16,170	13,468

Instagram

Criteria	Bilingual page	
	2023/2024	2022/2023
Followers (Apr-Mar)	8,662	8,222
Post Likes	15,928	21,345
Posts	191	201

E-recruitment system

Since its launch in 2021, the system has been used for a range of different vacancies and recruitment processes, including some large-scale recruitment campaigns for Firefighters and Control room staff. The Service's E-Recruitment System provides the user with the option to navigate its pages and submit an application through the medium of Welsh. Within the online form,

applicants are requested to provide information about Welsh Language status e.g., Welsh speaker or learner and their overall level of Welsh. The form also provides an option to receive further correspondence through the medium of Welsh. The system has already improved the job application experience for our end users.







Phone calls and correspondence received in Welsh

All telephone numbers that we advertise to the public, such as that of our reception desk and 0800 numbers, are answered bilingually. These public facing call handler job roles are all Welsh essential, and all requests for further Welsh services are managed centrally.

We have Welsh email addresses and we welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh equally.

Corporate **Policies** and Procedures

The Service complies with the legal requirement of carrying out Integrated Assessments and includes Welsh language as an area for assessment. Assessments are completed for all policies and procedures, including older documents being amended. Our Corporate policies which substantiate all service delivery and supporting activities are public facing. The policies are published on the Service's Website can be accessed [here](#).

USEFUL LINK:

[Corporate policy](#)



SCAN ME







Promoting Welsh Language and Culture

The Service actively promotes the Welsh Language and Culture both internally for its employees and externally for service users and the general public. During April 2023 – March 2024 we celebrated and publicised three important dates using global emails, intranet articles, posters and social media:

15th October 2023	Diwrnod Shwmae
25th January 2024	St. Dwynwen's Day
1st March 2024	St David's Day

Welsh Language Rights Day

On 7th December 2023, the Service participated in Welsh Language Rights Day to promote the Welsh Language Services provided by Public Organisations in Wales. The date was set by the Welsh Language Commissioner to commemorate the day in 2010 when the Welsh Language Legislation was passed by the National Assembly. Welsh Language Rights Day provides the opportunity to inform people of their rights, in receiving services through the medium of Welsh. The Service published a list of its Rights which are permanently displayed in our Headquarters Reception area. Service users and employees can access the Welsh Language Rights page on our website using this link: [Welsh Language Rights](#).

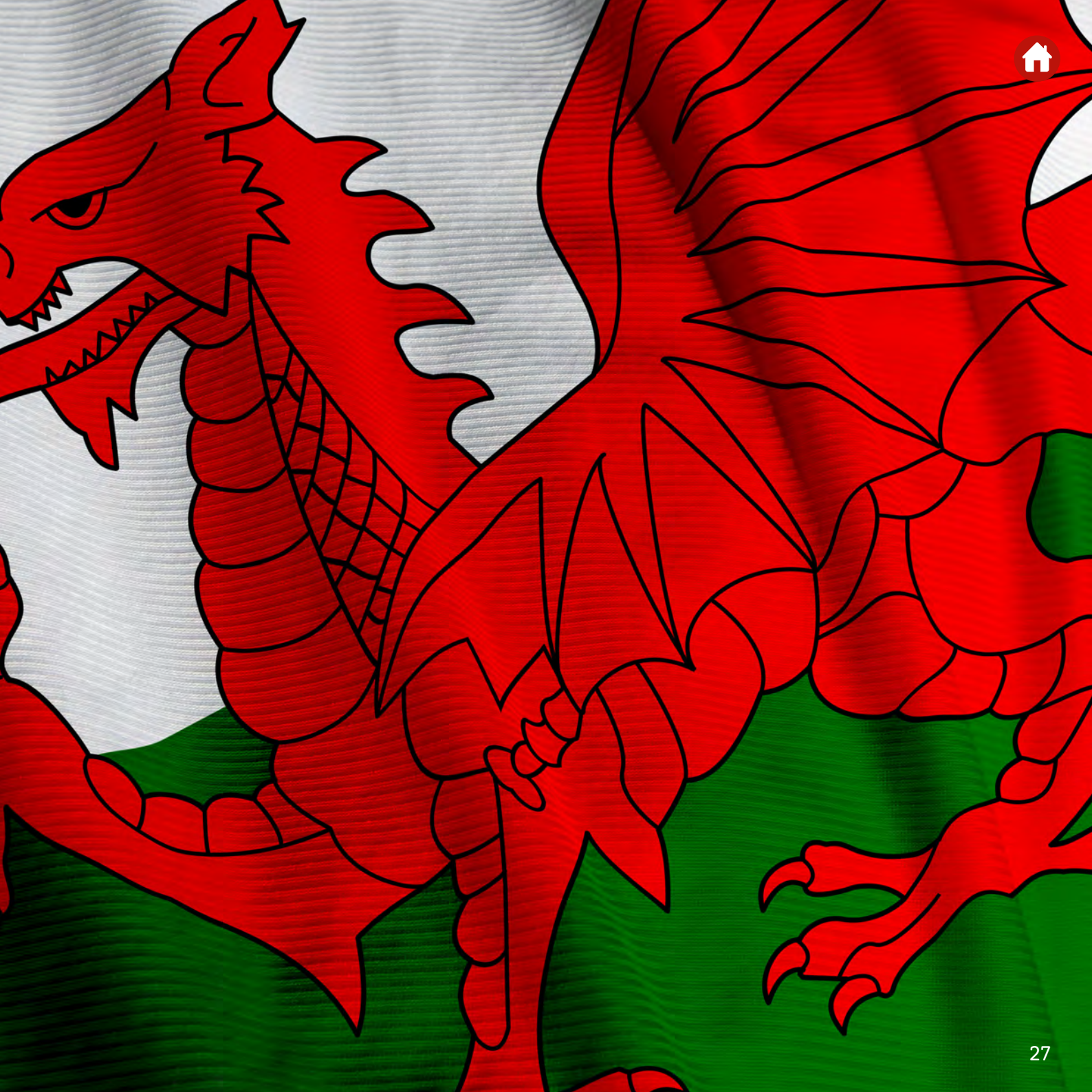
With us, you have the right to the following:

- Documents in Welsh
- Websites in Welsh
- Apply for a job in Welsh
- Letters and emails in Welsh
- Leaflets in Welsh
- Social media messages in Welsh
- Signs in Welsh
- Speak Welsh in Reception
- Use Welsh on the phone

[Welsh Language Rights](#)



SCAN ME







Number of staff who have **Welsh Language** skills

The Service's HR Portal has the ability to record language skills. Each employee is asked to assess their level of skills from 0 - 5 in Welsh and English at reading, spoken, understanding and written language and state whether their preferred language is Welsh or English. The Service is working to increase the number of self-assessments completed with announcements on the Intranet site, global e-mails and guidance documents. Data was extracted from the CoreHR system May 2024, which revealed that **86 employees** had indicated that they have Welsh Language Skills at Level 1 or above in one or more proficiencies.

Category	Reading	Spoken	Understanding	Written	Grand Total
Level 0	180	177	177	187	721
Level 1	28	35	29	22	114
Level 2	11	14	11	13	49
Level 3	12	10	5	11	38
Level 4	7	6	7	3	23
Level 5	11	8	11	7	37
					982

Job posts and Welsh Language Skills

The Service advertises vacancies in the medium of Welsh and English and these are featured on the 'Latest Vacancies' page of its website. All job roles within the Service are categorised as Welsh Essential or Welsh Desirable. For those posts within the Essential category, candidates are assessed on their Welsh Language Skills as part of the Shortlisting and Selection process.

New and vacant posts 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024	
Welsh essential	2
Welsh desirable	52





Coleg
Cymraeg
Cenedlaethol



Training and Courses through the medium of Welsh

There are two main points of contact for staff training, the Learning and Development Team at Fire Service Headquarters and the Training and Development Centre in Cardiff Gate. There were no training courses carried out or requested through the medium of Welsh during 2023/2024.

Welsh Language Award for Firefighters

All new Wholetime Firefighters employed by the Service are required to enrol onto an Apprenticeship qualification facilitated by Cardiff and Vale College. The Level 3 Diploma in Emergency Fire and Rescue Services includes the Prentis-iaith General Course provided by Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol. Prentis-iaith is a six-module course which covers Welsh Language and Culture. The course is interactive and includes an automated self-marking system, allowing learners to work individually at a pace they are comfortable with. A variety of methods are used to engage the learner and guide them through the modules, including a verbal element to help the learner practice their pronunciation of Welsh phrases. Each learner is awarded a certificate on completion of the course. One Wholetime Firefighter utilised the Additional Learning Fund (ALF) to attend Dysgu Cymraeg Mynediad 2.

Complaints received in relation to the **Welsh Language Standards**

The Business Support department records and initially deals with all complaints received by the Service through the 'Contact us' page. Complaints are then directed to the relevant department. The Service did not receive any complaints regarding its compliance with the Welsh Language Standards during 2023/2024.





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

01443 232000
www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

AGENDA ITEM NO 6.ii
26 SEPTEMBER 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

COMMITMENT TO NFCC CORE CODE OF ETHICS

THIS REPORT IS FOR DECISION

REPORT APPROVED BY THE DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

PRESENTING OFFICER: DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION, DOMINIC MIKA

SUMMARY

The Core Code of Ethics was developed in response to recommendations made by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to improve culture within fire and rescue services. It was developed by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) in consultation with firefighters and trade unions across the UK. It sets out five ethical principles, providing a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. They provide a foundation for all FRSs in developing their own principles and values. Renewing our commitment to the Core Code of Ethics supports the Service's resolve to deliver culture change as they will be promoted and serve as a basis for review of our own statement of values and standards.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Commissioners reassert the Service's adoption of the NFCC Core Code of Ethics, endorsing their use as the basis for review of the Service's values and standards, providing a foundation for expectations of conduct, behaviour and decision-making.
2. That the Commissioners affirm commitment to improving the values, culture, fairness and diversity of the Service by an organisational statement based on the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The NFCC Core Code of Ethics (the Code) was developed to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by FRSs. This work was led by the NFCC, the LGA and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and is referred to by His Majesty's Inspectorate of

Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) in their inspections of FRSs in England. It is, however, applicable to all FRSs. The recommendation to develop the Code was made by HMICFRS following their first round of FRS inspections from 2018 and was published in 2021.

- 1.2 Using the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles) as a guiding framework, the Code sets out five ethical principles with accompanying statements and guidance as a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour. The five principles of the Code are:
 - Putting our communities first – we put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.
 - Integrity – we act with integrity, including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.
 - Dignity and respect – making decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.
 - Leadership – we are all positive role models, always demonstrating flexibility and resilient leadership. We are all accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.
 - Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) – we continually recognise and promote the value of EDI both within the FRSs and the wider communities in which we serve. We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations, and celebrate difference.
- 1.3 The Code is supported by a Standard approved by the Fire Standards Board setting out what is required to meet the Standard, including requirements of leaders and governance.
- 1.4 HMICFRS's spotlight report on Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services (March 2023) expressed concern at continuing evidence of unacceptable behaviours and included a recommendation that "With immediate effect, chief fire officers should review their implementation of the Core Code of Ethics and make sure it is being applied across their services" (recommendation 34).
- 1.5 The Independent Culture Review Report by Fenella Morris KC identified significant failings in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service regarding behaviours, standards and culture. The report set out 82 recommendations to address these issues, central to which were actions to set clear behavioural standards (ICR6), to review and streamline the statement of values (ICR5) and to demonstrate clear leadership commitment relating to values, equality and diversity, standards and culture (ICR8).

- 1.6 The report recognised the Service's adoption of the Code and its affinity with the Service's own values. However, staff engagement indicated that it was neither embedded or understood.

2. ISSUE / PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The Code sets out guiding principles for the values that are important to FRSs. These principles inform the way we serve our communities, how we work and how we work together. They ensure an ethical approach is embedded Service-wide in all activities, interactions and decisions, vital to maintain public trust and confidence.
- 2.2 Reasserting the Service's adoption of the Code will demonstrate commitment to culture change, setting out expectations of conduct and behaviour. This will generate a more positive, transparent and accountable culture, enabling inappropriate behaviour to be challenged.
- 2.3 As a foundation for a review of the Service's values, they will support a gap analysis of existing values and cultural approaches based on the Fire Standard. In review of the Service's values, the Code may be adapted or added to but may not be detracted from, allowing flexibility for the Service's own values to truly represent our own needs and commitments.
- 2.4 The Code will be promoted Service-wide as part of a wider discussion on values and behaviours. This will be coordinated by the Ethics, Culture and Values project within the Step Forward programme, supported by project resources. It is intended that this activity will deliver a clear set of behavioural standards, identifying examples of positive and negative behaviours that are relatable and applicable to the Service's activities.
- 2.5 Setting these behavioural standards will inform individual accountability and provide clarity in identifying, challenging, discussing and addressing unacceptable behaviour.
- 2.6 Using the Code as a basis for development of the Service's principles, values and standards will ensure their alignment with recognised sector good practice. Embedding the Code in policies and procedures will ensure they are at the core of day-to-day activity.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

- 3.1.1. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - The Core Code of Ethics was equality impact assessed by the group at a national level and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key principle within the Code. An Equality Impact

Assessment has been completed and approved by the Service's Equality Officer.

- 3.1.2 Well-Being Of Future Generations (Wales) Act - As a public body, the Code will support the Service to ensure the highest standards of service to the community and support ethical decision making which will aid delivery of the Sustainable Development Principle.
- 3.1.3 Socio Economic Duty - The Duty addresses decision making which will be supported by the Code's focus on assuring an ethical approach.
- 3.1.4 Safeguarding - By setting out expectations for behaviour and informing discussion on what is and is not acceptable, the proposal will provide a basis to recognise and challenge inappropriate behaviour.
- 3.1.5 Consultation and Communications, including Representative Bodies - The Code and subsequent review of the Service's values will assist understanding of communicating with sensitivity and respect for others. The principles address accountability which is central to the purpose of consultation activities and drive communication.

3.2 Regulatory, Strategy and Policy

- 3.2.1 There are no direct financial implications in relation to this proposal.
- 3.2.2 Morris Report - The proposal addresses three recommendations of the Morris Report, as stated at para 1.5 of this paper.
- 3.2.3 Service Policy - Embedding the principles of the Code will ensure that policies and processes are ethical and address the needs of the FRS, staff, the community and partners. The Code and subsequently developed Service values will inform a review of OP-02.051 Standards and Expectations.

3.3 Resources, Assets and Delivery

- 3.3.1 The proposal does not require direct allocation of resources as promotion and discussion of the Code will be supported within already agreed support for the Transformation Programme.

3.3.2 The NFCC People, Culture and Leadership programme's second phase focusses on cultural reform and strengthening leadership. Resources have been developed to support FRSs which will be reviewed and utilised for the Service's promotion of the Code.

4 EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The need to define and establish standards of behaviour and to review the Service's values was clearly stated in the Morris Report and has been a recurring theme in subsequent discussions with staff. The Code provides a solid foundation for this work, aligned with other FRSs.
- 4.2 The Code will act as a starting point for discussion. It is relevant and applicable to all roles and responsibilities.
- 4.3 Establishing standards of behaviour with descriptors of both positive and negative descriptors and examples and developing the Service's own values in consultation and collaboration with staff will be key to their effective implementation, and this will be supported by demonstration of commitment at senior level.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Commissioners reassert the Service's adoption of the NFCC Core Code of Ethics, endorsing their use as the basis for review of the Service's values and standards, providing a foundation for expectations of conduct, behaviour and decision-making.
- 5.2 That the Commissioners affirm commitment to improving the values, culture, fairness and diversity of the Service by an organisational statement based on the NFCC Core Code of Ethics.

Contact Officer:	Suzanne Absalom Culture Change Programme Manager	
Background Papers	Date	Source / Contact
Fire Standards Board – Approved Standard: Core Code of Ethics https://www.firestandards.org/standards/approved/code-of-ethics-fsc-eth01/		
HMICFRS Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectrates.gov.uk/publication-html/values-and-culture-in-fire-and-rescue-services/		
NFCC Core Code of Ethics https://nfcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Core-Code-of-Ethics-England-FRS-May21_V0.pdf		
NFCC Core Code of Ethics Guidance https://nfcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Core-Code-of-Ethics-England-Guidance-May-21-V0.pdf		
NFCC People, Culture and Leadership programme resources https://nfcc.org.uk/our-services/people-programme/		

AGENDA ITEM NO 7

Reports for Information

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 7.i
26 SEPTEMBER 2024

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE AREA MANAGER, RISK REDUCTION

SWFRS AUTOMATIC FIRE ALARM (AFA) RESPONSE CHANGE UPDATE**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**

REPORT APPROVED BY ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, BRIAN THOMPSON

REPORT PRESENTED BY AREA MANAGER, MIKE WYATT

SUMMARY

The Commissioners had agreed unanimously for work to commence on how South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) could mitigate the substantial impact that Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs) have on our operational response, risk reduction activities and training events.

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 A significant amount of work has been completed to date. This includes the completion of all programme documents such as:

- Business case
- Project charter
- Gantt chart
- Equality impact assessment
- Privacy impact statement

1.2 Communication Strategy

- 1.2.1 One of our first priorities was to develop a communications strategy. This communication strategy is a live document which is constantly being updated and reviewed.
- 1.2.2 A new AFA webpage has been created to provide information and guidance on the changes https://www.southwales-fire.gov.uk/?page_id=136092. The webpage includes useful information for businesses and leaders of organisations to help them understand and prepare for the proposed changes to response. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) page is also included.
- 1.2.3 Letters to Alarm Receiving Centres (ARC's) and impacted stakeholders in both Welsh and English have been written and are due to be distributed in the first week of September. All correspondence will be sent out electronically along with a hard copy letter.
- 1.2.4 Correspondence will be sent out to the following:
- Health Boards x 3
 - Shared Services Partnerships
 - Care Inspectorate Wales
 - Welsh Government
 - Further Education establishments
 - Community Housing Cymru (CHC)
 - Top 100 businesses / organisations who we have received the most AFA's,
 - Additionally, the Public Service Boards (PSBs) will be informed in person with a briefing note
- 1.2.5 Social media messages have been written and are ready to be released. These will be released after the letters have been sent to the health boards, local authorities and other partners. A press release will also be sent out following the distribution of the letters.
- 1.2.6 An information leaflet has been developed with a QR code link to the new webpage. This will be handed out by our operational crews when they attend AFAs between September 2024 and January 2025.
- 1.2.7 A new email address has been created to allow people to respond to the correspondence afaenquiries@southwales-fire.gov.uk

1.2.8 Our strategy is firmly focussed on education and engagement. Communication to stakeholders will incorporate opportunities to ask questions and provide comments or feedback relating to the proposal. This phase of the project will commence from the first week of September.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 An issue encountered is the high levels of conflicting workload by departments required to work on this project.
- 2.2 A consideration is around getting the information out to our communities in languages other than English and Welsh. Our website does have the 'Recite Me' facility which allows anyone visiting our website to change the English/Welsh pages into a variety of other languages.

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Community and Environment

3.1.1 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

There will be no impact to faiths or beliefs including sensitive times of day or year. In addition, the change in procedure does not benefit or disadvantage anyone with disabilities.

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

Schools which are deemed at high risk can as part of the exception process receive a night-time-only response.

3.1.3 Socio Economic Duty

As part of the proposed AFA response strategy changes, domestic residences with monitored alarm systems will continue to receive a response between the hours of 18.00 and 08.00hrs. This will include blocks of flats under the responsibility of councils and housing associations.

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 states in Clause 19 and subclause 35.2.7 the need to avoid delay in summoning the fire and rescue service when the fire detection and fire alarm system of a residential care premises operates.

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

3.2.3 Service Policy – Updates required 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. National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) are in the process of creating a national guidance working group for UwFS reduction. SWFRS has representation on 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 The project timeline is challenging and we currently slightly behind schedule. However, we are confident that we can make up for this delay, providing that no further challenges or additional setbacks occur.

4.2 Next Steps

4.2.1 The webpage is now 'live' and the correspondence to stakeholder and alarm receiving centres will be distributed in the first week of September.

4.2.2 An animation which was completed on the 29/08/24 will be approved and placed onto the webpage and other channels such as YouTube.

4.2.3 We are looking at the feasibility of utilising a radio advertisement in our service area.

4.2.4 We will be responding to enquiries from members of our communities following the distribution of the letters and media messages in September 24.

4.2.5 Stakeholder meetings will be scheduled for those who express an interest from October – December 24.

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	
	None

Report Title: AFA Response Change Proposal – Update for Commissioner’s (Sept 2024)

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THIS REPORT IS NOT EXEMPT AND IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN**SOUTH WALES FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**AGENDA ITEM NO 7.ii
26 SEPTEMBER 2024

BOARD OF THE COMMISSIONERS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT & PROPERTY

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24**THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION**REPORT APPROVED BY HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT &
PROPERTYREPORT PRESENTED BY HEAD OF FINANCE, PROCUREMENT &
PROPERTY**SUMMARY**

The Appointed Auditor is required to give his opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024. This report considers the statutory ISA260 report, the final audited statement of accounts and the letter of representation.

As the audit concludes, the documents currently being finalised will be circulated to Commissioners electronically prior to the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Commissioners receive the ISA 260 report of the Appointed Auditor and note the letter of representation contained therein.

That Commissioners note the audited Statement of Accounts (provided electronically).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Treasurer to the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority is responsible for the preparation of the statutory financial statements and information contained within the annual Statement of Account according to accepted accounting practices.

- 1.2 The Auditor General is also required to give an opinion on whether the financial statements of the Authority and the Fire Fighters Pension Fund Account give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 March 2024, and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

2. ISSUE

- 2.1 The Head of Finance, Property & Procurement approved the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 on 31 May 2023, and these have been subject to the external audit process since July 1st 2024.
- 2.2 The draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was presented to the Finance and Audit Committee on 26th July 2024 prior to the completion of the audit process.
- 2.3 The audit has now been substantially completed by Audit Wales (AW) as the appointed auditors and their statutory ISA 260 report is finalised and attached for Members to receive. This is the final audit of accounts report and is where the auditors' draw attention to corrected and uncorrected misstatements in addition to areas of uncertainty and risk as part of their reporting to 'those charged with governance'.
- 2.4 The audited Statement of Accounts will be published on the Authority's website following Commissioner approval and Chair, Treasurer, Interim Chief Fire Officer and Auditor endorsement.
- 2.5 The overall opinion of the auditor is favourable and their intention is to issue an 'unqualified' audit report. The alternative is a 'qualified' audit opinion which is when the auditor has material concerns about aspects of the accounts, although this does not apply. The unqualified opinion is in no small measure down to the significant amount of work undertaken by the accountancy staff of the Fire & Rescue Service, together with support from the AW team.
- 2.6 It is normal practice for the Auditor to require a letter of representation from the Authority. A draft of this letter is contained within the ISA 260 report and certified by the Treasurer and Chair of the Board of Commissioners.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Whilst there have been changes made to the draft financial statements, these do not affect the overall financial position of the Fire & Rescue Authority and as a result there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Commissioners receive the ISA260 report of the Appointed Auditor and note the letter of representation contained therein.
- 4.2 That Commissioners note the audited Statement of Accounts (provided electronically).

Contact Officer:	Lisa Mullan Head of Finance, Procurement & Property
Background Papers:	Statement of Accounts 2023-24 AW ISA260 Report Proposed Report of the Auditor General to the South Wales Fire & Authority Letter of Representation.

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AGENDA ITEM NO 7.ii – APPENDIX A

Statement of Accounts 2023-2024

-

Below Link provided

[PDF\Agenda No 7.ii - App A - AUDITED Statement of Accounts 2023-24.pdf](#)

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Audit of Accounts Report – South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Audit year: 2023-24

Date issued: September 2024

Document reference: 4476A2024



This document has been prepared as part of work performed in accordance with statutory functions. Further information can be found in our [Statement of Responsibilities](#).

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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.

This document is also available in Welsh.

About Audit Wales

Our aims and ambitions

Assure



the people of
Wales that public
money is well
managed

Explain



how public
money is being
used to meet
people's needs

Inspire



and empower
the Welsh
public sector to
improve



Fully exploit
our unique
perspective,
expertise and
depth of insight



Strengthen our
position as an
authoritative,
trusted and
independent
voice



Increase our
visibility,
influence and
relevance



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

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Introduction

I have now largely completed my audit in line with my Audit Plan 2024 dated July 2024.

This Audit of Accounts Report summarises the main findings from my audit of your 2023-24 accounts. My team have already discussed these issues with the Head of Finance, Procurement and Property / Interim Treasurer and her team.

I am very grateful to your officers for their support in undertaking this audit.



Adrian Crompton

Auditor General for
Wales

Your audit at a glance



Audit opinions

We are proposing to give an unqualified opinion on the accounts.

We have nothing to report under the other sections of my report, i.e. those relating to going concern; other information; other matters; or matters I report by exception.



Significant issues

There are no misstatements or significant issues to report.

Financial statements' materiality



Materiality £2.2 million
Firefighters Pension Fund £0.63 million

My aim is to identify and correct material misstatements, i.e. those that might otherwise cause the user of the accounts to be misled.

Materiality is calculated using:

- 2023-24 gross expenditure of £108 million
- 2023-24 gross expenditure of £31.5 million - Fire Fighters Pension Fund
- Materiality percentage of 2%

I apply the materiality percentage to gross expenditure to calculate materiality.

I will report to you any misstatements above £108,000 (£31,000 Fire Fighters Pension Fund) calculated as 5% of materiality (called the 'trivial level').



Areas of specific interest

There are some areas of the accounts that may be of more importance to the user of the accounts. We set lower materiality levels for these as follows:

- Senior Officer Remuneration £1,000
- Commissioners Allowances £1,000
- Related party disclosures for individuals £10,000

Ethical compliance



Compliance with ethical standards

We believe that:

- we have complied with the ethical standards we are required to follow in carrying out our work;
- we have remained independent of yourselves;
- our objectivity has not been comprised; and
- we have no relationships that could undermine our independence or objectivity.

Proposed audit opinion



Audit opinion

We intend to issue an unqualified audit opinion on this year's accounts once you have provided us with a Letter of Representation (see below).

Our proposed audit report is set out in **Appendix 1**.



Letter of representation

A Letter of Representation is a formal letter in which you confirm to us the accuracy and completeness of information provided to us during the audit. Some of this information is specified as being necessary by auditing standards; other information may relate specifically to your audit.

The letter we are requesting you to sign is included in **Appendix 2**.

Issues arising during the audit



Misstatements

A misstatement arises where information in the accounts is not in accordance with accounting standards.

Uncorrected misstatements

There were no misstatements identified in the accounts which remain uncorrected.

Corrected misstatements

During our audit, we identified misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention.

These are set out in **Appendix 3**.

Status of this report

We have largely completed this years audit but at the time of drafting this report, the following work was outstanding:

- Firefighters pension fund – testing of pension commutations and lump-sum retirement benefits and controls over starters and leavers to the scheme; and
- the final review of our audit file.

We will update the Commissioners on the above at its meeting scheduled for 26th September 2024.



Other significant issues

In the addition to misstatements identified during the audit we also report other significant issues to you.

There were no such issues identified during the audit.

Recommendations

Following the audit certification by the Auditor General, we will continue to work with the Authority's finance team to further improve the accounts production process for 2024-25. There are no issues or recommendations that are sufficiently significant to warrant bringing to your attention.

Appendix 1

Proposed Audit Report

The report of the Auditor General for Wales to the Commissioners of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Opinion on financial statements

I have audited the financial statements of:

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

for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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

The Firefighters Pension Fund Accounts comprise the Fund Account and Net Assets Statement and related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

In my opinion, in all material respects, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund as at 31 March 2024 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)) and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements of Public Sector Entities in the United Kingdom'. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report.

My staff and I are independent of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

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

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

Other Information

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

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

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

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

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

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

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

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

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for:

- the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view and comply with proper practices;
- maintaining proper accounting records;
- internal controls as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; and
- assessing the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the responsible financial officer anticipates that the services provided by South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighters Pension Fund will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with section 13(2) of the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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

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

My procedures included the following:

- Enquiring of management, internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund's policies and procedures concerned with:
 - identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
 - detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud; and
 - the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations.
- Considering as an audit team how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the posting of unusual journals;
- Obtaining an understanding of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund's framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks that South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund operates in, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Firefighter's Pension Fund; and
- Obtaining an understanding of related party relationships.

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

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

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

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

A further description of the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Certificate of completion of audit

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

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
Date:

1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff CF10 4BZ

Appendix 2

Letter of representation

Audited body's letterhead

Auditor General for Wales
Wales Audit Office
1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

26 September 2024

Representations regarding the 2023-24 financial statements

This letter is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31 March 2024, for the purpose of expressing an opinion on their truth and fairness and their proper preparation.

We confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made enquiries as we consider sufficient, we can make the following representations to you.

Management representations

Responsibilities

We have fulfilled our responsibilities for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with legislative requirements and Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023-24; in particular the financial statements give a true and fair view in accordance therewith;
- the design, implementation, maintenance and review of internal control to prevent and detect fraud and error.

Information provided

We have provided you with:

- full access to:
 - all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as books of account and supporting documentation, minutes of meetings and other matters;

- additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
- unrestricted access to staff from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud;
- our knowledge of fraud or suspected fraud that we are aware of and that affects South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority and involves:
 - management;
 - employees who have significant roles in internal control; or
 - others where the fraud could have a material effect on the financial statements;
- our knowledge of any allegations of fraud, or suspected fraud, affecting the financial statements communicated by employees, former employees, regulators or others;
- our knowledge of all known instances of non-compliance or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements; and
- the identity of all related parties and all the related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware;

Financial statement representations

All transactions, assets and liabilities have been recorded in the accounting records and are reflected in the financial statements.

The methods, the data and the significant assumptions used in making accounting estimates, and their related disclosures are appropriate to achieve recognition, measurement or disclosure that is reasonable in the context of the applicable financial reporting framework.

Related party relationships and transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed.

All events occurring subsequent to the reporting date which require adjustment or disclosure have been adjusted for or disclosed.

All known actual or possible litigation and claims whose effects should be considered when preparing the financial statements have been disclosed to the auditor and accounted for and disclosed in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework.

The financial statements are free of material misstatements, including omissions. The effects of uncorrected misstatements identified during the audit are immaterial, both individually and in the aggregate, to the financial statements taken as a whole.

Representations by those charged with governance

We acknowledge that the representations made by management, above, have been discussed with us.

We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of true and fair financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework. The financial statements were approved by South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority on 26 September 2024.

We confirm that we have taken all the steps that we ought to have taken in order to make ourselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that it has been communicated to you. We confirm that, as far as we are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which you are unaware.

Signed by:

Signed by:

Officer who signs on behalf of
management

Commissioner who signs on behalf of
those charged with governance

Date: 26 September 2024

Date: 26 September 2024

Appendix 3

Summary of corrections made

During our audit, we identified the following misstatements that have been corrected by management, but which we consider should be drawn to your attention.

Value of correction	Accounts areas	Explanation
£2,003,000	Note 15 Creditors Creditors with other entities and individuals were understated as April pension payments made in March 2024 had been debited to creditors. Debtors with other entities and individuals were understated by a corresponding amount.	To correctly disclose creditor and debtor balances.
£156,000	Note 15 Creditors Services received and paid for in 2024-25 had been included in creditors with other entities and individuals with a contra entry within debtors thereby overstating both the creditor and debtor balances.	To correctly disclose creditor and debtor balances.
£642,000	Note 19 Revaluation Reserve The revaluation reserve was overstated as adjustments to asset values from revaluations were not correctly reflected in the revaluation reserve. The capital adjustment account was correspondingly understated.	To correctly disclose unusable reserve balances.
£27,000	Note 25 Members and Commissioners' Allowances Allowances paid to Commissioners' were overstated as the costs of a media consultant and secretarial support had been incorrectly included.	To correctly disclose Commissioners allowances.

£8,000	<p>Note 26 Exit Packages Exit packages disclosed was not complete as it excluded one package.</p>	To correctly disclose the number and cost of exit packages.
£10,788,000	<p>Note 34 Pensions The net Local Government Pension Scheme (RCT scheme) asset was overstated as it had not been restricted to the lower asset ceiling of £0 as required by the Local Government Code and underlying accounting standards. There were corresponding adjustments to primary statements (CIES, MiRS and Balance Sheet), other notes and associated narrative disclosures.</p>	To correctly disclose the maximum economic benefit of pension assets.
N/A	A small number of other narrative, presentational and minor amendments were made to supporting notes.	To ensure that all disclosures are accurately presented.

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 QAD*, and our Chair acts as a link to our Board on audit quality. For more information see our [Audit Quality Report 2023](#).

Our People



The first line of assurance is formed by our staff and management who are individually and collectively responsible for achieving the standards of audit quality to which we aspire.

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

Arrangements for achieving audit quality



The second line of assurance is formed by the policies, tools, learning & development, guidance, and leadership we provide to our staff to support them in achieving those standards of audit quality.

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

Independent assurance



The third line of assurance is formed by those activities that provide independent assurance over the effectiveness of the first two lines of assurance.






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

* QAD is the quality monitoring arm of ICAEW.

Supporting you

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

Visit our website to find:

	<p>our Good Practice work where we share emerging practice and insights from our audit work in support of our objectives to assure, to explain and to inspire.</p>
	<p>our newsletter which provides you with regular updates on our public service audit work, good practice, and events.</p>
	<p>our publications which cover our audit work completed at public bodies.</p>
	<p>information on our forward performance audit work programme 2023-2026 which is shaped by stakeholder engagement activity and our picture of public services analysis.</p>
	<p>various data tools and infographics to help you better understand public spending trends including a range of other insights into the scrutiny of public service delivery.</p>

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



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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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AGENDA ITEM NO 7.iii

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2024/25					
Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Sep 2024	Welsh Language Standards – Annual Monitoring Report	To update Commissioners on compliance against the Welsh Language Standards and to approve the Annual Monitoring Report	D	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	On Agenda
Sep 2024	Commitment to NFCC Core Code of Ethics	For Commissioners to reaffirm their support to the Core Code of Ethics and note the work being conducted to raise awareness and embed the Code into the Service.	D	Contact Officer: Suzanne Absalom	On Agenda
Sep 2024	Update on Unwanted Fire Signal Response	To provide Commissioners with an update on the progress of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	I	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Mike Wyatt	On Agenda
Oct 2024	Annual Improvement Plan	To consider and approve annual improvement plan	D	Contact Officer: Wayne Thomas	
Oct 2024	Amendments to Constitution	To consider and approve amendments to SWFRS Constitution	D	Contact Officer: Gabrielle Greathead	
Oct 2024	Social Partnership Report	To provide Commissioners with an update on SWFRS on call strategy	I	Contact officer: Suzanne Absalom	

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2024/25					
Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Oct 2024	On call Strategy	To provide Commissioners with an update on SWFRS on call strategy	I	Contact officer: Mark Kift	
Oct 2024	Update on Unwanted Fire Signal Response	To provide Commissioners with an update on the progress of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	I	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Mike Wyatt	
Dec 2024	Carbon Reduction Plan and Progress Reports	To advise Commissioners on the progress towards the actions set out in the Carbon Reduction and Biodiversity Plans	I	ACO CS Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Dec 2024	Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales' Draft Report	To consider the IRPW's draft Annual Report and enable comments to be submitted to the Panel within required timescales.	I	ACO CS Contact Officer:	
Dec 2024	Audit Wales Thematic Reviews Report (24/25 Targeted High Risk Prevention)	To consider the recommendations made by Audit Wales following their review of targeted high risk prevention.	I	T/ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2024/25					
Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Dec 2024	Your Health Delivery Group Update to Commissioners	ACFO Loader to present an update on Your Health to the Board of Commissioners.	I	Contact Officer: Dean Loader	
Dec 2024	Update on Unwanted Fire Signal Response	To provide Commissioners with an update on the progress of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	I	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Mike Wyatt	
Feb 2025	Annual Budget Setting report 2025/26	15 th February is the statutory date to set the annual net, revenue budget. This report will update Commissioners on information arising from Local Authority budget consultation process.	D	Treasurer Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Feb 2025	Update on Unwanted Fire Signal Response	To provide Commissioners with an update on the progress of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	I	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Mike Wyatt	
Mar 2025	Pay Policy 2025/26	To consider the Service's Pay Policy Statement in compliance with the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	
Mar 2025	Gender Pay Gap Report 2024	To update on the analysis of the gender pay gap across the Service.	D	ACO PS Contact Officer: Alison Reed	

FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE 2024/25					
Expected Date of Report	Report Name	Purpose of Piece of Work	Information or Decision	Lead Director/ Contact Officer	Progress
Mar 2025	Unwanted Fire Signal Response Proposal - Update	To present the proposals for consideration of changes to the Service response model for unwanted fire signals prior to a public consultation process.	D	T/T/ACFO SD Contact Officer Dean Loader	
Mar 2025	Strategic Themes and Objectives for 2024/25 – Plan Publication	Commissioners to approve the proposed strategic themes and objectives for 2024/25	D	ACO CS Contact Officer: Sarah Watkins / Wayne Thomas	
Mar 2025	Setting Statutory Strategic Performance Indicators and Strategic Objectives	To set the targets for the following financial year.	D	T/ACFO SD Contact Officer: Dean Loader	
Mar 2025	Internal Audit - Annual Plan Report 2025/26	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.	D	Contact Officer: Lisa Mullan	
Mar 2025	Calendar of Meetings for next municipal year 2025/26	To present Commissioners proposed dates of Board & Committee meetings for the next municipal year.	D	ACO CS	

AGENDA ITEM NO 8

**To consider any items of business that the Chairperson deems urgent
(Part 1 or 2)**

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1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	Commissioners are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare both orally and in writing any personal and/or prejudicial interest in respect of matters contained in this agenda in accordance with the provisions of the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Exercise of Functions) (Wales) Directions 2024 and the Local Government Act 2000.	
3.	Chairperson's Announcements	
4.	To receive the minutes of;	
	a. Board of Commissioners for South Wales Fire & Rescue Service Meeting held on Thursday 29 August 2024.	3
	b. Finance and Audit Committee Meeting held on Friday 26 July 2024	9
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