Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Unaudited Statement of Accounts

2022/23

Contents

Foreword by the Staffordshire Commissioner

The Staffordshire Commissioner has been responsible for the governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service since August 2018, after the Home Secretary approved the business case. Staffordshire is currently only one of four services operating under this model, but the government intends to roll this model out further across the sector and a white paper has now been issued by Government that will see this happen. The white paper provides a compelling case to reform and strengthen the fire and rescue services in England and builds upon the fire and building safety system reform in recent years and the government response to the Fire at Grenfell Tower. The vision of the government that I welcome is to drive change and improvement in three key areas: People, Professionalism and Governance.

In Staffordshire, we're experiencing first-hand the benefits of a single point of governance, as it allows for a more efficient, responsive service, able to react quickly to emerging public demand. In December 2021 I published my local Fire and Rescue Plan which sets out priorities and service expectations on behalf of Staffordshire residents. These include a flexible and responsive Service, protecting people and places, helping people most at risk stay safe and ensuring that we have a Fire and Rescue Service fit for tomorrow. I have reported progress against my plan to the Police Fire and Crime Panel and also challenged the performance of the Service by questioning the Chief Fire Officer during a number of Public Performance Meetings.

Police and Fire & Rescue teams are now co-located in stations at Hanley in Stoke-on-Trent, Tamworth and Chase Terrace – a key step in a programme of collaboration which has seen shared services developed in vehicle maintenace, estates, procurement, human resources, finance and corporate communications.

I have worked with Staffordshire Fire to address future years' budget gaps through a number of planning sessions, and I am pleased to that around £1 million of cash savings is being delivered as part of the ongoing transformation work. This has improved efficiency and effectiveness of the Service but there is still more to do to address funding moving forward.

HMICFRS recognised that following their inspection carried out in 2021 there were 20 areas for improvement identified by the Inspectorate and I am happy with the progress being made by the Service and I am confident that the next inspection during 2023 will report tangible improvements in many areas. HMICFRS have also published a spotlight report on culture in the fire and rescue service and I am working with the Chief Fire Officer and commited and determined to work with the fire and rescue services to deliver an open, inclusive, and welcoming culture for all. It is clear that this is his number one priority as there is no place for discrimination, bullying or harassment in Staffordshire or in any fire and rescue service.

In terms of Outlook for the Authority the updated MTFS will ensure that the Chief Fire Officer has the resources needed to deliver on the local plan and national government priorities. With this, inflation and wage pressures in mind, I increased the council tax precept by 4.85% in 2023/24, equivalent to £3.90 per year. I will always aim to keep council tax as low as possible without compromising safety. The Council Tax increase is below the referendum limit which was set at £5 for Fire & Rescue Authorities in 2023/24.

I am responsible for approving the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 and have given due consideration to the recommendations made by the Ethics Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP) meeting scheduled for 27th September 2023.

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner

Narrative Statement by the Director of Finance

The Statement of Accounts sets out the financial activities of the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31 March 2023 and includes comparative figures for the previous year. The Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting principles contained within the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The Code of Practice and relevant guidance notes specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to give a "true and fair" view of the financial position and transactions of the Authority.

The purpose of the Narrative Statement is to provide the reader with a broad understanding of the Authority's financial performance for the year ended 31 March 2023, by clearly explaining the funding position, and how this funding is spent in order to deliver the priorities as set out within the Corporate Safety Plan (CSP). In addition, the Narrative Statement also provides further information to the reader about economy, efficiency and the effective use of resources during the financial year. It also looks to the future and considers some of the challenges faced by Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and importantly discusses how the ongoing collaboration work with Staffordshire Police is progressing.

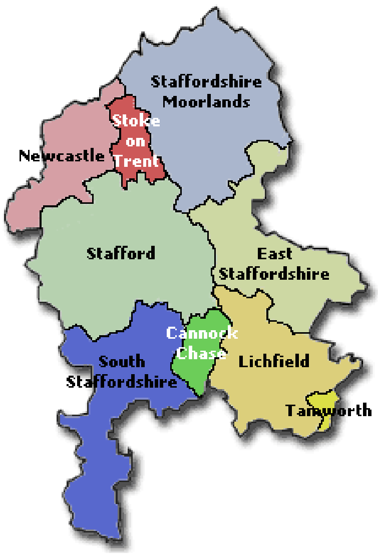
The Staffordshire Commissioner, Ben Adams, was elected to office in May 2021 and is responsible for approving this set of accounts. The Commissioner released his Fire and Rescue Plan during 2021 which sets out the main priorities for the three-year period to May 2024. The Commissioner is committed to ensuring that Staffordshire Fire & Rescue is fit for a changing future and is a leading example for other services to follow so that the people of Staffordshire can be reassured that their money is being used efficiently and effectively and the workforce better reflects the communities it serves.

This statement also reflects upon current challenges and discusses how the Service is preparing for the challenges ahead by focussing upon being even more efficient and delivers improved productivity.

This narrative report contains:

1. Introduction to Staffordshire
2. Organisation overview
3. Our priorities
4. Our service delivery
5. HMICFRS Inspection Findings
6. Risks
7. Basis of preparation
8. Financial performance
9. Outlook

1. Introduction to Staffordshire



The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for the finances of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) with a net revenue budget of £42.5m approved for 2022/23 on 14 February 2022 by the Staffordshire Commissioner following presentation to the Police Fire and Crime Panel. SFRS is responsible for providing its services to a population of around 1.14 million people in the City of Stoke on Trent and the County of Staffordshire.

There are varying levels of deprivation amongst the diverse communities of the county and this is reflected by the differing demand levels placed upon the Service, with Stoke-on-Trent having the most accidental dwelling fires and total number of incidents attended over the last three years. In total, the Service attended just over 9,700 emergency incidents during the year ending 31 March 2023, with almost half of the incidents attended occurring in the north of the county (Stoke on Trent, Newcastle and Staffordshire Moorlands). Staffordshire has the largest total road length of any authority area of the West Midlands and has one of the largest in the country. There are 64.5 miles of motorway in Staffordshire and the West Coast Mainline connects the county by rail. The section of the motorway through Staffordshire and Cheshire has around 21 million vehicle movements per year.

2. Organisation Overview

The Service operates through three main service delivery areas covering the county and has thirty three fire stations, a headquarters site based in Stone and a separate Joint Emergency Transport and Engineering facility that is shared with Staffordshire Police. A close relationship with our communities and partners is at the heart of our Service supported by our estate strategy which includes 21 community fire stations across the county built under two Private Finance Initiatives (PFI's); which complements our existing premises and enabled co-location with Staffordshire Police in many locations in addition to supporting opportunities for community use, along with shared facilities for our partners.

The number of deaths and injuries caused by fire have fallen in recent years and the Service continue to focus and invest in proactive activities that help prevent fires and other emergencies happening in the first place. However, demand placed on the fire and rescue service has started to rise and change both locally and nationally with new risks emerging, including terrorism, illegal waste tipping and incidents caused by extreme weather and the Covid pandemic. With these comes increased pressure on our people and our resources.

The following shows a snapshot of the key performance measures and activity undertaken by the Service during the year and provides a trend during the last three years. In terms of the numbers of incidents attended and the number of accidental dwelling fires attended the activity levels remain positive and show a downward trend.

The total number of deaths and injuries caused by fire, although showing a downward trend, have remained fairly consistent for a number of years. The number of deaths at 4 for the year is the same as last year and a increase from three deaths reported in 2020/21. Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) attended by the Service continues to increase year on year despite the positive work undertaken by the Staffordshire Road Safety Partnership. RTC incidents attended by the Fire Service were significantly up on 2021/22 (+17%) and up on 2020/21 levels of 544 (+53%).

All Incidents Attended	**Accidental Dwelling Fires**	**Fire Deaths and Injuries**
2022/23: 9748 Three Year Trend ↑	2022/23: 405 Three Year Trend ↓	2022/23: 21 Deaths:4 Injuries:17 ↓
Business Fires (Excl Prisons)	**Prison Fires**	**RTC's**
2022/23: 184 Three Year Trend ↑	2022/23: 69 Three Year Trend ↑	2022/23: 833 Three Year Trend ↑
Unwanted Fire Signals	**Special Service Calls**	**Secondary Fires**
2022/23: 4191 Three Year Trend ↑	2022/23:1633 Three Year Trend ↑	2022/23: 2267 Three Year Trend ↑

Vulnerable households continue to be targeted by the Service for prevention activity and information relating to those who are most at risk of Accidental Dwelling Fires has been developed and updated so that it can be utilised by our Service Delivery Groups. Prevention work has now returned to more normal levels following the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

The Service analyses performance data to investigate instances where response times are not met and also to understand issues which impact on levels of appliance availability.

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, inquiries into building regulations and fire safety have identified the need to tighten these arrangements to keep people safe in their homes. This will certainly place greater responsibilities on all fire and rescue services to ensure the right numbers of skilled, specialist staff are available for audit and inspection work. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service are already responding to this and it will continue to be an investment priority.

Work remains ongoing between the Service and Staffordshire Police to identify where the combined estate can be rationalised and used more effectively and efficiently to deliver future savings. This has already resulted in the Police and Fire Service sharing the community fire stations in both Tamworth Belgrave and Hanley with the local area community policing team responding from Tamworth Belgrave and in the City of Stoke on Trent the shift based operational staff responding from the repurposed Hanley Police and Fire Station.

For both Tamworth and Hanley this has allowed the disposal of two existing police buildings generating a substantial capital receipt, reduce running costs and resulting in additional income for the Fire and Rescue Service. Sharing of buildings ultimately leads to benefits and savings to the public purse which is always at the heart of the focus to improve efficiency and deliver more economic solutions. The delivery of the Staffordshire Commissioner's Estates Strategy will lead to further significant savings into the medium term.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the requirement that each Fire and Rescue Authority must produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) demonstrating how prevention, protection, and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities, through authorities and partners working either individually or collectively, in a cost-effective way. This task is delivered by producing the Corporate Safety Plan (CSP) which sets out the strategic priorities and shapes and drives the Service's vision of 'making Staffordshire the safest place to be' covering the period 2020 to 2024 and is discussed in more detail below.

Our People

At the end of the financial year, Staffordshire Fire employed 690 full time equivalent staff, consisting of 287 wholetime operational firefighters, 246 on-call firefighters, 144 support staff and secondments and 13 senior management staff including the principal management team.

In addition to the above a number of shared service arrangements are in place with Staffordshire Police, this includes the following departments: Human Resources, Finance, Communications, Property, Commercial Services, Joint Emergency Transport Service (JETS) and also Occupational Health and Stores. All staff, with the exception of Stores, are employed by the Chief Constable with agreements in place to manage the contractual arrangements and cost recharges for each business area.

3. Our priorities

As required by the government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, every fire and rescue service must produce a high-level Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which explains how they use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.

Listening to feedback from our people and our communities, we now call the IRMP for Staffordshire our Corporate Safety Plan.

We identify and assess all foreseeable fire and rescue-related risks across Staffordshire and use this information to plan how to control these risks, respond to emergencies and deliver our fire prevention and protection activities in the most efficient and effective way. This means we can make sure we have the right people and resources in the right places at the right time to protect our communities, our buildings, our people and the environment.

This Safety Plan sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire 'the safest place to be' and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county. Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do. We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

The priorities for the Corporate Safety Plan have been established as follows:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention
2. Protecting Staffordshire and Its people
3. Public Confidence
4. Service Reform

Prevention and Early Intervention

What we aim to do - Develop a detailed community risk profile of Staffordshire, so that we can use our resources in the most efficient and effective way.

In order to prevent fires and respond promptly and effectively to fires and other emergencies the Service will work together with partners across the county, share information and create a more detailed understanding of the risks to our communities and identify the people and properties most at risk. In addition, the Service will prioritise these risks to ensure our activities have the most positive impact on community safety and develop targeted activities to make the most efficient use of our resources and minimise our impact on the environment. We are committed to working with partners to educate our communities and share goals to reduce duplication and inefficiencies in the public sector.

Protecting Staffordshire and Its people

What we aim to do - Reduce and remove risks in our communities using a combination of prevention, protection and response activities and help make Staffordshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

To protect our people, buildings, the environment and reduce local risk the Service will: continue to modify and develop our activities to embrace the changing needs of the county and use advances in technology and techniques to ensure our response to emergencies is efficient and effective. We will contribute to building communities which are fit for the future (resilient, healthy and sustainable) and contribute to ensuring that buildings in Staffordshire are safe for residents and visitors for generations to come. We will ensure that we have the capability to meet new and emerging risks from incidents that may involve flooding, wildfire, terrorism or supporting other emergency services.

Public Confidence

What we aim to do - Report regularly on our progress and communicate openly about our plans so that, they are clearly understood, meet our legal duties and provide assurance to the public in a way which is transparent and easy to scrutinise.

In order to ensure plans and resources are in place to provide a flexible efficient and resilient response to emergency incidents the Service will consult with our communities and listen to our people when developing our plans and services. In addition, provide evidence that our activities are based on a recognised need and are targeted where they are needed most. A transparent and easily understood approach will be adopted to planning and reporting throughout the service.

Service Reform

What we aim to do - Develop and support a diverse, healthy and highly professional workforce who are motivated and empowered to improve our service.

To ensure that we continue to be effective, efficient and able to transform the Service to meet the challenges ahead we will invest in our people by providing them with the right equipment, training and skills to keep them safe, encourage innovation and inspire our future leaders. The Service will continue to strive to improve the services we provide and be honest and open, encouraging people to be themselves and treat each other with kindness and respect. This will promote a positive and supportive culture committed to improving the health, fitness and wellbeing of our people and work with our communities and partners to improve the diversity of our workforce.

Further details supporting the Corporate Safety Plan priorities can be found on our website:

https://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/what-we-do/our-safety-plan-2020-2024/

4. Our Service Delivery

This Safety Plan discussed above sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire 'the safest place to be' and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county. Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do. We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

Our resources are placed so that we are able to respond to incidents as quickly and as safely as possible. As part of our planning process, we monitor and review the risks within Staffordshire to ensure we remain flexible in our approach and are best placed to suggest improvements where they will benefit the safety of our firefighters and our communities.

This helps us to:

- Improve our knowledge of vulnerability and identify those most at risk
- Better understand the needs of our diverse communities
- Prepare for the challenges ahead.

We continue to use and develop a range of data-driven tools, techniques and modelling programmes to help us monitor, assess and anticipate the impact of future changes in risk and levels of demand. These are key to supporting our risk planning processes. They involve the use of both social and demographic data, consideration of local strategic infrastructure plans, industrial strategies and, information and learning from previous emergency incidents.

In planning our response to risk, we work closely with partners including Staffordshire Police, West Midlands Ambulance Service and the Environment Agency. We contribute towards the risk assessment process in the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum, which produces a community risk register drawing upon local and regional risks set against a national risk framework. Through the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, we are part of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum and regularly take part in joint exercises and training, testing our Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles to ensure we are adequately prepared when crisis hits.

We work with other fire and rescue services and partner organisations to identify new and emerging risks, such as naturally occurring hazards (extreme weather), pandemic illnesses and malicious threats (including terrorism) and use this intelligence to prepare our firefighters for the types of emergencies they may face.

- In recent years, the number of waste fires and wildfires has increased with several large waste fires at illicit sites and fires involving fly-tipped materials. Extreme weather conditions have already seen hundreds of hours spent tackling wildfires in the Moorlands, which destroyed hundreds of acres of countryside and threatened homes. We have specially-trained waste and wildfire tactical advisors.

- Climate change causing wide-scale flooding across Staffordshire and further afield. We have high-volume fire engines and enhanced logistical support vehicles (used during the Cumbria and Thames Valley floods and more recently at the collapse of Whaley Bridge dam)

- As well as aiming to cause physical harm, terrorist attacks now seek to disrupt services by preventing access to buildings or damaging computer systems. We have measures in place involving physical and cyber security, but we must continue to be vigilant and develop our buildings, systems and staff knowledge to keep pace with the threat. This area was audited during 2022/23 and a number of recommendations made by our internal auditors, RSM, are currently being implemented.

5. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Since 2017, HMICFRS has been responsible for the independent inspection of England's 44 fire and rescue services in addition to national police forces. These inspection reports provide an assessment of a fire and rescue service's effectiveness and efficiency and how well they look after their people. HMICFRS use a system of graded judgments to assess these criteria; 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate'.

The Service was inspected during September and October 2021, with the final report published later in July 2022; which is in line with HMICFRS's approach of publishing reports in batches and not immediately after each service's inspection is complete. The report's findings were in many ways positive, although it highlighted issues that the Service is continuing to invest time and effort in to improve.

HMICFRS rated the Service as 'Good' at providing an effective service to the people of Staffordshire and at being well prepared for major incidents. Inspectors also said we are 'Good' at identifying people in our communities who are most at risk from fire and work well with partners to reduce this risk. The inspection noted the positive response to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy improving the safety of residents in Staffordshire who live in highrise buildings through the community sprinkler scheme. HMICFRS found the Service to have good financial management arrangements in place, understand how money is spent and collaborate well with the police resulting in more efficient use of our fleet and buildings. HMICFRS pointed out the need to explore new ways of working and invest in new technologies to help ensure the workforce is utilised in the most productive way. There were also a number of areas which were rated as 'Requires Improvement' and HMICFRS has identified 20 areas of areas for improvement. These included: protecting the public through fire regulation, responding to fire and other emergencies, making the best use of resources, promoting the right values and culture, and ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

The HMICFRS Inspection Report is designed to give the public information about how their local fire and rescue service is performing in several important areas, in a way that is comparable with other services across England. A copy of the latest HMICFRS Inspection report can be found in full here.

Staffordshire - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) – Home (justiceinspectorates.gov.uk)

The next full inspection of the Service by HMICFRS is scheduled for the Autumn of 2023.

6. Risks

The Staffordshire Commissioner and SFRS both have risks registers both at strategic and operational level. The risk register is reviewed and challenged by Ethics, Transparency Audit Panel (ETAP) on a regular basis. Both registers form a part of the Internal Audit programme delivered by our internal auditors, RSM and reported to ETAP. The Service holds a regular review of all strategic risks and risk owners are invited to the meeting to explain the risk and its mitigation along with how it is being pro-actively managed by the Service.

7. Basis of preparation

The Statement of Accounts is published to present fairly the financial position and transactions of the Authority in a fair and transparent manner. Its format is prescribed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). A glossary to explain some of the technical terms is included at the back of this report.

These accounts are prepared on a going concern basis, assuming that the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority will continue in operation for the foreseeable future in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2022/23.

The Commissioner is required by statute to make funding decisions on a different basis from the way in which it reports the Statement of Accounts. A number of adjustments are therefore made to the accounts that are used for budget setting and budget management to incorporate proper accounting adjustments in the area of pensions, employee benefits and depreciation.

The main statements consist of:

- **Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts** which sets out the responsibilities of the Authority and the Treasurer for the accounts;

- **Annual Governance Statement** which assesses the adequacy of the Authority's governance arrangements and identifies where improvements can be made;

- **Statement of Accounting Policies** which sets out the basis for recognising, measuring and disclosing transactions in the accounts;

- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** which summarises income and expenditure on the Authority's services during 2022/23; and presents all the recognised gains and losses of the Authority during 2022/23;

- **Movement in Reserves Statement** which reconciles the Income and Expenditure Account with General Fund Balances considering contributions to reserves committed for future expenditure;

- **Balance Sheet** which sets out the Authority's financial position as at 31 March 2023;

- **Cash Flow Statement** which summarises the inflows and outflows of cash in the year.

8. Financial performance

The Revenue Budget for 2022/23 was approved on 14 February 2022 by the Staffordshire Commissioner, and was set at £42.5 million. Revenue expenditure consists of the day-to-day running costs, such as employee costs, pension costs, premises, transport, ICT, income and financing costs.

Overall, the financial performance of the Authority has been positive in year despite the challenging economic circumstances that has resulted in significant upward pressure in many areas of spend for the Service throughout the year.

The 2022/23 outturn position is summarised below and the details of how this expenditure has been funded during the year and provides a comparison to budget:

Revenue Budget Outurn 2022/23	Original Budget	Outturn	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Pay	28.7	28.1	0.6
Non Pay			
Premises Costs	3.9	4.4	(0.5)
Transport Costs	0.8	1.0	(0.3)
Supplies and Services	7.1	7.6	(0.5)
Community Fire Safety	0.3	0.3	(0.0)
Total Non Pay	12.1	13.3	(1.2)
Income, Grants and Interest Receivable	(3.1)	(5.7)	2.6
Capital Financing Costs	2.2	2.0	0.2
Unitary Charge Payments	3.0	3.7	(0.7)
Direct Financing Capital Expenditure	0.0	0.5	(0.5)
Total before the use of Reserves	42.9	41.9	1.0
Use of Reserves	(0.4)	0.2	(0.6)
Total	**42.5**	**42.1**	0.4
Contribution to Reserves	0.0	0.4	(0.4)
Total	**42.5**	**42.5**	(0.0)

Funded By:	**£m**
Settlement Funding	
Local Business Rates (1%)	2.7
Business Rates Top-Up	6.1
Revenue Support Grant	4.9
Total	13.7
Council Tax	28.8
Total	**42.5**

The total revenue spend for the year closed in line with budget despite a very challenging year due to unprecedented cost increases and the impact of pay inflation. The year end position included additional pay pressures for operational staff of 7% following final agreement with the Fire Brigade Union membership with the agreed fire staff award concluding with an average of over 5%. These increases were against a pay budget assumption set at 3%.

It should be noted that all pay awards for fire operational and support staff are undertaken by national negotiating bodies are outside of the control of the Staffordshire Commissioner. Wholetime overtime costs included the benefit of the approved minimum crewing of four for whole-time appliance mobilisation which helped to mitigate the impact of the additional pay award. Crewing costs as part of this change resulted in savings in overtime and crewing deficiency costs of £0.6m when compared to the previous financial year. Lower headcount and operational activity in year have resulted in savings for on-call compared to budget and a number of vacancies have been carried for fire support staff during the year.

Non-pay costs closed adverse to budget and included higher costs being incurred on a number of key areas due to the inflationary pressure experience e.g. for higher fuel, utilities and supplies and services costs. The unitary charge (UC) cost for PFI stations reflected the increase in the variable cost element of the UC following the annual increase in RPIx.

The increase in interest rates resulted in an additional £0.4m of interest receivable in year and business rates S31 grant income was better than anticipated providing some mitigation against the areas of costs increase.

The statutory accounts are published within the framework issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and the Government, the results of which are a deficit for the year of £6,266m (2021/22 was a deficit of £3,348m). However, this includes pensions and depreciation costs, which are not chargeable to tax payers (nationally and locally) and the final position for the financial year is set out in the following table (also see Note 23):

Reserves	General Fund Actual £m	Earmarked Reserves £m
General Reserves		
General Reserves balance 1 April 2022	1.9	
Break Even for the Year	0	
General Reserves balance 31 March 2023	**1.9**	
Other (useable) Reserves		**1**
Other Reserves balance 1 April 2022		**8.3**
Net movement for the year:		
Funding for Revenue purposes		0.0
Contribution to Reserves		1.0
Funding to support the Capital Programme		(2.0)
Other (useable) Reserves balance 31 March 2023		**7.3**

This means that the General Reserve brought forward from 2021/22 remains at £1.9 million at the end March 2023, this reserve is held to allow for any unexpected or emergency events that are assessed to be either medium or high risk. The reserve remains under 5% of the total Revenue budget and is considered to be a reasonable provision for any emergency events that may occur.

The Other (Useable) Reserve has reduced to £7.3 million and forms an integral and important part of the overall financial strategy and financial resilience for the Staffordshire Commissioner as incorporated within the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Reserves Strategy. Reserves are not held without good reason and are earmarked to support funding into the medium term and are a key in reducing borrowing costs and maintaining liquidity. The Reserves Strategy is updated annually to ensure that all reserves are earmarked appropriately and are linked to risk held within the approved Risk register.

In line with the approved Reserves Strategy £1.5m of reserves has been utilised to support the capital programme for the four new appliances as discussed in more detail within the capital section below.

The reserves balance is forecast to reduce to around £4.5 million by 2025/26 in line with the reserves strategy and approved MTFS, thus demonstrating effective and efficient utilisation of reserve balances into the medium term.

Capital Investment

During 2022/23, £3.2m was invested in capital projects, summarised as follows:

Capital Expenditure Outturn 2022/23	Forecast £m	Actual Spend £m	Actual %
Land and Buildings	0.88	0.65	20%
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	2.71	2.07	64%
Information Technology	0.86	0.53	16%
Total Capital Expenditure	**4.44**	**3.24**	**100%**

The capital spend for 2022/23 closed at £3.24m against a forecast of £4.44m.

The capital programme is supported mainly by external borrowing and planned capital receipts, with no capital grant funding from the government being made available. In 2022/23 £0.53m has been funded by revenue contributions and £1.5m by earmarked reserves for the vehicle a replacement and the station refurbishment.

Two new Aerial Ladder Platforms have been purchased and are now undergoing the equipment fit-out ready for operation use during 2023/24. Orders have been raised for the two Heavy Rescue Tenders that are expected to be delivered in 2024. Investment in these four vehicles alone is in excess of £2 million.

During the year the Abbots Bromley refurbishment was completed at a cost of around £0.5m. This minor refurbishment was funded from an earmarked reserve created from the PFI benefit achieved following a refinancing exercise undertaken in a previous financial year.

Balance Sheet

The Balance sheet is a snapshot of the Authority's assets and liabilities, cash balances and reserves at the balance sheet date. A table summary is provided below.

	31st March 2022 £m	31st March 2023 £m
Long Term Assets	131.8	140.5
Current Assets	21.0	22.1
Current Liabilities	(9.5)	(10.9)
Long Term Pension Liabilities	(510.9)	(358.3)
Other Long Term Liabilities	(75.8)	(73.2)
Net Liabilities	**(443.4)**	**(279.8)**
Usable Reserves	18.0	17.3
Unusable Reserves	(461.4)	(297.1)
Total Reserves	**(443.4)**	**(279.8)**

As at 31st March there are negative assets on the balance sheet. The sole reason for this is the unfunded Firefighters' Pension Schemes and the funded Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) pension scheme. Excluding these pension liabilities, the Group Balance sheet has net assets of £79m including usable reserves of £17m.

The pension liability has reduced by £153m in year following the actuarial reports received by the two actuaries for the Firefighters' Pension Schemes (Government Actuarial Department) and LGPS Pension Scheme (Hymans). This is reviewed in more detail within the pension section below.

Treasury Management

The Staffordshire Commissioner approves a Treasury Management and Investment Strategy before start of each financial year and receives regular updates on treasury performance during the year.

Cash Flow

	31st March 2022	31st March 2023
	£m	£m
Cash and Cash Equivalents	14.0	12.4
Short Term Investments	1.5	4.5
Total	**15.5**	**16.9**

Overall, cash flow has remained in a healthy state during the year with £16.9m of cash held in cash and cash equivalents and investments as at 31 March 2023. The cash flow overall was better than budget in year primarily associated with some delays in capital spend and capital savings achieved and grants received in excess of budget.

External Debt
Historically long-term borrowing has been utilised to finance part of the overall capital programme. As at 31st March 2023 the Authority had total external borrowing of £16.8m.

The total Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is shown in note 37, this shows a total CFR requirement of £20.9m, a slight increase in overall debt levels of £0.05m. This demonstrates the intelligent use of capital receipts supported by direct funding of capital from revenue during the year, and when also including the level of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in year has reduced the indebtedness of the Authority.

The Capital Financing Requirement has reduced by more than £10m since March 2013, demonstrating the commitment of the Authority to reduce debt levels during the challenging financial environment experienced within the public sector during the last decade.

The PFI liability has also reduced by £2.4m in year and will continue to unwind during the concessionary period for both PFI projects (see Note 41 for further information).

Pensions

Accounting standards require the full cost of pension benefits as they are earned to be reported in the accounts. The impact of this requirement on the accounts is significant with the total balance sheet liability for pensions amounting to £358m. The amount included within the balance sheet reflects an estimate of the total pension liability and incorporates a number of assumptions that change over time. This liability does not affect the ability to continue as a going concern as it refers to future liabilities that will be met by future contributions. Excluding the pension liability, the balance sheet shows net assets of £79m. A detailed going concern assessment is produced each year and presented to ETAP and Grant Thornton as part of the year end audit.

The Firefighters Pension Schemes are unfunded defined benefit schemes and any deficit on the scheme is met by Central Government through the Home Office and a top-up payment is received annually to cover any shortfall. Employer contributions into the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 scheme are at a rate of 28.8% of pay for current operational staff are funded from the current revenue budget which includes council tax funding. The cost of pension payments to pensioners is largely met from the Home Office top-up grant and is therefore not funded by Council Tax. The assessed liability overall of Staffordshire in the Firefighters Pension Schemes as at 31st March 2023 was £364.2m (£500.3m 2021/22). The Government's Actuarial Department (GAD) provides the actuarial valuation and supporting information to the Authority.

Support staff working for the Authority are eligible to be members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) administered by Staffordshire County Council and is a funded scheme: The current primary contribution rate for employers is 16.7% of pay plus the additional secondary contribution discussed below, and this is met from the current revenue budget which includes council tax funds. The assessed asset overall of Staffordshire in the LGPS as at 31st March 2023 was £5.9 million (£10.6 million liability 2021/22).

Following the three year “triennial” review of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), the actuary, Hymans Robertson, proposed that secondary contribution i.e. a further deficit repair payment was required for the three year period to 2022/23 in order for the employers primary contribution rate to remain unchanged. The Staffordshire Commissioner agreed to make an upfront payment of £1.121m as a lump sum and receive a favorable discount rate offered by the actuary for this payment in advance. This has resulted in an effective LGPS contribution rate for the three-year period of around 26.5%.

The total pension liability has reduced by £136.1 million in year as incorporated into the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 is primarily associated with the impact of fund valuation mainly through changes in financial assumptions that included an increase in the discount rate of 2% (from 2.65 to 4.65%) used by the actuary within the valuation of the Firefighters Pension Schemes. In addition, the rate of CPI has also been adjusted down by 0.4%, as has the long-term assumption for salary increases by 0.9% to 3.85%. Life expectancy assumptions for both males and females has not changed. Assumptions for the Local Government Pension Scheme have also been revised resulting in a discount rate of 4.75% (increased by 2.05%, the CPI pension inflation down 0.25% to 2.95% and future salary increases down 0.15% to 3.45%).

The increase in the discount rate effectively reduces future liability, as the future scheme costs are discounted at a higher rate. Reductions in CPI and salary assumptions has also reduced the overall pension liability.

The assumptions used by both actuaries have been reviewed and challenged by management and will be reviewed by the external auditor to ensure the assumptions used are consistent and robust. The assumptions used by both actuaries show a high level of consistency with no outlying factors that are considered to be outside of management expectations.

McCloud / Sargeant Judgment

Before 2015 (2014 for local government), public sector pension schemes provided benefits on a final salary basis. In 2015 (2014 respectively), the Government replaced the final salary schemes with new career average (CARE) schemes for future pensionable service. Existing members had to switch from the final salary schemes to the new CARE schemes unless they received ‘protections’, which were granted based on a member’s proximity to normal pension age.

In December 2018, the McCloud/Sargeant judgment found the protections introduced in 2015 to be discriminatory against younger members of the final salary schemes. In February 2021, following consultation on its proposal to address the age discrimination, the Government published its response and proposals that would remove this discrimination.

The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill (PS&JO Bill) was passed in March 2022. This Bill consolidated the information which has been issued to date and formalised the ruling by the court (McCloud/Sargeant case), forming the proposal for how the government will remove the discrimination identified by the courts in way that the 2015 reforms were introduced for some members.

The pension remedy is now made up of two parts. The first part was completed last year with all active members now being members of Firefighters’ Pension Scheme 2015 from 1 April 2022, providing equal treatment for all active pension scheme members. The second part is to put right, 'remedy,’ the discrimination that has happened between 2015 and 2022. The full remedy and all associated legislations is expected to be in place by October 2023.

The LGA have released guidance which does enable Service’s to offer future retirees in the Firefighter Pension Schemes the opportunity to have their benefits remedied on retirement – this has been termed Immediate Detriment and relies on Section 61 of the Equality Act. This is done in good faith based on the information available at the time of the retirement with all cases processed under Immediate Detriment will be reviewed when the legislation is passed to ensure the benefit calculations meet with the new Regulations. Unfortunately, there are a number of complexities with implementing the remedy, such as tax charges and allowances, some of which have not yet been resolved and the Authority has not been able to utilise immediate detriment with most retirements being processed under existing legislation.

This remedy window runs from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022 and will allow eligible members to elect which scheme they wish to receive benefits from for this period.

Special retained members (Matthews)

In November 2018 a ruling on the legal case involving part time judges (O'Brien v MoJ) has a direct impact on the equivalent firefighters (Matthews). Home Office Ministers agreed to extend the pension entitlement to eligible retained firefighters to cover service pre-July 2000. The Memorandum of Understanding signed in March 2022 sets out the intended scope and operation of the options exercise required to enact remedy in this case. We expect the option exercise open sometime during or shortly after 2023/24.

This options exercise will increase the pension entitlement for some current special retained members and also allow access to the scheme for additional historic retained firefighters. However, administrators are still in the process of planning for the Matthews remedy and are unable to provide data on the eligible members, the benefits that they are entitled to buy and how much they will need to contribute to pay for those benefits. Consequently, there is very significant data uncertainty in the calculation of this liability and significant assumptions have had to be made.

Firefighters' Pension Schemes

This Firefighters' Pension Scheme Actuarial Report has been prepared by the Government Actuary's Department ('GAD') at the request of Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority. The report sets out the results of the pensions disclosures in accordance with the requirements of CIPFA's Code of Practice for accounting periods commencing on or after 1 April 2022 for the retirement benefit liabilities under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 1992, the Firefighters' Injury Benefit Scheme, the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2006 and the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (collectively referred to as 'the scheme') for the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

The results have been calculated by carrying out a detailed valuation of the most recent data provided as at 31 March 2023. This has then been rolled forward to reflect the position as at 31 March 2023. In particular the actuary has allowed for service accrued between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2023 and known pension and salary increases that would have applied.

LGPS

This LGPS Actuarial Report has been prepared by the Hymans Robertson LLP at the request of Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

LGPS has more than 6.1 million members nationally and the Members of the Scheme who are employed by the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority are part of the Staffordshire Fund administered by Staffordshire County Council.

9. Outlook

The latest approved MTFS which provides the financial plan for the next five years includes a future funding gap of £1.3m by 2027 and the Authority is moving ahead with a number of workstreams as part of its transformation agenda that will increase efficiency and improve productivity across the Service and close this estimated shortfall in funding.

There are a number of workstreams that are actively being worked upon which all connect under the banner of future transformation of the Service. The work is aligned to the Safety Plan 2020-2024 (service reform) and the Commissioners Fire Plan 2021-2024 under the two priorities of having a Flexible and Responsive Service as well as a Fire Service for Tomorrow.

The work fits under four key headings:

a) Corporate Reform
b) Response and Crewing Reform
c) Prevention and Protection Reform
d) Estates and Shared Services Reform

The requirement for Service Transformation is to ensure that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service "is able to provide a modern, efficient and sustainable level of service to the public which does not compromise the safety of our staff or our communities".

The approved MTFS must ensure that the Chief Fire Officer has the resources needed to deliver on the local plan and national government priorities. With this, and inflation and wage pressures in mind, the Commissioner concluded that the 2023/24 Fire and Rescue council tax precept should increase by 4.85%, equivalent to £3.90 per year or 7.5p per week for a band D property. Whilst the MTFS assumes that precept increases will remain at this level, pay awards and cost increases are running at much higher levels. Attracting and retaining staff within the Fire and Rescue Service will continue to be one on the many challenges ahead.

Savings options in excess of £1m have been included within the approved MTFS of which £0.7m has now been fully implemented. Workstreams will continue to be developed alongside the Commissioner to ensure that the Service continues to deliver efficiencies and improved productivity in order to meet the £1.3m gap within the MTFS by 2026.

In May 2022 the Government released a white paper consulting on proposals for "Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service", by building professionalism, boosting performance and strengthening governance. The proposals cover three principal areas of the reform vision: People, Professionalism and Governance and views are being sought on the specific proposals and the wider package of reforms presented. With Staffordshire already under the governance of the Staffordshire Commissioner these arrangements have already been strengthened in line with the government's vision. The White paper is expected to be published in the summer of 2023.

These Accounts are due to be approved by the Staffordshire Commissioner following detailed review and recommendation by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel scheduled for 27th September 2023.

David Greensmith ACMA CGMA
Director of Finance, Staffordshire Commissioner's Office / Section 151 Officer
Date:

Audit Certificate

Independent auditor's report to the members of Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

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Statement of Responsibilities

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Responsibilities

The Authority is required to:

- make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. For this authority, the responsibility of Chief Financial Officer is allocated to the Director of Finance (Staffordshire Commissioner's Office);
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets;
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

I accept the above responsibilities and I am due to approve the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts for Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority following a detailed review and recommendation made by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel scheduled for 27th September 2023.

…………………………………………….

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner

Date:

The Director of Finance’s Responsibilities

The Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper accounting practices as set out in The Code.

The Director of Finance is required to present fairly the financial position of the Authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023.

In preparing this statement of accounts, the Director of Finance has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgments and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the local authority Code of Practice.

The Director of Finance has also:

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

The Director of Finance Certificate

I certify that the Statement of Accounts gives a true and fair view of the financial position of the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2023 and the income and expenditure for the year ending 31 March 2023.

…………………………………………..

David Greensmith ACMA CGMA
Director of Finance (Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office) / S151 Officer

Date:

Statement of Main Accounting Policies

1. General Principles

The Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting principles contained within the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2022/23, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

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

2. Property, Plant and Equipment

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as property, plant and equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of property, plant and equipment is capitalised on an accrual basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

The Authority has a de-minimus of £10,000.

Measurement and Valuation

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising of the purchase price and any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management. Donated assets are measured initially at fair value.

Plant, Property and Equipment is valued on the basis recommended by CIPFA and in accordance with the Statement of Asset Valuation Principles and Guidance Notes issued by The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The Authority revalues its entire land and building portfolio sufficiently regularly, as a minimum every five years.

Revaluation gains are taken to the Revaluation Reserve and revaluation losses are written off against any balance on the Revaluation Reserve for that asset or to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement if the balance on the revaluation reserve is less than the loss.

Operational properties are carried in the Balance Sheet at Depreciated Replacement Cost for specialised properties, where there is no evidence of market value, and Open Market Value for properties where there is evidence of market value.

Impairment

Assets are assessed at each year end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

- Where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance

- Where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all property, plant and equipment assets by the systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives. An exception is made for assets without a determinable finite useful life (i.e. freehold land) and assets that are not yet available for use (i.e. assets under construction).

Depreciation is calculated using a straight line method from the year following acquisition. Assets in the course of construction are not depreciated until used. The following useful lives apply:

- Buildings are depreciated in accordance with IAS 16 – Property, Plant and Equipment. According to the most recent valuation report, all buildings have an asset life of 60 years.

- Fire appliances have an asset life of between 10 and 15 years, other vehicles have an asset life of between 4 and 10 years depending on the vehicle function.

- Plant and equipment have an asset life between 5 and 20 years.

- IT equipment have an asset life between 3 and 5 years.

On an exceptional basis and where appropriate, a small number of assets have a useful expected life outside of the stated range of useful lives, based on specific characteristics of these assets.

Where a property, plant and equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

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

Disposals

When an asset is disposed of, or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Receipts from disposals, if any, are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal. Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Where a component of an existing asset has to be de-recognised and the component amount is not known, then an estimate using a reasonable basis has been used. The component calculation is established using the replacement cost of the component, indexed back to the original component’s inception and adjusted for any subsequent depreciation and impairment.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. Receipts credited to the Capital Receipt Reserve can only be used for new capital investment. Receipts are appropriated to the Reserve from the General Funds Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing.

3. Intangible Assets

The Authority defines intangible assets as identifiable non-monetary asset without physical substance; as per IAS 38. The intangible assets (e.g. computer software) are measured at cost.

4. Revenue Provision for the Repayment of Debt

In accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Authority is required to calculate a ‘prudent’ level for the repayment of debt. This is achieved through an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Authority in accordance with statutory guidance. This charge is calculated as follows:

- For capital expenditure incurred before 1st April 2008 or which in the future is supported capital expenditure, the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy is to set aside a provision equal to 4% of the previous year’s Capital Financing Requirement.

- From 1st April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing, excluding finance leases, the MRP policy uses the Asset Life Method i.e. MRP will be an annual charge based on the estimated life of the assets. The provision is set aside in the year following the capital expenditure.

- MRP is also charged against Private Finance Initiatives. The capital element of repayments is being used as a proxy for the PFI MRP.

5. Leasing Charges

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

During 2022/23 the Authority held finance leases under the definition of IAS 17 Leases. Leases are accounted for in accordance with IAS 17, operating leases are not capitalised and rentals are charged directly to the CIES in the year to which they relate. Finance leases are capitalised with transactions reflected on the Balance Sheet as fixed assets and deferred liabilities and through the CIES as interest payable and similar charges.

6. Heritage Assets

The Authority holds a number of heritage assets. The assets are held in secure locations, either Fire Stations or the local City Museum.

The assets are appropriately and sensitively preserved and insured 20% above the valuation. The Authority does not seek to acquire assets of this nature, and has no intention of disposing of the assets currently held.

The assets have been valued by an independent specialist based on current open market sale value.
Due to the value of the assets held they are not recognised in the balance sheet in accordance with the code.

7. Non-current assets held for sale

Non-current assets are reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale where it is probable that the carrying amount of the asset will be recovered through a sale transaction rather than through its continual use.

The asset is revalued and carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

8. Inventories

Workshop, Fuel and Stores inventories are maintained, and where material, are shown in the Balance Sheet. The workshop inventory is valued at the lower of cost or net realisable value. The stores' inventory is valued at First In First Out (FIFO) and the fuel is valued at cost. Other immaterial inventories, e.g. stationery, are fully charged to the CIES in the year of purchase.

The Authority does not currently provide for obsolescence or loss in value since amounts written off remain fairly constant and therefore equate to an annual provision.

9. Debtors and Creditors

The Accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis and provision for sums due to or owed by the Authority is included in the accounts where the cash has not actually been received or paid during the year. Income has only been included in the accounts when it can be realised with reasonable certainty. Proper allowance is made for known losses or liabilities where these are material and can be reasonably estimated otherwise these are disclosed by way of note as contingent liabilities.

10. Pensions

The disclosure requirements are included in the main financial statements as notes to the accounts in accordance with CIPFA recommended practice and IAS 19 – Employee Benefits.

Types of pension schemes

The Authority participates in two different pension schemes, which meet the needs of employees.

a) Firefighters

   This scheme is unfunded and the charge to the accounts represents the Authority's (as employer) contribution to the fund for the year.

b) Other Pensionable Employees

   Other employees, subject to certain qualifying criteria, are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. The pension costs that are charged to the Authority's accounts in respect of these employees are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for these employees.

In accordance with IAS 19 the authority recognises the cost of retirement benefits within the Net Cost of Services, when they are earned, rather than when benefits are actually paid as pensions. However, the charge to be made to the Council Tax, via the precepts, is based on the amount payable in the year. The difference is reversed out in the General Fund.

11. Interest on Balances

During the year surplus money was invested and the interest earned credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

12. Government Grants and Contributions

Government grants and contributions are recognised in the CIES when conditions attached to the grant or contribution has been satisfied. Government Grants and contributions that have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. Where capital grants are credited to the CIES they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant is yet to be used to finance capital it is held on the Capital Grant Unapplied reserve. When it has been used it is transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

13. Changes in Accounting Policies

The Authority has reviewed its accounting policies in accordance with IAS 8 – Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors which sets out the principles to be adopted and disclosures that are required within the Statement of Accounts. Any appropriate changes have been applied.

14. Financial Instruments

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified into three types which are based on the intention of use when the asset was purchased:

- Amortised Cost – held to collect contractual cash flows of principle and interest on specific dates
- Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income (FVOCI) – held to both collect contractual cash flows and sell the financial asset on specified dates
- Fair Value through Profit or Loss (FVP&L) – Achieve objectives by any other means than collecting contractual cash flows.

The Authority does not have any FVOCI.

Financial assets are recognised in the Statement of Accounts when the authority becomes party to the financial instrument contract. Financial assets are derecognised when the contractual rights have expired or the asset has been transferred.

Loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost, with the exception of Money Market Fund investments which are measured at FVTPL.

Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. Any gains and losses arise on derecognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the authority becomes a party to the contractual provision of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Financial liabilities are derecognised when the liability has been discharged, that is the liability has been paid or otherwise discharged.

The Authority has liabilities in relation to loans from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), Lender Options Borrowing Options (LOBO), creditors for goods and services and two PFI contracts.

Interest Payable Is charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure section in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year which it relates.

15. Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Council Tax and the non-domestic rates income included in the CIES will show the accrued income for the year. The difference between the income included in the CIES and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is held in the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations' reconciliation.

The Authority's Balance Sheet shows the proportion of surplus/deficit of the Billing Authorities Collection Fund in the Debtors/Creditors balance. The Authority also shows the attributable share of the impairment allowance for doubtful debts and a provision for non-domestic rates appeals.

16. Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

PFI transactions are treated in the Authority's accounts in accordance with latest recommended practice of Control of Assets (IFRIC12 – Service concession arrangements).

PFI contracts are agreements to receive services, where the responsibility for making available the fixed assets needed to provide the services passes to the PFI contractor. As the Authority is deemed to control the services that are provided under its PFI scheme and the ownership of the fixed assets will pass to the Authority at the end of the contract for no additional charge, the Authority carries the fixed assets used under the contract on the Balance Sheet.

Non-current assets recognised on the Balance Sheet are revalued and depreciated in the same way as property, plant and equipment owned by the Authority.

The amounts payable to the PFI operators each year (known as Unitary Charges) are analysed into five elements:

- Fair value of the services received during the year – debited to the relevant service in the CIES
- Finance costs – an interest charge of an agreed % on the outstanding Balance Sheet liability, debited to Interest Payable and Similar Charges in the CIES
- Contingent rent – increases in the amount to be paid for the property arising during the contract, debited to Interest Payable and Similar Charges in the CIES
- Payment towards liability – applied to write down the Balance Sheet liability towards the PFI operator
- Lifecycle replacement costs (regular planned refurbishments) – debited to the relevant service in the CIES

17. Employee Benefits – Accumulating Compensating Absences

A review of the cost of holiday entitlements (in the form of annual leave, lieu time and flexi-time) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next year. If the value is of a significant amount an accrual is charged to the CIES.

18. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with any financial institution repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in 3 months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value. Any investments that do not satisfy this principle are classed as short term investments.

In the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and that form an integral part of the Authority's cash management.

19. Reserves

The Authority sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover unexpected events and contingencies. Reserves are created by appropriating amounts out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the expenditure to be financed from reserves is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) in that year, to score against the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the CIES. The corresponding amount is then transferred from the reserve account back into the General Fund to ensure that there is no net charge on the council tax for the expenditure.

The Authority holds the following Usable Reserves:

- **General Reserve** – a risk assessment of the pressures likely to face the Authority is undertaken, and the current balance on this reserve represents those identified high and medium risks, in proportion to the probability of their occurrence.

- **Earmarked Reserves Revenue Grants** – the balance held represents grants received which have no outstanding conditions but have not been fully utilised in the year; the grant is fully recognised in the CIES.

- **Capital Grants Unapplied** – the balance held represents grants received and fully recognised in the CIES but have not been applied to an acquisition.

- **Civil Contingency Reserve** – this reserve is made up of budgeted contributions and unspent balances from previous years. It is held as a contingency to cover unexpected occurrences.

- **Other Reserve** – this reserve is made up of budgeted contributions and planned efficiency savings from previous years and it is utilised in line with the approved Reserve Strategy.

The Authority holds the following Unusable Reserves:

- **Collection Fund Adjustment Account** – the balance held represents the accrued council tax income presented in the CIES.

- **Capital Adjustment Account** – the balance held represents the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

- **Pension Reserve** – absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions.

- **Revaluation Reserve** – contains the gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment, and Intangible Assets.

20. Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged to those that benefit from the supply or service in accordance with the costing principles of the CIPFA subjective analysis and the monthly management accounts production.

21. Fees and Charges Income

The Authority recognises revenue from contracts with service recipients in accordance with the provision of International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 15, Revenue from Contracts with Customers.

Revenue is recognised in the financial year that services are provided in accordance with the performance obligations of the contract.

22. Accounting Standards That Have Been Issued But Not Yet Adopted

The Code requires changes in accounting policy to be applied retrospectively unless alternative transitional arrangements are specified in the Code. The Code requires the Authority to disclose information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted.

The standards introduced by the 2023/24 Code where disclosures are required in 2022/23 financial statements, are as follows:

- Definition of Accounting Estimates (Amendments to IAS8) issued in February 2021
- Disclosure of Accounting Policies (Amendments to IAS1 and IFRS Practice Statement 2), issued in February 2021
- Updating a Reference to the Conceptual Framework (Amendments to IFRS3), issued in May 2020

These changes are not expected to have an impact on the Authority's financial statements.

A revised standard with regard to leases has been issued by the International Accounting Standards Board that became effective as of the 1st January 2019. The interpretation for this has not been adopted for the 2022/23 accounts and the implementation has been deferred until 1st April 2024, the mandatory implementation date, therefore the 2024/25 CIPFA Code of Practice. The Authority has undertaken a review of its current contracts to determine if any are to be treated as a finance lease from the date of implementation. Only 1 was identified but this is already treated as a finance lease. The review will be updated at the time of the implementation of The Code.

23. Events After the Reporting Period

Events after the Balance Sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue.

Two types of events can be identified as:

- **Adjusting Events**
  Those events that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events.

- **Non-adjusting Events**
  Those events that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but, where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and either their estimated financial effect or a statement that such an estimate cannot be made reliably.

24. Accrued Revenue Income and Expenditure

The revenue accounts are maintained on an accrual basis. Expenditure is charged to the revenue accounts in the period in which goods and services are received and fall due, similarly, income is credited in the period in which it falls due, regardless of the timing of cash payments or receipts. The exception to the accruals basis is where the amounts involved are not material.

Interest due to or from third parties in relation to loans and investments, is accrued in full at the year-end.

Provision is made for the impairment of debts in the General Fund.

Where Income and Expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a Debtor or Creditor for the relevant amount is recognised on the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled and it is likely that collection of such debt is doubtful, the balance of the debt is written down and a charge is made to revenue for the income that may not be collectable.

25. Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates

The collection of council tax and non-domestic rates is an agency arrangement for both the billing authorities, major preceptors and, in the case of non-domestic rates, central government. The Fire Authority is a preceptor along with the Policing and Crime Commissioner, while the nine local authorities in Staffordshire are the billing authorities.

The council tax and non-domestic rates income included in each body’s Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year is their proportion of accrued income for the year. There is a debtor / creditor position between the preceptor authorities, the billing authorities and central government which is recognised on the Balance Sheet.

The Authority only recognise its share of any outstanding council tax and non-domestic rates arrears, receipts in advance, receivables impairments allowance and an allowance for appeals made by non-domestic rates payers.

26. Prior Period Adjustments

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error.

Where a change in accounting policy is made, or the correction of a material error, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied.

Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other 'unusable reserves'.

The Statement shows how the movements in year of the authority's reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase / (Decrease) line shows the statutory General Fund Balance movements in the year following those adjustments.

2022/23	Note	General Fund (GF) Balance £'000	Earmarked GF Reserves £'000	TOTAL GENERAL FUND £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	TOTAL USABLE RESERVES £'000	TOTAL UNUSABLE RESERVES £'000	TOTAL AUTHORITY RESERVES £'000
Balance as at 31 March 2022		1,906	16,111	18,017	1	**18,018**	(461,437)	**(443,419)**
Movement in reserves during 2022/23								
Surplus or (deficit) on provision of services		(6,266)	0	(6,266)	0	**(6,266)**	**0**	**(6,266)**
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure				0		**0**	**169,907**	**169,907**
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		(6,266)	0	(6,266)	0	**(6,266)**	**169,907**	**163,641**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	1	5,588	0	5,588	0	**5,588**	(5,588)	**0**
Net Increase before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(678)	0	(678)	0	**(678)**	**164,319**	**163,641**
Transfers (To) / From Earmarked Reserves		678	(678)	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0**
Increase in year		0	(678)	(678)	0	**(678)**	164,319	**163,641**
Balance as at 31 March 2023 c/f		1,906	15,433	17,339	1	**17,340**	(297,118)	**(279,778)**

2021/22	Note	General Fund (GF) Balance £'000	Earmarked GF Reserves £'000	TOTAL GENERAL FUND £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	TOTAL USABLE RESERVES £'000	TOTAL UNUSABLE RESERVES £'000	TOTAL AUTHORITY RESERVES £'000
Balance as at 31 March 2021		1,906	15,330	17,236	1	**17,237**	(473,965)	**(456,728)**
Movement in reserves during 2021/22								
Surplus or (deficit) on provision of services		(3,348)	0	(3,348)	0	**(3,348)**	**0**	**(3,348)**
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure						**0**	**16,657**	**16,657**
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		(3,348)	0	(3,348)	0	**(3,348)**	**16,657**	**13,309**
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	1	4,129	0	4,129	0	**4,129**	(4,129)	**0**
Net Increase / (Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		781	0	781	0	**781**	**12,528**	**13,309**
Transfers (To) / From Earmarked Reserves		(781)	781	0	0	**0**	**0**	**0**
Increase / (Decrease) in year		(0)	781	781	0	**781**	12,528	**13,309**
Balance as at 31 March 2022 c/f		1,906	16,111	18,017	1	**18,018**	(461,437)	**(443,419)**

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing service in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, rather than the amount to be funded from taxation.

The Authority raises taxation to cover expenditure in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The taxation position is shown in both the Expenditure and Funding Analysis and the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2021/22 Gross Expenditure £,000	2021/22 Gross Income £,000	2021/22 Net Expenditure £,000		2022/23 Gross Expenditure £,000	2022/23 Gross Income £,000	2022/23 Net Expenditure £,000	Note
53,561	(7,233)	46,328	Fire Fighting Services	53,615	(7,823)	45,792	
691	(622)	69	Civil Contingencies Unit	650	(525)	125	30
11	0	11	Non-distributed costs	0	0	0	
54,263	**(7,855)**	**46,408**	**Net Cost of Services**	**54,265**	**(8,348)**	**45,917**	
		56	Other Operating Expenditure			200	10
		12,423	Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure			15,284	11
		(55,538)	Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure			(55,135)	12
		3,348	**Deficit on Provision of Services**			**6,266**	
		(5,820)	(Surplus) / Deficit on revaluation of property			(9,469)	13
		(10,837)	Remeasurements of the net defined benefit liability / (asset)			(160,438)	45
		(16,657)	**Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure**			**(169,907)**	
		(13,309)	**Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure**			**(163,641)**	

Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the authority. The net liabilities of the authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the authority. Reserves are reported in two categories.

The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the authority may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use.

The second category of reserves is those that the authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000	Note
131,486	Property, Plant & Equipment	140,214	13
354	Intangible Assets	280	15
131,840	**Long Term Assets**	**140,494**	
1,500	Short Term Investments	4,500	21
695	Inventories	643	18
4,783	Short Term Debtors	4,531	19
13,991	Cash & Cash Equivalents	12,438	20
20,969	**Current Assets**	**22,112**	
(328)	Short Term Borrowing	(177)	17
(7,519)	Short Term Creditors	(9,179)	22
(1,604)	Grants Receipts in Advance	(1,549)	22 /34
(9,451)	**Current Liabilities**	**(10,905)**	
(16,800)	Long Term Borrowings	(16,700)	17
(59,042)	Other Long Term Liabilities	(56,500)	39
(510,935)	Pension liability	(358,279)	45
(586,777)	**Long Term Liabilities**	**(431,479)**	
(443,419)	**NET LIABILITIES**	**(279,778)**	
18,018	Usable Reserves	17,340	23
(461,437)	Unusable Reserves	(297,118)	24
(443,419)	**TOTAL RESERVES**	**(279,778)**	

Cash Flow Statement

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

2021/22 £'000		2022/23 £'000	Note
3,348	**Net Deficit on the Provision of Services**	**6,266**	
(8,078)	Adjustments net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements	(13,232)	27
16	Adjustments for items included in the net deficit on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities	0	28
(4,714)	**Net Cash flows from operating activities**	**(6,966)**	
423	Net cash flows from Investing Activities	6,242	25
2,331	Net cash flows from Financing Activities	2,651	26
(373)	LGPS Pension deficit contributions	(374)	24
(2,333)	**Net (increase) or decrease in cash and cash equivalents**	**1,553**	
11,658	Cash and Cash equivalents and bank overdraft at the beginning of the reporting period	13,991	20
13,991	Cash and Cash equivalents and bank overdraft at the end of the reporting period	12,438	20

Notes to the Core Financial Statements

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1. ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATIONS

2022/23	General Fund (GF) Balance £'000	Earmarked Other GF Reserves £'000	CCU Reserves £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	TOTAL MOVEMENT IN UNUSABLE RESERVES £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:					
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES):					
Charges for depreciation and revaluation of non-current assets	(3,685)				**3,685**
Revaluation losses on Property Plant and Equipment					**0**
Amortisation of intangible assets	(93)				**93**
Capital grants & contributions applied	0				**0**
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	0				**0**
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the CIES:					
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	3,622				**(3,622)**
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	1,977				**(1,977)**
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:					
Capital grants and contributions unapplied credited to the CIES	(1)				**1**
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account					**0**
Adjustments primarily involving the Pension Reserve:					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES	(22,497)				**22,497**
Government firefighter grant	8,672				**(8,672)**
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	6,417				**(6,417)**
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:					
Amounts by which council tax income and non-domestic rates credited to the CIES is different from council tax income and non-domestic rates calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	0				**0**
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	**(5,588)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5,588**

2021/22	General Fund (GF) Balance £'000	Earmarked Other GF Reserves £'000	CCU Reserves £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	TOTAL MOVEMENT IN UNUSABLE RESERVES £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:					
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES):					
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(3,679)				**3,679**
Revaluation losses on Property Plant and Equipment					**0**
Amortisation of intangible assets	(88)				**88**
Capital grants & contributions applied	33				**(33)**
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the CIES	17				**(17)**
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the CIES:					
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	3,569				**(3,569)**
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	408				**(408)**
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Grants Unapplied Account:					
Capital grants and contributions unapplied credited to the CIES					**0**
Application of grants to capital financing transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account					**0**
Adjustments primarily involving the Pension Reserve:					
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the CIES	(21,805)				**21,805**
Government firefighter grant	9,588				**(9,588)**
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	6,330				**(6,330)**
Adjustments primarily involving the Collection Fund Adjustment Account:					
Amounts by which council tax income and non-domestic rates credited to the CIES is different from council tax income and non-domestic rates calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	1,498				**(1,498)**
TOTAL ADJUSTMENTS	**(4,129)**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4,129**

2. EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (government grants, council tax and business rates) by the Authority in comparison with those resources consumed or earned by the Authority in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Authority's services. The income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2022/23	As reported to Management £,000	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund £,000	Chargable to the General Fund £,000	Adjustments between funding and Accounting Basis £,000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £,000
Fire Fighting Services	42,316	2,688	45,004	788	45,792
Civil Contingencies Unit	0	125	125	0	125
Net Cost of Services	**42,316**	**2,813**	**45,129**	**788**	**45,917**
Other Income and Expenditure	(42,472)	(1,979)	(44,451)	4,800	(39,651)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	**(156)**	**834**	**678**	**5,588**	**6,266**
Opening General Fund Balance			(18,018)		
Less/Plus (Deficit) on General Fund in Year			678		
Closing General Fund Balance 31 March			**(17,340)**		

2021/22	As reported to Management £,000	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund £,000	Chargable to the General Fund £,000	Adjustments between funding and Accounting Basis £,000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement £,000
Fire Fighting Services	40,797	580	41,377	4,962	46,339
Civil Contingencies Unit	0	69	69	0	69
Net Cost of Services	**40,797**	**649**	**41,446**	**4,962**	**46,408**
Other Income and Expenditure	(41,950)	(277)	(42,227)	(833)	(43,060)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	**(1,153)**	**372**	**(781)**	**4,129**	**3,348**
Opening General Fund Balance			(17,237)		
Less/Plus (Deficit) on General Fund in Year			(781)		
Closing General Fund Balance 31 March			**(18,018)**		

3. NOTES TO EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

2022/23	CCU £,000	Income classification in management accounts £,000	Other accruals and adjustment £,000	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund £,000	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £,000	Net change for the Pension Adjustment £,000	Other Differences £,000	Adjustments between funding and Accounting Basis £,000
Fire Fighting Services		1,979	709	2,688	(1,820)	2,608	0	788
Civil Contingencies Unit	125			125	0	0	0	0
Net Cost of Services	**125**	**1,979**	**709**	**2,813**	**(1,820)**	**2,608**	**0**	**788**
Other Income and Expenditure		(1,979)		(1,979)	0	4,800	0	4,800
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	**125**	**0**	**709**	**834**	**(1,820)**	**7,408**	**0**	**5,588**

2021/22	CCU £,000	Income classification in management accounts £,000	Other accruals and adjustment £,000	Adjustment to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund £,000	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £,000	Net change for the Pension Adjustment £,000	Other Differences £,000	Adjustments between funding and Accounting Basis £,000
Fire Fighting Services		277	303	580	(242)	5,205	(1)	4,962
Civil Contingencies Unit	69			69	0	0	0	0
Net Cost of Services	**69**	**277**	**303**	**649**	**(242)**	**5,205**	**(1)**	**4,962**
Other Income and Expenditure		(277)		(277)	0	681	(1,514)	(833)
(Surplus) / Deficit on Provision of Services	**69**	**0**	**303**	**372**	**(242)**	**5,886**	**(1,515)**	**4,129**

Adjustments to arrive at the net amount chargeable to the General Fund

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service administer the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), which is funded by contributions from all Staffordshire partners. The CCU financial position is not reported to the Authority with the Staffordshire Fire Management Accounts but is reported separately to the CCU Strategic Partners Board.

The MRP and PFI unitary charge within year is estimated to produce the management accounts. The true cost is included at the yearend resulting in a small adjustment.

Adjustment for capital purposes

This adjustment includes depreciation and impairment, disposal of assets and the statutory charges for capital financing (i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision).

Net Change for the Pension Adjustment

This adjustment is the net change for the removal of pension contributions made by the Authority and the replacement with the Current Service Costs as calculated by the actuarial report to comply with IAS19 Employee Benefits.

Other Differences

This adjustment represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for Council Tax and Non-domestic Rates and the income recognised under Generally Accepted Accounting Practices. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the collection fund.

4. EXPENDITURE AND INCOME BY NATURE

2021/22 £000		2022/23 £000
	Expenditure	
20,947	Pay Costs	21,264
21,798	Pension Cost (IAS 19 amended)	22,467
1,335	Other Employee Costs	1,505
2,995	Premises Costs	4,393
771	Transport Costs	1,061
5,252	Supplies & Services	5,300
2,338	Other Support Costs	2,658
770	Unitary Charge net of grant	1,012
4,253	Capital Charges	3,979
768	Interest Payable	760
	Income	
(3,896)	Income General	(5,687)
(235)	Grants Released	(277)
(12)	Interest Receivable	(387)
(9,588)	Fire Fighter Top Up Grant	(8,672)
(44,148)	Government Grants and Precepts	(43,110)
3,348	**Deficit on Provision of Services**	**6,266**

The above figures are in the format as presented in the monthly Management Accounts but reflect the statutory accounting adjustment.

5. PRIOR PERIOD RESTATEMENT

There are no prior period restatements needed.

6. MOVEMENT IN EARMARKED RESERVES

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund to provide financing for future expenditure plans.

	Balance as at 1 April 2021 £'000	Transfers from £'000	Transfers to £'000	Balance as at 31 March 2022 £'000	Transfers from £'000	Transfers to £'000	Balance as at 31 March 2023 £'000
Invest to save	6,662	(865)	1,619	7,416	(1,991)	1,335	6,760
PFI1 unitary charge reserve	5,576	(7,123)	7,044	5,497	(6,755)	7,044	5,786
Civil contingencies unit	718		13	731	(125)		606
Earmarked reserves PFI2	44			44			44
PFI1 contingency reserve	781	(20)	123	884	(500)	128	512
	13,781	**(8,008)**	**8,799**	**14,572**	**(9,371)**	**8,507**	**13,708**
Earmarked grants:							
- Brexit Local resilience	59			59	0	0	59
- Business Levy Surplus	0			0	(81)	81	0
- Business Rates Pool income	200	(200)	200	200	(400)	200	0
- Business Rates Relief	0			0	(2,410)	2,410	0
- Covid	329	(308)	134	155	(51)	78	182
- DWP - access to work	11	(11)		0			0
- Enhanced logistic support project	0	(16)	44	28	(16)	44	56
- ESMCP	315	(18)		297	(3)		294
- fire protection accreditation	10			10	0	0	10
- Flood Scheme	0			0	(2)	2	0
- Grenfell	89	(45)		44	(7)		37
- LRF Funding	0	(81)	196	115	(67)	190	238
- Mass fatalities maintenance	125	(2)	49	172	(1)	48	219
- New Dimensions Grant	58	(107)	70	21	(52)	70	39
- New Risks	111	(36)	29	104	(15)	20	109
- Partnership Income	27			27	(27)	29	29
- Pension remedy admin	57			57		56	113
- Protection uplift & building review	116	(50)	122	188	(30)	112	270
- PSAA	0	(5)	5	0			0
- Redmund Review	0		12	12	(12)	12	12
- Special Services Grant	0			0	(663)	663	0
- Transparency code set up	42		8	50		8	58
	1,549	**(879)**	**869**	**1,539**	**(3,837)**	**4,023**	**1,725**
	15,330	**(8,887)**	**9,668**	**16,111**	**(13,208)**	**12,530**	**15,433**

7. AUTHORISATION OF ACCOUNTS FOR ISSUE

The responsible financial officer is required to confirm that they are satisfied that the statement of accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the authority at the end of the relevant financial year and the authority's income and expenditure for that financial year, prior to the commencement of the period for the exercise of public rights (which includes the first 10 working days in June) and to approve and publish them by 30 September.

In line with the statutory requirements the unaudited financial statement was certified by David Greensmith, Director of Finance (Staffordshire Commissioner's Office) / Section 151 Officer on 31st May 2023 and they are made available for public inspection from 1st June 2023.

The audited financial statements are scheduled to be presented to the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel for approval on 27th September 2023 and published thereafter.

8. CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies set out in the Accounts, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

Government funding –

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

Property Value –

In order to satisfy The Code of Practice, which explicitly states that revaluations must be 'sufficiently regular to ensure that the carrying amount is not materially different from the current value at the end of the reporting period', all land and buildings have undergone a desk top valuation assessment on 31st

March 2023; eleven of the properties had an on-site inspection in 2021/22 and an additional twelve this year; the remaining properties will also have an on-site inspection next year thereby the complete portfolio of properties will all have been inspected by 2024. All the stations are classed as a specialised building using the Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC) method with the exception of the Stafford Fire Station Annex building which has been separated from the Stafford Fire Station site asset and revalued at fair value.

The Trentham Lakes Workshop is also classed as a specialised building as it is a purpose built structure to accommodate the larger appliances and the Aerial Ladder Platforms including large bays, floor channels for the larger vehicles and specialist lifting gear integral to the building for the removal of the appliance equipment and strip downs. In view of this Trentham Lakes Workshop is valued under the DRC method.

PFI scheme –

The authority is deemed to control the services provided under the outsourced agreements to rebuilt and maintain 21 fire stations under the PFI1 and PFI2 schemes across Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The authority is also deemed to control the residual value of assets used in these arrangements at the end of the agreements. The accounting policies for PFI schemes have been applied to these arrangements and the assets are recognised as Property, Plant and Equipment on the authority's balance sheet.

9. ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

The Statement of Accounts sometimes contain estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made considering historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The UK has been experiencing its highest rates of inflation for nearly 40 years, with recent CPI at 10.1% in the last 12 months to January 2023. To combat inflation, the Bank of England raised interest rates to 4%, the highest rate in 14 years. This period of unusually high inflation and interest rates has potential implications for the statement of accounts under the provision of the exiting accounting standards.

The items in the Authority's Balance Sheet at 31st March 2023 for which there is a risk of a material adjustment in the following financial year are:

Pension Liability

Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and expected returns on pension fund assets. The Government Actuary's Department (GAD) and Hymans Robertson provide the Authority with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied (Note 45).

The effect of the net pensions' liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, all other factors remaining equal, a 0.5% decrease in the discount rate assumption on the Fire fighters Pension would result in an increase in the pension liability of £26 million, similarly a 0.1% decrease would impact the LGPS by £0.77m (see note 45).

Property, Plant & Equipment

The Authority's assets are depreciated over the useful lives that are dependent on assumptions about the level of repairs and maintenance that will be incurred in relation to individual assets. The current economic climate makes it uncertain that the Authority will be able to sustain its current spending on repairs and maintenance, bringing into doubt the useful lives assigned to assets.

If the useful life of assets is reduced, depreciation would increase and the carrying amount of the assets would fall. It is estimated that based on the current carrying value of depreciating assets of £127m at 31 March 2023 the annual depreciation charge for property plant and equipment assets would increase by c£0.5m for every year that the useful life had been reduced.

A valuation is a professional opinion on the property value formulated on the basis of the assumptions adopted by the valuer at a given time. Therefore, there is a degree of uncertainty as a given valuation reflects the market realities as well as the features of the property itself. A 1% change in the valuation of land and buildings will result in an increase or decrease of £1.4m.

However, the assets are revalued annually and the assets lives are kept under regular review.

Fair Value Measurement

When the fair values of financial assets and financial liabilities cannot be measured based on quoted prices in active markets (i.e. Level 1), their fair value is measured using valuation techniques (e.g. quoted prices for similar assets or liabilities in active markets or the Discounted Cash Flow model).

The authority used the Discounted Cash Flow Model to measure the fair value of the PFI Liabilities using observable data (i.e. PWLB borrowing rates). For the financial assets the fair value is determined by calculating the Net Present Value of future cash flows, which provides an estimate of the value of payment in the future in today's terms. The discount rate used in the calculation is equal to the current rate in relation to the same instrument from a comparable lender.

The recent market experience of higher inflation and higher interest rates affects any index-linked bonds and the likely impact will be that the fair value of outstanding long-term debt will fall.

10. OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE

The loss on disposal of £200,000 includes the disposal of property components and plant.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
56	Loss/ (surplus) on disposal of fixed assets	200
56		**200**

11. FINANCING AND INVESTING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
757	Interest payable on debt	751
11	Interest payable on finance leases	9
2,620	Interest payable on PFI1 Unitary payments	2,521
(1,721)	Grant for interest on PFI1 payments	(1,607)
2,003	Interest payable on PFI2 Unitary payments	1,931
(1,504)	Grant for interest on PFI2 payments	(1,407)
10,269	Net interest on the net defined benefit liability	13,472
(12)	Investment Interest Income	(386)
12,423		**15,284**

12. TAXATION AND NON-SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
(699)	Recognised revenue grants and contributions	(639)
(28,020)	Council Tax	(28,818)
(9,800)	Non-domestic rates redistribution	(8,729)
(4,777)	Revenue Support Grant	(4,923)
(1,803)	Transitional funding	(3,354)
(850)	Non-domestic rates adjustment	0
(9,589)	Gain on pension grant	(8,672)
(55,538)		**(55,135)**

13. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Movements in 2022/23

	Land & Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment £000	Assets Under Construction £000	Total Property, Plant and Equipment £000	PFI assets included in PP&E £000
Value at 1 April 2022	124,176	25,496	216	149,888	81,942
- Additions	219	1,185	1,786	3,190	0
- Donated Assets				0	
- Disposals	(201)	(1,795)	0	(1,996)	
- Revaluations	7,262	0	0	7,262	5,604
- Impairment	0	0	0	0	
- Reclassification	0	0	(45)	(45)	
- Transfers	487	230	(717)	0	
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2023	**131,943**	**25,116**	**1,240**	**158,299**	**87,546**
Depreciation:					
- Cumulative net to 31 March 2022	0	(18,402)	0	(18,402)	0
- Disposals	0	1,795	0	1,795	
- On revaluations	2,207	0	0	2,207	1,494
- For the Year	(2,207)	(1,478)		(3,685)	(1,494)
Depreciation at 31 March 2023	**0**	**(18,085)**	**0**	**(18,085)**	**0**
Net Book Value at 31 March 2023	**131,943**	**7,031**	**1,240**	**140,214**	**87,546**

Movements in 2021/22

	Land & Buildings £000	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment £000	Assets Under Construction £000	Total Property, Plant and Equipment £000	PFI assets included in PP&E £000
Value at 1 April 2021	**121,005**	**25,458**	**140**	**146,603**	**77,986**
- Additions	78	186	157	421	0
- Donated Assets				0	
- Disposals	(73)	(229)	0	(302)	
- Revaluations	3,166	0	0	3,166	3,956
- Impairment	0	0	0	0	
- Reclassification	0	0	0	0	
- Transfers	0	81	(81)	0	
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2022	**124,176**	**25,496**	**216**	**149,888**	**81,942**
Depreciation:					
- Cumulative net to 31 March 2021	0	(17,176)	0	(17,176)	0
- Disposals	0	229	0	229	
- On revaluations	2,225	0	0	2,225	1,453
- For the Year	(2,225)	(1,455)		(3,680)	(1,453)
Depreciation at 31 March 2022	**0**	**(18,402)**	0	**(18,402)**	**0**
Net Book Value at 31 March 2022	**124,176**	**7,094**	**216**	**131,486**	**81,942**

Depreciation

The following useful lives and depreciation rates have been used in the calculation of depreciation:

- Buildings – 60 years
- Components of buildings – 10-25 years
- Appliances and appliance equipment – 10-15 years
- Vehicles – 4-10 years
- Furniture, plant and equipment – 5-20 years
- IT equipment – 3-5 years

On an exceptional basis and where appropriate, a small number of assets have a useful expected life outside of the stated range of useful lives, based on specific characteristics of these assets.

Capital Commitments

At 31 March 2023 there is contractually committed capital expenditure of £1.4m; orders have been raised for two ERP vehicles (£0.8m), building works (£0.2m), a number of IT projects (£0.24m) and operational equipment (£0.19m) all to be realised in 2023/24.

Revaluations

In 2022/23 the Authority engaged Cameron Butler BLE (Hons) MRICS, of FHP Property Consultants to value the entire land and buildings portfolio to ensure all assets held on the Balance Sheet comply with as per IAS16 by being revalued sufficiently regularly. During the revaluation exercise twelve of the property assets underwent an on-site inspection. This has resulted in an upward revaluation of £9,469,000.

The UK has been experiencing its highest rates of inflation for nearly 40 years, with recent CPI at 10.1% in the last 12 months to January 2023. To combat inflation, the Bank of England raised interest rates to 4%, the highest rate in 14 years. This period of unusually high inflation and interest rates has an impact on the DRC measurements; the increased BCIS index is reflected in the most recent revaluations.

The valuations have all been carried out in accordance with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors' current Appraisal and Valuation Standards manual. The sources and assumptions made when producing the valuations are set out in the valuation certificates and reports.

14. DETAILS OF ASSETS OWNED BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY

During the year two vehicles were disposed of and one purchased to maintain the operational fleet of 173.

31-Mar-22		31-Mar-23
1	Fire Headquarters	1
33	Fire Stations	33
1	Workshops	1
174	Vehicles	173

15. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

The Authority accounts for its software as intangible assets, to the extent that the software is not an integral part of a particular IT system and accounted for as part of the hardware item of Property, Plant and Equipment. The intangible assets include both purchased licences and general software.

All software is given a finite useful life, based on assessments of the period that the software is expected to be of use to the Authority.

The useful lives assigned to the software are:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
0	3 years	0
314	5 years	205
40	upto 10 years	75
354		**280**

The carrying amount of intangible assets is amortised on a straight-line basis. The movements during the year are as follows:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
859	Gross Book Value at 1 April	877
18	- Additions	52
0	- Disposals	0
0	- Reclassification	(33)
(435)	- Cumulative amortisation to 31 March	(523)
0	- Amortisation on disposals	0
(88)	- Amortisation for the year	(93)
354	Net Book Value at 31 March	**280**

16. HERITAGE ASSETS

The Authority currently owns four heritage vehicles and a collection of memorabilia which is held around the County. The Authority also displays one heritage vehicle at Newcastle Fire Station which is owned by the Newcastle Brampton Museum;

- Leyland Ajax pump escape 1939, one of the last open topped Leyland machines to leave the production line
- Merryweather horse drawn steam pump fire engine c1894, currently being displayed at The Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent
- Coventry Climax with Godiva Pump 1939 which has been gifted to the Authority and restored using donations and fundraising from the local community
- Thornycroft 1954 Fire Appliance displayed at Uttoxeter Fire Station gifted by Windrush Farm, Gloucestershire

The first two assets have been independently valued by an external specialist, John Holland FRICS FAAV of Thimbleby & Shorland Ltd, Reading. The value of the vehicles has been determined as £15,000 and £30,000 respectively. The values were based on current open market sale value as at 31 March 2012. Both the Coventry Climax and the Thornycroft have not been professionally valued but similar vehicles cost in the region of £5,000.

The Authority does not seek to acquire assets of this nature, and has no intention of disposing of the assets currently held. Due to the value of the heritage assets held they have not been recognised in the Balance Sheet in accordance with the Code.

17. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categories of financial instruments

The borrowings and investments disclosed in the Balance Sheet are made up of the following categories of financial instruments:

Financial Assets

	Non-Current				Current				Total	
	Investments		Debtors		Investments		Debtors			
	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000
Amortised costs:										
Cash held					241	137			**241**	**137**
Fixed Term Deposits					1,500	4,500			**1,500**	**4,500**
Debtors							369	472	**369**	**472**
Fair Value through profit and loss:										
Money Market Funds					13,750	12,300			**13,750**	**12,300**
Total Financial Assets	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**15,491**	**16,937**	**369**	**472**	**15,860**	**17,409**

Financial Liabilities

	Non-Current				Current				Total	
	Borrowings		Creditors		Borrowings		Creditors			
	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000
Amortised costs:										
Market loans - LOBO	1,000	1,000							**1,000**	**1,000**
PWLB loans	15,800	15,700			250	100			**16,050**	**15,800**
PWLB loans - interest					78	77			**78**	**77**
Creditors							3,226	4,490	**3,226**	**4,490**
PFI1	32,773	31,214			1,456	1,559			**34,229**	**32,773**
PFI2	26,096	25,153			905	943			**27,001**	**26,096**
Finance Lease	173	132	0	0	39	41	0	0	**212**	**173**
Total Financial Liabilities	**75,842**	**73,199**	**0**	**0**	**2,728**	**2,720**	**3,226**	**4,490**	**81,796**	**80,409**

There are no assets or liabilities classified as Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income and non-financial assets.

Fair Values of Assets and Liabilities

Financial liabilities, financial assets represented by loans and receivables and long-term debtors and creditors are carried in the Balance Sheet at amortised cost; Money Market Funds investments are carried at FVTPL. Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments.

Fair value is defined as the amount for which an asset could be exchanged or a liability settled, assuming that the transaction was negotiated between parties knowledgeable about the market in which they are dealing and willing to buy/sell at an appropriate price, with no other motive in their negotiations other than to secure a fair price.

For financial assets the fair value is determined by calculating the Net Present Value of future cashflows, which provides an estimate of the value of payments in the future in today's terms. The discount rate used in the calculation is equal to the current rate in relation to the same instrument from a comparable lender. The Authority's investments are all at fixed rates and have therefore been calculated using the comparable fixed deposit rates as at 31 March 2023.

The fair value of the PWLB (Public Works Loan Board) and LOBO (Lenders Option Borrowers Option) borrowings have been calculated using a discounted cash flow analysis using other market data (level 2) namely swap rates, credit spreads and option prices.

The fair value of the PFI Liabilities has been calculated using a discounted cash flow analysis and are calculated using PWLB borrowing rates. The fair value is higher than the carrying amount because the interest rate payable is higher than the rates available for similar loans at the balance sheet date. This does not affect future payments made under the PFI scheme.

The authority used valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

Inputs to the valuation techniques in respect of assets and liabilities for which fair value is measured or disclosed in the authority's financial statements are categorised within the fair value hierarchy, as follows:

- **Level 1** – quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities that the authority can access at the measurement date
- **Level 2** – inputs other than quoted prices included within Level 1 that are observable for the asset or liability, either directly or indirectly
- **Level 3** – unobservable inputs for the asset or liability

The valuation hierarchy of financial instruments that were carried at fair value for 2022/23:

31-Mar-23	Carrying Amount £,000	Fair Value Level 1 £,000	Level 2 £,000	Level 3 £,000	Total £,000
Financial Assets:					
Cash held	137		137		**137**
Fixed Term Deposits	4,500		4,500		**4,500**
Money Market Funds	12,300	12,300			**12,300**
Debtors	472		472		**472**
Total Financial Assets	**17,409**	**12,300**	**5,109**	**0**	**17,409**
Financial Liabilities:					
Market loans - LOBO	1,000		906		**906**
PWLB loans	15,800		15,508		**15,508**
PWLB loans - interest	77		78		**78**
Creditors	4,490		4,490		**4,490**
PFI1	32,773		44,978		**44,978**
PFI2	26,096		38,929		**38,929**
Finance Lease	173		192		**192**
Total Financial Liabilities	**80,409**	**0**	**105,081**	**0**	**105,081**

The valuation hierarchy of financial instruments that were carried at fair value for 2021/22:

31-Mar-22	Carrying Amount £,000	Fair Value Level 1 £,000	Level 2 £,000	Level 3 £,000	Total £,000
Financial Assets:					
Cash held	241		241		**241**
Fixed Term Deposits	1,500		1,500		**1,500**
Money Market Funds	13,750	13,750			**13,750**
Debtors	369		369		**369**
Total Financial Assets	**15,860**	**13,750**	**2,110**	**0**	**15,860**
Financial Liabilities:					
Market loans - LOBO	1,000		1,412		**1,412**
PWLB loans	16,050		21,418		**21,418**
PWLB loans - interest	78		78		**78**
Creditors	3,226		3,226		**3,226**
PFI1	34,229		42,572		**42,572**
PFI2	27,001		34,915		**34,915**
Finance Lease	212		231		**231**
Total Financial Liabilities	**81,796**	**0**	**103,852**	**0**	**103,852**

Nature and extent of risks arising from financial instruments

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

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

The risks in relation to the Fire Authority are detailed below:

Credit risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the authority's customers.

The authority does not generally allow credit for customers such that £471,000 of the £4,531,000 debtors' balance is past its due date for payment.

Of the £471,000 debtors, £406,000 is due from the Staffordshire Police for the rechargeable costs of joint services and £20,000 is due from Other Local Authorities therefore only a small debt is held for general customer charges. The debt is less than three months.

Liquidity risk

The Authority has a comprehensive cash flow management system that seeks to ensure that cash is available as needed. As the authority has ready access to borrowings, there is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The Authority has the following debt liabilities on its balance sheet.

	31-Mar-22 £'000	31-Mar-23 £'000
Source of Loan		
Market Loans - LOBO	1,000	1,000
PWLB Maturity Loans	16,050	15,800
	17,050	**16,800**
Analysis of Maturity		
Less than one year	250	100
Between one year and two years	100	550
Between two years and five years	800	650
More than five years	15,900	15,500
	17,050	**16,800**

All trade and other payables are due to be paid in less than one year.

Market risk

The authority is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. However, all its long term borrowing is on fixed rate contracts.

During 2022/23, if interest rates had been 1% higher with all other variables held constant, the impact on the CIES would be an increase in interest of c.£183,000.

18. INVENTORIES

The Authority holds three areas of inventories; the main stores at headquarters, transport and engineering stores held at the Trentham workshop and fuel stock which is held at various locations across the service. The inventories included in the balance sheet for 2022/23 is £643,000 (£695,000 in 2021/22) being HQ stores £489,000 Transport £36,000 and fuel £118,000 (respectively for 2021/22 £494,000, £36,000 and £165,000).

19. AMOUNTS OWED TO THE AUTHORITY BY DEBTORS

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
691	General Debtors	809
637	Payments in Advance	980
2,617	FF Government Top-up Grant	1,904
838	Council Tax Billing Authority	838
4,783		**4,531**

The general debtors figure is net of the impairment of doubtful debts of £226 (£1071 in 2021/22) is negligible. This provision ensures that sufficient resources are available should unpaid debtor accounts be deemed unrecoverable. The adequacy of this provision is reviewed annually. The general debtors figure also includes VAT at £334,000 and the Cycle Scheme at £5,000.

The Fire Fighter Government Top-up Grant of 2022/23 has a balance due from Home Office of £1,904,000 which will be settled in the grant provision of 2023/24.

In addition, the Authority also accounts for a proportionate share of the risks that the council tax and non-domestic rates collected by the billing authorities have incurred, which also includes a provision for doubtful debts and an appeal provision.

The Debtors can be further analysed as follows:

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
2,928	Central government bodies	2,238
1,154	Other local authorities	1,264
701	Other entities and individuals	1,029
4,783		**4,531**

20. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
0	Cash Account	1
241	Bank Account	137
13,750	Temporary Investments	12,300
13,991		**12,438**

The cash in hand represents a canteen float of a negligible amount £100 and a Princes Trust float of £500.

The cash book balance of £137,000 (£241,000 in 2021/22) takes account of cheques yet to be presented to the Authority's bank for payment at 31 March 2023 and is held in Current Assets.

The Authority holds total temporary investments of £16,800,000 at the 31st March 2023. However, this includes investments of £4,500,000 that do not satisfy the definition of cash and cash equivalents due to the maturity period and the early withdrawal penalty for the other. This has been presented in Note 21 within Short Term Investments.

21. SHORT TERM INVESTMENTS

The short term investment of £4,500,000 are held with a combination of Money Market Funds and Debt Management Office.

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
1,500	Temporary Investments	4,500
1,500		**4,500**

22. AMOUNTS OWED BY THE AUTHORITY TO CREDITORS

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
2,531	General Creditors	3,486
1,352	Accruals and deferred income	1,915
1,236	Council Tax Billing Authority	1,236
1,604	Receipts in advance	1,549
2,361	PFI liability	2,501
39	Finance Lease liability	41
9,123		**10,728**

The general creditors figure includes the supplier creditor accounts at £1,509,000 (£827,000 2021/22), Payroll HMRC at £910,000 (£657,000 2021/22) and Pension creditor at £340,000 (£709,000 2021/22). Of the £1,509,000 creditors, £1,352,000 is due to the Staffordshire Police for the rechargeable costs of joint services and £20,000 is due to Other Local Authorities therefore an amount of £137,000 is due to general suppliers.

Receipts in Advance includes a government transformation grant received in 2015/16 for £5,138,000. During the year £55,000 has been utilised with the balance committed in future periods; the grant remaining is £1,549,000. Due to the grant conditions it is held as a liability and not a reserve.

The Authority also accounts for a proportionate share of the rewards that the council tax and non-domestic rates collected by the billing authorities have incurred.

The creditors can be further analysed as follows:

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
2,262	Central government bodies	2,460
1,768	Other local authorities	2,609
5,093	Other entities and individuals	5,659
9,123		**10,728**

23. USABLE RESERVES

Movements in the Authority’s usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserve Statement.

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
1,906	**General Fund (1)**	**1,906**
1	**Capital grants unapplied**	**1**
1,540	Earmarked reserves - grants	1,726
5,498	Earmarked reserves - PFI grant	5,786
731	CCU Reserve	606
8,342	Other Reserves (2)	7,315
16,111	**Earmarked Reserves**	**15,433**
18,018	**Total Usable Reserves**	**17,340**

(1) General Reserves - held to protect against any spate or emergency conditions which may arise. The level held is based on a risk assessment.
(2) Other Reserves – held to fund transformation initiatives, invest to save and is utilised against non-recurring revenue spend. It is generated from budgeted contributions and planned efficiency savings from previous years.
(3) The Authority has an approved reserve strategy that is updated annually.

24. UNUSABLE RESERVES

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
42,098	Revaluation Reserve	50,638
8,204	Capital Adjustment Account	10,953
(511,310)	Pensions Reserve	(358,280)
(429)	Collection Fund Adjustment Account	(429)
(461,437)		**(297,118)**

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated in the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

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

- Revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost
- Used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation, or
- Disposed of and the gains are realised.

The balance on the Revaluation Reserve is accounted for on an individual asset basis.

2021/22		2022/23	
£,000		£,000	£,000
37,087	Balance as at 1 April		42,098
5,820	Upward revaluation of assets	9,469	
0	Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the surplus/deficit on the Provision of Services	0	
5,820	**Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services**		9,469
(809)	Different between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(819)	
0	Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	(110)	
(809)	**Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account**		(929)
42,098	**Balance as at 31 March**		**50,638**

Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The account is debited with the costs of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement.

The account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

As the Authority did not inherit debt from the County Council the depreciation charged to the Income and Expenditure Account is greater than the revenue provision for repayment of debt.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000	£,000
7,136	Balance as at 1 April		8,204
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:		
(3,680)	Charges for depreciation and impairments of non-current assets	(3,685)	
(88)	Amortisation of intangible assets	(93)	
17	Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	0	
(3,751)		(3,778)	(3,778)
809	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve		928
4,194	**Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year**		**5,354**
	Capital financing applied in the year:		
33	Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	1,450	
407	Direct revenue contributions	527	
0	Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	0	
2,332	Lease payments	2,400	
1,238	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	1,222	5,599
8,204	**Balance at 31 March**		**10,953**

Pension Reserves

The Pension Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the CIES as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs.

However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer's contributions to the pension fund or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the Pensions Reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the Authority has set aside to meet them.

The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
(516,260)	**Balance brought forward**	**(511,309)**
10,837	Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability	160,438
(21,805)	Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the surplus or deficit on the Provision of services in the CIES	(22,497)
15,546	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	15,089
373	LGPS deficit contribution prepayment	0
(511,309)	**Total Pension Reserve**	**(358,279)**

The option to prepay the LGPS deficit contribution of £1,121,000 for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 was exercised. The prepayment is used to offset the pension liabilities held on the balance sheet.

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account (CFAA) manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax and non-domestic rates income in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as it falls due from the council tax payers and business rates payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund.

The adjustment has not been applied in the unaudited accounts 2022/23. This will be a post-audit adjustment.

The following table presents the movements in the CFAA:

31-Mar-22 £,000		31-Mar-23 £,000
(1,928)	Balance as at 1 April	(429)
649	Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	0
850	Amount by which non-domestic rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from non-domestic rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements	0
(429)		**(429)**

25. CASH FLOW STATEMENT – INVESTING ACTIVITIES

The cash flows for investing activities include the following items:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
440	Purchase of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets	3,242
0	Purchase of short-term and long-term investments	3,000
0	Proceeds of short-term and long-term investments	0
(17)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets	0
0	Proceeds from short-term and long-term investments	0
423	**Cash outflows from Investing Activities**	**6,242**

26. CASH FLOW STATEMENT – FINANCING ACTIVITIES

The cash flows for financing activities include the following items:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
37	Cash Payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to finance leases	39
2,294	Cash Payments for the reduction of the outstanding liabilities relating to PFI contracts	2,362
0	Repayment of short and long-term borrowing	250
2,331	**Cash outflows from Financing Activities**	**2,651**

27. CASH FLOW STATEMENT – ADJUSTMENTS FOR NON-CASH MOVEMENTS

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
(4,197)	PPE movements (depreciation, impairment, amortisation)	(3,778)
2,042	Movement in current assets (debtors, creditors, stock)	(1,767)
(5,885)	Movement in Pension Liability	(7,408)
(73)	Carrying amount of Non current assets sold	(201)
35	Other non-cash movements	(78)
(8,078)	**Other Non-cash movements**	**(13,232)**

28. CASH FLOW STATEMENT – ADJUSTMENTS FOR ITEMS INCLUDED IN THE NET DEFICIT THAT ARE INVESTING OR FINANCING ACTIVITIES

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
0	Capital grants credited to Surplus or Deficit on provision of services	0
16	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment and intangible assets	0
16	**Adjust for items included in the net deficit on the provision of services that are investing or financing activities**	**0**

29. CASH FLOW STATEMENT – OPERATING ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
(12)	Interest Received	(386)
757	Interest Paid	751

30. AGENCY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

The Authority acts as an agent for other Fire Authorities under Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire Services Act 1947. Where assistance provided is greater than that received charges are made. The following transactions have been made between the Authority and West Midlands FRA and Derbyshire FRA. There has been no over-border services to Derbyshire FRA during 2022/23.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
113	Payments to West Midlands	130
0	Over-accrual of income for Derbyshire past income	0
113		**130**

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service administer the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) on behalf of the local authorities within the county.

The CCU funds are included in the Authority's Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Balance Sheet. The expenditure for 2022/23 amounted to £650,000 (£691,000 in 2021/22) and income totalled £608,000 (£622,000 in 2021/222) leaving a net deficit position of £45,000 (£69,000 net surplus in 2021/22). In addition, during the year credits were issued to all partners for £83,000 for the share of a managed underspend in 2020/21 resulting in a overall deficit for the year of £125,000.

The accumulated reserves balance at 31st March 2023 is £606,000 (£731,000 in 2021/22) which is held in the Authority's short-term investments.

31. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

From 1st August 2018 the governance arrangements transferred to The Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) therefore there is no allowances paid.

32. OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The following table sets out the remuneration for Senior Officers whose salary is less than £150,000 but equal to or more than £50,000 per year:

For the Year of 2022/23	Salary (Including fees & allowances) £	Benefits in Kind (e.g. Car Allowance) £	Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions £	Pensions Contributions £	Total Remuneration including pension contributions £	Note
Chief Fire Officer	144,873	0	144,873	41,723	186,596	
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	115,898	0	115,898	33,379	149,277	
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	98,166	0	98,166	28,272	126,438	1 + 2
Director of Finance, Assets & Resources	93,396	8,495	101,891	15,597	117,488	3
Total Senior Officers between £50,000 and £150,000	**452,333**	**8,495**	**460,828**	**118,971**	**579,799**	

Note 1: Assistant Chief Fire Officer from 06/05/2022 annualised salary £108,684

Note 2: Following a re-structure of the Senior Leadership Team - the Director of Response and Director of Prevent & Protect posts have been removed and replaced by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer post.

Note 3: Director of Finance, Assets & Resources 50% of the salary is recharged to Staffordshire Commissioners Office

For the Year of 2021/22	Salary (Including fees & allowances) £	Benefits in Kind (e.g. Car Allowance) £	Total Remuneration excluding pension contributions £	Pensions Contributions £	Total Remuneration including pension contributions £	Note
Chief Fire Officer	135,086	0	135,086	38,905	173,991	1
Chief Fire Officer	80,168	0	80,168	22,768	102,936	2
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	113,242	0	113,242	32,396	145,638	3
Director of Prevent & Protect	110,692	0	110,692	31,879	142,571	
Director of Finance, Assets & Resources	93,741	8,495	102,236	15,655	117,891	4
Director of Response	79,354	0	79,354	18,491	97,845	5
Total Senior Officers between £50,000 and £150,000	**612,283**	**8,495**	**620,778**	**160,094**	**780,872**	

Note 1: Chief Fire Officer from 18/10/2021 annualised salary £144,873, previously Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Note 2: Retired as Chief Fire Officer on 17/10/2021, annualised salary is £144,873

Note 3: Deputy Chief Fire Officer from 18/10/2021, previously Director of Response

Note 4: Director of Finance, Assets & Resources 50% of the salary is recharged to Staffordshire Commissioners Office

Note 5: Temporary Director of Response from 18/10/2021, annualised salary is £97,789

There are no Senior Officers whose salary is £150,000 or more per year.

The numbers of employees whose remuneration, excluding employer's pension contribution, was £50,000 or more in bands of £5,000, were as follows. These include both Senior Officers and Other Officers.

Remuneration Band	2021/22 No of Employees	2022/23 No of Employees
£50,000 - £54,999	22	28
£55,000 - £59,999	23	19
£60,000 - £64,999	8	11
£65,000 - £69,999	1	7
£70,000 - £74,999	-	1
£75,000 - £79,999	1	1
£80,000 - £84,999	1	-
£85,000 - £89,999	-	1
£90,000 - £94,999	-	-
£95,000 - £99,999	-	1
£100,000 - £104,999	1	1
£105,000 - £109,999	-	-
£110,000 - £114,999	2	-
£115,000 - £119,999	-	1
£120,000 - £124,999	-	-
£125,000 - £129,999	-	-
£130,000 - £134,999	-	-
£135,000 - £139,999	1	-
£140,000 - £144,999	-	1
£145,000 - £149,999	-	-
	60	**72**

The numbers of exit packages with total cost per band and total cost of the compulsory and other redundancies are set out in the table below:

Exit package cost band (including special payments)	Number of compulsory redundancies		Number of other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages by cost band		Total cost of exit packages in each band	
	2021/22	**2022/23**	2021/22	**2022/23**	2021/22	**2022/23**	2021/22 £	**2022/23 £**
£0 - £20,000	-	0	2	1	2	1	22,841	17,874
£20,001 - £40,000	-	0	1	2	1	2	33,692	52,513
£40,001 - £60,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£60,001 - £80,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£80,001 - £100,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£100,001 - £150,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,001 - £200,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
£200,001 - £250,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**0**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**56,533**	**70,387**

33. EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

The Authority has paid the following amounts for external audit services during the year.

The Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) awarded a contract of audit for the Authority to begin with effect from 2018/19. The fee agreed in the contract was £23,646. Since that time there have been a number of developments, particularly in relation to the revised Code and ISA's. This is reflected on the updated audit fees of £38,999 for 2021/22 (£43,572 published) and the proposed fee of £43,572 for 2022/23.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
44	Fees payable to Grant Thornton for external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	44
0	- in respect of other services	0
44	Total Audit Fees	**44**
(5)	updated audit fees post-2021/22 audit	
39	2021/22 Actual Fee	

34. GRANT INCOME

The Authority credited the following grants, contributions and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in 2022/23

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
Credited to Net Costs of Service:		
230	HO - Fire Link	217
0	HO - Flood scheme	3
1,707	HO - Pension contribution grant	1,707
5	PSAA	0
0	HO - Safe & sound	55
2,094	MHCLG - PFI1	2,207
1,726	MHCLG - PFI2	1,823
5,762		**6,012**
Credited to Financial and Investment income:		
1,721	MHCLG - PFI1	1,607
1,504	MHCLG - PFI2	1,407
3,225		**3,014**
Credited to Taxation and Non-specific Grant Income & Expenditure:		
44	HO - Enhanced Logistic Support Project	45
70	HO - New Dimensions	70
29	HO - New Risks	19
48	HO - mass fatalities maintenance	48
196	HO - Brexit local resilience	190
134	COVID	79
8	MHCLG - Transparency Code set up	8
12	Redmond Review	12
123	HO - protection uplift and building risk	112
0	HO - FF pension remedy admin	56
35	HO - transformation	0
699	**Revenue grants**	**639**
0	MHCLG - Capital fire	0
0	**Capital grants**	**0**
842	Business Rates Relief	1,742
200	Staffordshire Business Rates Pool	200
293	Tax Income Guarantee	0
0	Business Rates Reconciliation Grant	668
0	Special Services Grant	663
468	Local Council Tax Support	81
1,803	**Transitional Funding**	**3,354**
4,777	**Revenue Support Grant**	**4,923**
9,589	**Fire Fighter Pension Top Up Grant**	**8,672**
16,868		**17,588**

The Authority holds a Business Transformation Grant that have conditions attached and these are held as a liability in Grants Receipts in Advance, the income will be recognised in the year it is utilised.

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
1,639	Balance at 1 April	1,604
(35)	Released in year - Transformation Fund (revenue)	(55)
0	Released in year - Transformation Fund (capital)	0
1,604	**Total held in Receipts in Advance**	**1,549**

35. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Authority is required to disclose material transactions with related parties, bodies, or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Authority or be controlled or influenced by the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Authority.

Central Government
Central Government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority. It is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants, and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Authority has with other parties.

Members
Members and Senior Officers of the Authority have direct control over its financial and operating policies and are required to disclose details of any transactions that the Authority has with any individuals with whom they may have a close relationship or any company in which they may have an interest. Members and Senior Officers are aware of the requirement of this disclosure and have declared that they have not been involved in any such related party transactions.

Outsourcing of administration services
The Authority contracts with Staffordshire County Council for the provision of various administrative support including treasury management, VAT advice, archiving and property services. In 2022/23 the amount paid is £39,000 (£37,000 in 2021/22).

The Authority contracts with Stoke on Trent City Council for the provision of payroll services of £19,700 (£18,700 in 2021/22). In addition, the fire-fighter pension administration is provided by West Yorkshire Pension Fund at a cost of £37,000 (£25,000 in 2021/22).

A recharge from the OPCC for the governance arrangements of £199,000 (£185,000 in 2021/22). A recharge of £2,260,000 for the back-office service which includes Finance, HR, Property Services, Procurement, the Communications/Media Team and JETS (2021/22 £1,977,000).

Joint Emergency Transport Service

The Joint Emergency Transport Service (JETS) delivers all aspects of fleet services for Fire and Police vehicles in Staffordshire. JETS established in April 2016 is located at the Staffordshire Fire Workshop at Trentham Lakes. Some overhead costs are shared at a 51/49 split Police/Fire respectively. Other costs are direct to each Service. All the stock is held separately with identifiable stock control. The cost to Staffordshire Fire for the transport service in 2022/23 was £1,748,000 (2021/22 £1,443,000) the pressure against budget relates to fuel and repair consumables.

Community Interest Company
The Authority hold shares in The Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Safer Communities Community Interest Company which was established following the completion of the PFI1 project in 2011. The Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Safer Communities Community Interest Company is a company limited by shares. Like all CICs, it has some unique and important additional features to safeguard its social mission that it was set up for. The shares have a nominal value in the accounts. The distribution of those shares is as follows:

Party	No. of Shares	No. of Directors	Vision
Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service	55	Two	To make Staffordshire the safest place to live and work
Fire Support (Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Holdings Ltd)	25	Two	Supporting fire rescue, education and prevention
Groundwork West Midlands	20	One	A society of sustainable communities which are vibrant, healthy and safe and where individuals and enterprise prosper

The CIC also has a “lock” on its assets. This prevents profits from being distributed to its members or shareholders other than in certain limited circumstances. It also means that all assets must be used for the community purpose or, if they are sold, open market value must be obtained for them and the proceeds used for the community purposes. In addition, if the CIC is wound up, its assets must be transferred to another, similarly asset-locked body.

During 2022/23 the value of transactions entered into between the Authority and the CIC company was income of £161,000 (2021/22 £208,000) with expenditure to match as cost recovery only is in operation. At the 31st March 2023 there are no debtor balance owed to Staffordshire Fire or creditor balance owed to CIC.

Financial Statements have been prepared for the CIC.

Following a review of the CIC operation the decision to close the CIC had been approved and has now been actioned. The Princes Trust activity has transitioned over to the Service within the year and is fully provided by the Service.

36. INTEREST IN COMPANIES

The Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Safer Communities Community Interest Company is a company limited by shares. The company was established following the completion of the PFI1 project in 2011. It was formed in partnership between public, private and voluntary sector with the primary purpose of providing opportunities to improve the health, safety, social and economic wellbeing of the communities of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Its vision is to support active citizenship and financial sustainability through social enterprise and income generation.

The company is considered to be a related party to the Authority and details of transactions between the two entities have been disclosed in Note 35.

A copy of the accounts can be requested from Staffordshire Commissioner Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters.

37. CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND CAPITAL FINANCING

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including value of assets acquired under finance leases and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the Authority, the expenditure results in an increase in the Capital Financing Requirements (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the Authority that has yet to be financed.

The CFR is analysed as follows:

2021/22 Non PFI £,000	2021/22 PFI & Lease £,000	2021/22 TOTAL £,000		2022/23 Non PFI £,000	2022/23 PFI & Lease £,000	2022/23 TOTAL £,000
22,095	62,900	84,995	**Opening Capital Financing Requirement**	20,857	60,569	81,426
			Capital investment			
20	0	20	Intangible Assets	52	0	52
420	0	420	Property, Plant & Equipment	3,190	0	3,190
			Sources of finance			
0	0	0	Capital receipts	0	0	0
(33)	0	(33)	Government grants and other contributions	0	0	0
(407)	0	(407)	Direct Revenue Financing	(1,976)	0	(1,976)
(1,238)	(2,331)	(3,569)	Revenue Provision	(1,222)	(2,400)	(3,622)
20,857	**60,569**	**81,426**	**Closing Capital Financing Requirement**	**20,901**	**58,169**	**79,070**
			Explanation of movements in the year			
0	0	0	Increase in underlying need to borrow (supported by Government financial assistance)	1,266	0	1,266
(1,238)	(2,331)	(3,569)	Decrease in underlying need to borrow (unsupported by Government financial assistance)	(1,222)	(2,400)	(3,622)
		0	Assets acquired under finance lease			0
(1,238)	**(2,331)**	**(3,569)**	**(Decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement**	**44**	**(2,400)**	**(2,356)**

38. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION

There is a statutory requirement for the Authority to set aside sums from its General Fund Account in the form of a minimum revenue provision. The sum is based on a combination of either 4% of the Authority's capital financing requirement at the end of the previous financial year and a proportion of an assets value based on asset life. MRP is also charges against Private Finance Initiatives. The capital element of repayments is being used as a proxy for the PFI MRP.

The charges for this are reflected in the table below:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
(1,238)	Other Services	(1,222)
(37)	Finance Lease	(39)
(1,379)	PFI1	(1,456)
(915)	PFI2	(905)
(3,569)	**Total MRP**	**(3,622)**

39. OTHER LONG TERM LIABILITIES

The Other Long Term Liabilities include finance leases and the PFI Liability as disclosed in notes 40 and 41. The following schedule analyses the liability:

2021/22 Total Liability £,000	2021/22 Payable less than 1 year £,000	2021/22 Payable more than 1 year £,000		2022/23 Total Liability £,000	2022/23 Payable less than 1 year £,000	2022/23 Payable more than 1 year £,000
212	39	173	Finance Lease	173	40	133
34,228	1,456	32,772	PFI 1 Liability	32,771	1,558	31,213
27,002	905	26,097	PFI 2 Liability	26,097	943	25,154
61,442	**2,400**	**59,042**		**59,041**	**2,541**	**56,500**

The liabilities payable less than one year are included in the Short Term Creditors.

40. LEASES

Finance Leases

The assets acquired under finance lease are carried as Property, Plant and Equipment in the Balance Sheet at the following net amounts:

2021/22 £,000		2022/23 £,000
267	**Opening Net Value at 1 April**	**229**
0	Additions	0
0	Revaluations	0
(38)	Depreciation	(37)
0	Disposals	0
229	**Value at 31 March**	**192**

The Authority is committed to making minimum payments under these leases comprising settlement of the long-term liability for the interest in the property acquired by the Authority and finance costs that will be payable by the Authority in future years while liability remains outstanding.

During 2017/18 the Service expanded the Fire Behaviour Training site by developing a Training Villa which was operational from June 2017 and officially opened by The Earl of Wessex KG GCVO 8th September 2017. The Villa was acquired under a 10 year finance lease.

The minimum lease payments will be payable over the following periods:

	Minimum Lease Payments		Finance Lease Liabilities	
	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000	31-Mar-22 £,000	31-Mar-23 £,000
Obligations payable not later than one year	48	48	39	40
Obligations payable later than one year and not later than five years	192	144	173	133
Obligations payable later than five years	0	0	0	0
	240	**192**	**212**	**173**

The rentals payable under these arrangements in 2022/23 were £48,000 charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as £9,000 interest payable and £39,000 relating to the write-down of obligations to the lessor charged to the General Fund.

Operating Lease

The Authority currently has no operational vehicles or equipment financed under the terms of operating leases.

41. PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVES (PFI)

The PFI transactions are treated in the Authority's accounts in accordance with the latest recommended practice with the adaptation of IFRIC12 (Service Concession Arrangements).

The assets used to provide services at the fire stations are recognised on the Authority's Balance Sheet.

The Authority makes an agreed payment annually which is increased each year by inflation and can be reduced if the contractor fails to meet availability and performance standards in any year but which is otherwise fixed.

Although the payments made to the contractor are described as unitary payment, they have been calculated to compensate the contractor for the fair value of the services they provide, the capital expenditure incurred and interest payable whilst the capital expenditure remains to be reimbursed.

PFI 1 scheme

The contract to build ten new community fire stations in Staffordshire as part of the first PFI project was officially signed on 15 October 2009 by representatives of the Authority and the consortium delivering the project, Fire Support. The project benefited from £50 million of PFI credits from The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The project has seen seven fire stations rebuilt as well as the construction of an additional three new stations. All ten stations are operational; five being built in 2010/11 and the remaining built in 2011/12.

Payments remaining to be made under the PFI contract are as follows:

Future Unitary Payments	Operating Costs £'000	Contingent Rental/ Interest £'000	Lifecycle Replacement £'000	Capital Repayment £'000	Total Unitary Charge £'000
within 1 year	1,492	2,423	327	1,558	**5,800**
2-5 years	6,420	8,490	1,531	7,294	**23,735**
6-10 years	9,151	7,295	2,487	12,045	**30,978**
11-15 years	7,146	2,477	1,534	11,875	**23,033**
	24,208	**20,686**	**5,879**	**32,772**	**83,545**

The liability outstanding to pay the contractor's liability for capital expenditure incurred is £32,772,000 over the next 14 years, as stated in the above table.

Transactions under the scheme during 2022/23 were:

2021/22 £'000		2022/23 £'000
1,518	Fair Value of Services	1,687
2,546	Finance Costs	2,448
74	Contingent Rent	73
4,138	**Revenue Unitary Payments**	**4,208**
291	Other Revenue Expenditure	319
847	Depreciation	867
5,276	**Total Expenditure**	**5,394**
(3,814)	PFI Special Grant	(3,814)
-	Other Contributions	-
1,462	**(Surplus)/Deficit Amount in Income & Expenditure Account**	**1,580**
	Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance	
(847)	Amounts required by statue to be Excluded - depreciation	(867)
1,379	amounts required by statue to be Included - MRP	1,456
(404)	Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	102
128	**Net Charge to the General Fund**	**691**
-	Interest Earned on Balance	-
-	Interest Accrued from Previous Years	-

The Net Book Value of assets held under the PFI1 scheme as at 31 March 2023 was £50,059,000.

PFI 2 scheme

The contract to build eleven new community fire stations in Staffordshire as part of the second PFI project was officially signed on 10 July 2013 by representatives of the Authority and the consortium delivering the project, Blue[3]. The project benefited from £45 million of PFI credits from The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The project has seen ten fire stations rebuilt as well as the construction of a new station as a replacement of a current station on a different site. All stations were operational by the end of 2015/16.

Payments remaining to be made under the PFI contract are as follows:

Future Unitary Payments	Operating Costs £'000	Contingent Rental/ Interest £'000	Lifecycle Replacement £'000	Capital Repayment £'000	Total Unitary Charge £'000
within 1 year	1,578	1,874	276	943	**4,671**
2-5 years	6,715	6,891	1,168	4,420	**19,194**
6-10 years	9,382	6,423	3,691	5,746	**25,242**
11-15 years	10,615	4,623	3,316	8,247	**26,801**
16-20 years	6,631	1,934	792	6,740	**16,097**
	34,920	**21,745**	**9,243**	**26,097**	**92,004**

The liability outstanding to pay the contractor's liability for capital expenditure incurred is £26,097,000 over the next 18 years, as stated in the above table.

Transactions under the scheme during 2022/23 were:

2021/22 £'000		2022/23 £'000
1,227	Fair Value of Services	1,352
1,742	Finance Costs	1,685
261	Finance Costs	248
3,229	**Revenue Unitary Payments**	**3,285**
156	Other Revenue Expenditure	245
606	Depreciation	627
3,991	**Total Expenditure**	**4,157**
(3,230)	PFI Special Grant	(3,230)
-	Other Contributions	-
761	**(Surplus)/Deficit Amount in Income & Expenditure Account**	**927**
	Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance	
(606)	Amounts required by statue to be Excluded - depreciation	(627)
915	amounts required by statue to be Included - MRP	905
(324)	Transfer to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	186
(15)	**Net Charge to the General Fund**	**464**
-	Interest Earned on Balance	-
-	Interest Accrued from Previous Years	-

The Net Book Value of assets held under the PFI2 scheme as at 31 March 2023 was £37,487,000.

42. CONTINGENT LIABILTIES

There are twelve pending insurance cases still being progressed through the legal process and final decisions are not yet known. However, all deductibles have been paid and therefore Staffordshire Fire has no liability outstanding if all the claims were found in favour of the claimants.

43. TERMINATION BENEFITS

In 2022/23 the Authority incurred liabilities of £70,000 for three compensation payments disclosed in Note 32.

44. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

There are no events after the reporting period.

45. PENSION SCHEMES

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE COSTS

Uniformed Fire-fighters

This is an unfunded scheme which means that there are no investment assets to match with the liability. Cash has to be generated to meet actual pension payments as they fall due. The fire-fighters pension scheme is a defined benefit scheme. Any annual surplus or deficit on the scheme is paid to or met by the Home Office.

Other Pensionable Employees

In 2022/23 the Authority paid an employer's contribution of £1,077,000 into the Staffordshire County Pension Fund. The fund gives members defined benefits related to pay and service. The contribution rate is determined by the fund's actuary based on the triennial actuarial valuation.

The costs of providing pensions are charged to the service revenue accounts as they are earned over the service lives of scheme members. Any variations from regular costs are spread over the remaining working life of current members using the percentage of salary method.

The triennial valuation of the Staffordshire Local Government Pension Scheme was undertaken in 2020 by the actuary Hymans Robertson LLP, to establish the contribution rates applicable for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023. For the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority the results of the modelling exercise resulted in a proposal to keep employer contribution rates payable into the scheme unchanged, however this would require a deficit repayment to cover the three year period. The Authority made a payment in advance of £1,121,000 to cover the triennial period, receiving a favourable discount rate for paying the deficit upfront rather than on an annual basis.

The Fire Authority participates in six schemes; the Fire Fighter Pension Schemes are administered by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund and the Local Government Pension Scheme is administered by Staffordshire County Council.

a) Five fire-fighters' schemes are:

   i. Pension Scheme 1992 (FF'92)
   ii. Pension Scheme 2006 (FF'06) which includes whole time and retained staff as members
   iii. Compensation Scheme 2006 (FF'CS) with non-contributory provisions covering death and injury on duty
   iv. Pension Scheme 2015
   v. Pension Modified Scheme (included in the FF'06 figures for this disclosure)

b) A Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for other employees

The cost of the retirement benefits in the Cost of Services represents the cost of benefits earned during the year and past service costs, which represent the estimated liability of discretionary benefits awarded by the employer. The charge to the Council Tax is based upon employers' contribution paid in the year to the Pension Fund, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement after Net Operating Expenditure. The following transactions were made in the income and expenditure account during the year.

2022/23	LGPS	FF 1992 Pension Scheme	FF 2006 Pension Scheme	FF 2015 Pension Scheme	Compensation Scheme	**Total Scheme**
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement						
Net Cost of Services:						
- Current service costs	1,975	0	(60)	6,930	180	**9,025**
- Past Service Costs		9,270	1,610	(10,880)		**0**
- curtailments						**0**
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:						
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability	302	10,390	1,110	1,260	410	**13,472**
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,277	19,660	2,660	(2,690)	590	**22,497**
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:						
- Return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability	(2,245)					**(2,245)**
- changes in demographic assumptions	183	6,900	1,610	5,060	280	**14,033**
- changes in financial assumptions	23,003	110,560	17,010	26,190	3,520	**180,283**
- experience gains and losses	(2,843)	(25,880)	(1,800)	(470)	(640)	**(31,633)**
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	18,098	91,580	16,820	30,780	3,160	**160,438**
- Employers contributions	(703)	0	(1)	(4,274)		**(4,978)**
- Retirement benefits paid to Pensioners	0				(1,000)	**(1,000)**
- Unfunded benefits	(62)					**(62)**
Actual amount charged against the General fund Balance for pensions in the year	(765)	0	(1)	(4,274)	(1,000)	**(6,040)**

2021/22	LGPS	FF 1992 Pension Scheme	FF 2006 Pension Scheme	FF 2015 Pension Scheme	Compensation Scheme	**Total Scheme**
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	**£'000**
Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement						
Net Cost of Services:						
- Current service costs	2,124	100	70	9,010	220	**11,524**
- Past Service Costs						**0**
- curtailments	11					**11**
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:						
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability	380	7,910	840	820	320	**10,270**
Total Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,515	8,010	910	9,830	540	**21,805**
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:						
- Return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability	4,648					**4,648**
- changes in demographic assumptions	321					**321**
- changes in financial assumptions	4,635	4,180	670	920	140	**10,545**
- experience gains and losses	(117)	(1,450)	770	(4,010)	130	**(4,677)**
Other Post Employment Benefit Charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	9,487	2,730	1,440	(3,090)	270	**10,837**
- Employers contributions	(685)	(125)	(114)	(3,936)		**(4,860)**
- Retirement benefits paid to Pensioners	0				(1,034)	**(1,034)**
- Unfunded benefits	(61)					**(61)**
Actual amount charged against the General fund Balance for pensions in the year	(746)	(125)	(114)	(3,936)	(1,034)	**(5,955)**

The cumulative actuarial gain recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the 31 March 2023 is £160,438m (2021/22 gain £10.84m). The re-measurement includes significant changes arising from changes to the financial assumptions shown on the following page. The increase in the rates of CPI and in the long term salary assumptions and rate of revaluation for CARE pensions all contribute to an increase in the pension liability, this is offset with the increased discount rate (LGPS increased by 2.05%, FF increased by 2%) which reduces the liability for both LGPS and the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. The experience gains/loss is the change in the scheme liability resulting from the effects of differences between the actuarial assumptions that applied at the start of the year and what has actually occurred.

McCloud Judgement – Pension Age Discrimination Case:

Claims of age discrimination were brought in relation to the terms of transitional protection by groups of firefighters and members of the Judiciary in the McCloud/Sargeant legal case and the Court of Appeal handed down its judgment on the claim on 20 December 2018, ruling that the transitional protection arrangements were discriminatory on the basis of age. As a result, the cost control element of the 2016 valuation was paused whilst the Government addressed the need to remedy this discrimination across all public service pension schemes. The cost cap mechanism for the 2016 valuation has since been un-paused and the calculations complete, with the outcome being no changes to benefits or contributions.

The McCloud remedy window ran from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022. Eligible members will be able to elect which scheme they wish to receive benefits from for this period. Due to the differing benefits structures we expect the majority of eligible members to elect to take legacy scheme (1992 or 2006) benefits for the remedy period.

An allowance for McCLoud remedy was first included in the 2018/19 disclosures as a past service cost for four years remedy service from 2015-2019. This past service cost was attributed proportionally to the 1992 and 2006 schemes. For subsequent years to 2021/22 an allowance was made in the 2015 service costs for the annual accrual of additional remedy service.

Now that the remedy window is closed we have moved all McCloud related liabilities for eligible members for the period 2019 to 2022 to the associated legacy schemes. This means All McCloud liability are held within the legacy scheme we expect benefits to be paid from. This has led to a past service cost of £9m added to the 1992 Scheme, £2m to the 2006 Scheme. As these liabilities are no longer held within the 2015 Scheme we have a past service gain of £11m.

THE AUTHORITY'S ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

The underlying assets and liabilities of the Authority are as follows:

2022/23	LGPS £'000	FF'92 £'000	FF'06 £'000	FF'15 £'000	FF'CS £'000	TOTAL £'000
Scheme liabilities	42,318	309,250	26,830	15,850	12,290	406,538
Unfunded liabilities	1,208	0	0	0	0	1,208
Total Liabilities	**43,526**	**309,250**	**26,830**	**15,850**	**12,290**	**407,746**
Estimated assets	49,507	0	0	0	0	49,507
Net liabilities	**(5,981)**	**309,250**	**26,830**	**15,850**	**12,290**	**358,239**

2021/22	LGPS £'000	FF'92 £'000	FF'06 £'000	FF'15 £'000	FF'CS £'000	TOTAL £'000
Scheme liabilities	60,311	393,767	41,269	49,403	15,861	560,611
Unfunded liabilities	1,535	0	0	0	0	1,535
Total Liabilities	**61,846**	**393,767**	**41,269**	**49,403**	**15,861**	**562,146**
Estimated assets	51,241	0	0	0	0	51,241
Net liabilities	**10,605**	**393,767**	**41,269**	**49,403**	**15,861**	**510,905**

The liability shows the underlying commitments the Authority has to pay as retirement benefits.

The total liability of £358m reduces the Authority's net worth significantly as shown in the Balance Sheet and results in overall negative balance of £279.7m at 31 March 2023. The Government top up grant required to balance to the Pension Fund Account of £8.6m has not been included in the net liabilities above or in the Balance Sheet.

However, a statutory arrangement for funding the deficit means the financial position of the Authority remains healthy. The LGPS deficit will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme's actuary.

BASIS FOR ESTIMATING ASSETS

The LGPS Scheme's liabilities have been valued by Hymans Robertson, an independent and professionally qualified firm of actuaries. The Unfunded Scheme's liabilities have been re-valued using the Projected Unit Method by the Government's Actuary Department.

An estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years is dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels and other financial assumptions, see below:

2022/23	LGPS	FF'92	FF'06	FF'15	FF'CS
Mortality:					
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:					
- Men	20.5	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2
- Woman	24.2	21.2	21.2	21.2	21.2
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:					
- Men	21.7	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9
- Woman	25.9	22.9	22.9	22.9	22.9
Financial assumptions:					
Price Increases (CPI)	2.95%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%
Salary Increases	3.45%	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%	3.85%
Pension Increases	2.95%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%	2.60%
Discount Rate	4.75%	4.65%	4.65%	4.65%	4.65%

2021/22	LGPS	FF'92	FF'06	FF'15	FF'CS
Mortality:					
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners:					
- Men	21.2	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5
- Woman	23.8	21.5	21.5	21.5	21.5
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners:					
- Men	22.2	23.2	23.2	23.2	23.2
- Woman	25.5	23.2	23.2	23.2	23.2
Financial assumptions:					
Price Increases (CPI)	3.20%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Salary Increases	3.60%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
Pension Increases	3.20%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%
Discount Rate	2.70%	2.65%	2.65%	2.65%	2.65%

For the LGPS an allowance is included for future retirements to elect to take 50% of the maximum additional tax-free cash up to HMRC limits for pre-April 2008 service and 75% of the maximum tax-free cash for post-April 2008 service.

Scheme Profile and funding liability split:

LGPS:	Active members	Deferred members	Pensioner members
Number	154	212	180
Total Salaries in membership data (pa) (£m)	3,938	517	1,195
Average Age	50	51	67

The membership data summarised in the table above is as at the most recent funding valuation date of 31st March 2022. Salaries are actual, not full-time equivalent. Deferred pensioners include undecided leavers and frozen refunds. Pensioners include dependants.

Fire Fighter Pension:	Active members	Deferred members	Pensioner members
Number	576	653	781
Total Salaries in membership data (pa) (£m)	12.72		
Total deferred pension (pa) (£m)		0.71	
Total pension (pa) (£m)			11.64

The principal membership data used for the statement is dated 31 March 2020

LGPS:	Active members	Deferred members	Pensioner members	
Liability split (£000)	11,440	9,250	21,628	42,318
Liability split (%)	27.0%	21.9%	51.1%	100%

As at 31 March 2023

Sensitivity analysis:

The estimation of the defined benefit liability is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table previously shown. The sensitivity analyses have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes whilst all the other assumptions remain constant. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis did not change from those used in previous period.

The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used to measure the scheme liabilities are set out below:

	FF'92		FF'06		FF'15		Compensation Scheme	
Change in assumptions at 31 March 2023	Approx. % increase to Employer Liability %	Approx. monetary amount £m	Approx. % increase to Employer Liability %	Approx. monetary amount £m	Approx. % increase to Employer Liability %	Approx. monetary amount £m	Approx. % increase to Employer Liability %	Approx. monetary amount £m
0.5% decrease in Real Discount Rate	6.5%	20.0	19.0%	3.0	12.5%	2.0	5.0%	1.0
Life expectancy, pensioners assumed to be one year younger	2.5%	8.0	4.5%	-	2.0%	-	4.0%	-
0.5% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0.5%	1.0	4.5%	1.0	5.5%	1.0	0.0%	-
0.5% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	6.5%	20.0	16.5%	3.0	9.5%	1.0	5.0%	1.0

	LGPS	
Change in assumptions at 31 March 2023	Approx. % increase to Employer Liability %	Approx. monetary amount £m
0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate	2.0%	0.77
Life expectancy, pensioners assumed to be one year younger	4.0%	1.74
0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate	0.0%	0.06
0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate	2.0%	0.72

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

Year Ended:	31-Mar-22	31-Mar-23
	£'000	£'000
Opening Defined Benefit Obligation	**64,271**	**61,846**
Current Service Cost	2,124	1,975
Interest Cost	1,296	1,681
Contributions by scheme participants	257	271
Remeasurement gains and losses	(4,839)	(20,917)
Losses on Curtailments	11	0
Effect of settlements	0	0
Estimated Unfunded Benefits Paid	(61)	(62)
Estimated Benefits Paid	(1,213)	(1,268)
Closing Defined Benefits Obligation	**61,846**	**43,526**
Opening Fair Value of Employer Assets	**45,948**	**51,241**
Interest income on plan assets	916	1,379
Contributions by scheme participants	257	271
Contributions by the employer	685	703
Contributions in respect of Unfunded Benefits	61	62
Effect of settlements	0	0
Remeasurement gains and losses	4,648	(2,819)
Unfunded Benefits Paid	(61)	(62)
Benefits Paid	(1,213)	(1,268)
Closing Fair Value of Employer Assets	**51,241**	**49,507**
	(10,605)	**5,981**

The closing defined benefit obligations of £43.5m includes unfunded obligations of £1.2m. The present value of funded obligations comprises of approximately £11.44m, £9.25m and £21.63m in respect of employee members, deferred pensioners and pensioners respectively as at 31 March 2023.

The movement in the net pension's deficit for the LGPS for the year can be analysed as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23
	£'000	£'000
Net (deficit) at the beginning of year	**(18,323)**	**(10,605)**
Movement in the year:		
Current service cost	(2,124)	(1,975)
Contributions by the employer	685	703
Net return on assets (after Interest on pension liabilities)	(380)	(302)
Past Service Costs	0	0
Impact of settlements and curtailments	(11)	0
Unfunded Benefits	61	62
Actuarial gains/(loss)	9,487	18,098
Change in valuation of pension fund assets		
Net (deficit) at the end of year	**(10,605)**	**5,981**
The actuarial gain/loss can be analysed as follows:		
- Return on plan assets, excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability	4,648	(2,245)
- changes in demographic assumptions	321	183
- changes in financial assumptions	4,635	23,003
- other experience	(117)	(2,843)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	**9,487**	**18,098**

Further information can be found in the Staffordshire County Council Superannuation Fund Annual Report, which is available upon request from the County's Finance Directorate, Eastgate Street, Stafford.

Fair value of employers' assets:

Asset Category	Period Ended 31 March 2022 Quoted prices in active markets £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2022 Quoted prices not in active markets £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2022 Total £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2022 Percentage of Total Assets	Period Ended 31 March 2023 Quoted prices in active markets £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2023 Quoted prices not in active markets £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2023 Total £'000	Period Ended 31 March 2023 Percentage of Total Assets
Equity Securities:								
Consumer	1,725.1	-	1,725.1	3%	1,666.7	-	1,666.7	3%
Manufacturing	1,407.8	-	1,407.8	3%	1,360.2	-	1,360.2	3%
Energy and Utilities	386.7	-	386.7	1%	373.6	-	373.6	1%
Financial Institutions	1,836.2	-	1,836.2	4%	1,774.1	-	1,774.1	4%
Health and Care	1,939.0	-	1,939.0	4%	1,873.4	-	1,873.4	4%
Information Technology	2,230.0	-	2,230.0	4%	2,154.5	-	2,154.5	4%
Other	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Debt Securities:								
Corporate bonds (investment grade)	3,010.2	-	3,010.2	6%	2,908.3	-	2,908.3	6%
Corporate bonds (non-investment grade)	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
UK government	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Other	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Private Equity:								
All	-	2,538.9	2,538.9	5%	-	2,453.0	2,453.0	5%
Real Estate:								
UK Property	-	4,103.5	4,103.5	8%	-	3,964.5	3,964.5	8%
Overseas Property	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Investment funds and Unit Trusts:								
Equities	24,341.5	-	24,341.5	48%	23,517.7	-	23,517.7	48%
Bonds	3,206.9	-	3,206.9	6%	3,098.4	-	3,098.4	6%
Hedge Funds	-	18.8	18.8	0%	-	18.2	18.2	0%
Commodities	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Infrastructure	-	136.5	136.5	0%	-	131.9	131.9	0%
Other	-	2,351.5	2,351.5	5%	-	2,272.0	2,272.0	5%
Derivatives:								
Inflation	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Interest Rate	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Foreign Exchange	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Other	-	-	-	0%	-	-	-	0%
Cash and Cash Equivalents:								
All	2,008.4	-	2,008.4	4%	1,940.5	-	1,940.5	4%
Total	**42,092**	**9,149**	**51,241**	**100%**	**40,667**	**8,840**	**49,507**	**100%**

FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEMES

The movement in the net pension's deficit for the Unfunded Firefighters' Schemes for the year can be analysed as follows:

2022/23	FF'92 £'000	FF'06 £'000	FF'15 £'000	FF'CS £'000	TOTAL £'000
Net deficit - start of year	**(393,767)**	**(41,269)**	**(49,403)**	**(15,861)**	**(500,300)**
Movement in the year:					0
Current service cost	0	60	(6,930)	(180)	(7,050)
Contributions by scheme participants	0	(60)	(1,970)	0	(2,030)
Past service cost	(9,270)	(1,610)	10,880	0	0
Pension transfers-in	0	0	(40)	0	(40)
Pension/benefits paid	12,600	340	2,080	1,000	16,020
Interest on pension liabilities	(10,390)	(1,110)	(1,260)	(410)	(13,170)
Actuarial gains/(loss)	91,580	16,820	30,780	3,160	142,340
Net deficit - end of year	**(309,247)**	**(26,829)**	**(15,863)**	**(12,291)**	**(364,230)**
The actuarial gain/loss can be analysed as follows:					
changes in demographic assumptions	6,900	1,610	5,060	280	13,850
changes in financial assumptions	110,560	17,010	26,190	3,520	157,280
experience gains and losses	(25,880)	(1,800)	(470)	(640)	(28,790)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	**91,580**	**16,820**	**30,780**	**3,160**	**142,340**

2021/22	FF'92 £'000	FF'06 £'000	FF'15 £'000	FF'CS £'000	TOTAL £'000
Net deficit - start of year	**(402,217)**	**(42,089)**	**(36,233)**	**(16,621)**	**(497,160)**
Movement in the year:					0
Current service cost	(100)	(70)	(9,010)	(220)	(9,400)
Contributions by scheme participants	(70)	(110)	(1,720)		(1,900)
Past service cost	0	0	0		0
Pension transfers-in	0	0	(190)		(190)
Pension/benefits paid	13,800	400	1,660	1,030	16,890
Interest on pension liabilities	(7,910)	(840)	(820)	(320)	(9,890)
Actuarial gains/(loss)	2,730	1,440	(3,090)	270	1,350
Net deficit - end of year	**(393,767)**	**(41,269)**	**(49,403)**	**(15,861)**	**(500,300)**
The actuarial gain/loss can be analysed as follows:					
changes in demographic assumptions	0	0	0	0	0
changes in financial assumptions	4,180	670	920	140	5,910
experience gains and losses	(1,450)	770	(4,010)	130	(4,560)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	**2,730**	**1,440**	**(3,090)**	**270**	**1,350**

Firefighters' Pension Fund Account

2021/22 £'000		2022/23 £'000	2022/23 £'000
	Contributions receivable		
	From employer		
(4,070)	- normal	(4,125)	
(105)	- Ill health	(150)	
(4,175)			(4,275)
(1,905)	From members		(2,032)
	Transfers in		
(187)	- individual transfers in from other schemes	(45)	
(187)			(45)
	Benefits payable		
12,506	- pensions	13,033	
3,349	- commutations and lump sum retirement benefits	1,985	
0	- other benefits payable	0	
15,855			15,018
	Payments to and on account of leavers		
0	- individual transfers out to other schemes	6	
0			6
9,588	**Net amount payable for the year before top-up grant receivable to sponsoring department**		**8,672**
(9,588)	Top-up grant payable by the Government		(8,672)
0	**Fund Account Balance**		**0**

2021/22 £'000		2022/23 £'000
	Net Current Assets and Liabilities	
(6,971)	Top-up grant received	(6,768)
9,588	Pension costs for the year	8,672
(2,617)	Amount owing (to) General Fund	(1,904)
0		**0**

Statement of Accounting Policies for Firefighters' Pension Fund

1. The fund accounts have been prepared on an accruals basis.

2. An exception to the accruals basis is the transfer values which are on a cash basis. Note: transfer payments between English fire authorities were repealed by Regulation 36 of 1810/2006. Therefore, transfer payments which arise will relate to Firefighters transferring to/from Welsh and Scottish authorities or transferring out of the Firefighters Pension Scheme entirely.

3. The fund has been valued by the Government Actuary's Department using the Projected Unit Credit method. The actuarial assumptions are shown in Note 45 to the Core Financial Statements.

4. The pension fund accounts do not take account of the obligation to pay pensions and benefits which fall due after the end of the financial year.

Notes to the Pension Fund Account

1. Legal Status of the Pension Fund

The Pension Fund was established under the Firefighters Pension Fund Regulations 2006 (SI1810/2006) and from 1st July 2018 the Firefighters Pension Fund has been administered by the West Yorkshire Pension Fund, previously administered by Staffordshire County Council.

2. Management of the Fund

During the year the pension fund is managed by the Director of Finance (Staffordshire Commissioner's Office) / Section 151 Officer.

3. Pension Benefits Payable from the Fund

The pension benefits payable from the fund include:

- Fire Fighters 1992 Scheme
- Fire Fighters 2006 Scheme
- Fire Fighters 2015 Scheme
- Fire Fighters Modified Scheme

The injury benefits are payable from the main authority accounts rather than the pension fund.

4. Unfunded Scheme

The Firefighters' pension scheme is an unfunded scheme, consequently:

- the fund has no investment assets;
- benefits payable are funded by contributions from employers and employees;
- any difference between benefits payable and contributions receivable is met by top-up grant from the Home Office.

5. Statutory Restrictions

The pension fund is statutorily prevented from including interest on cashflows and administration expenses in the pension fund and that these expenses are borne by the fire authority main accounts.

6. Pension Fund Scheme Contribution Levels

Employees and employers contribution levels are set nationally by the Home Office and subject to triennial revaluation by the Government Actuary's Department.

7. Government 'Top-Up' Grant

The pension fund account receives contributions from the Authority, as the employer, and from scheme members, with any deficit being funded by a 'top-up' grant from Government or by paying over the surplus to the Government sponsoring department. The Government grant balances the fund to nil. The net assets statement
shows £8.6m grant to be paid to the Authority as this is the deficit balance on the fund for 2022/23 costs.

8. IFRS

As a result of the introduction of The IFRS Code there are no material changes to the pension statements arising from the transition.

Glossary

Accrual
A sum included in the final accounts to cover income or expenditure attributable to an accounting period for goods or work done, but for which payment has not been received/made by the end of an accounting period.

Actuarial Strain
This is a charge paid, or due to be paid to the pension fund for paying pensions early.

Capital Charge
A charge to service expenditure accounts to reflect the cost of fixed assets used in the provision of services.

Capital Expenditure
Expenditure on the acquisition of significant fixed assets that will be of use or benefit to the authority in providing its services beyond the year of account.

Capital Adjustment Account
Provides a balancing mechanism between the different rates at which assets are depreciated under accounting rules and are financed through the capital controls system.

Capital Receipts
Proceeds from the sale of an asset e.g. Land and Buildings which may be used to finance new capital expenditure or to repay outstanding loan debt as laid down within regulations set by Central Government.

CIPFA
The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. This is the professional organisation for accountants working in the public service.

Contingent Liabilities
A potential liability at the balance sheet date when the accounts are submitted for approval the outcome of which is uncertain. If material the liability will be disclosed as a note to the accounts.

Deferred Charges
An item in a balance sheet where there is no tangible asset. It also represents outstanding borrowing in respect of a capital asset which has been disposed of but where the proceeds have been insufficient to clear the outstanding debt.

Deferred Liabilities
Liabilities which by arrangement are payable beyond the next year at some point in the future or paid off by an annual sum over a period of time.

Financial Regulations
A written code of procedures we have approved, aimed at providing a framework for sound financial management.

IAS
International Accounting Standards

IFRIC
International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee

IFRS
International Financial Reporting Standards

Impairment
Where an asset's value has been reduced for reasons other than normal wear and tear. The asset's value in the accounts has to be reduced to reflect this impairment.

Leasing
A method of financing capital expenditure where a rental charge is paid for a specified period of time. There are two main types of leasing arrangements:

a) Finances leases which transfer the risks and rewards of ownership of a fixed asset to the lessee and such assets are included within the fixed assets in the balance sheet.

b) Operating leases where the ownership of the asset remains with the leasing company and the annual rental is charged direct to the income and expenditure account

Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO)
A longer term loan which, at set points during its term, gives the lender the option to change the interest rate and the borrower the option to continue or end the agreement.

Minimum Revenue Provision – Prudent Level
The minimum amount which must be charged to the revenue account each year to set aside for provision for credit liabilities, previously 4% of the capital financing requirement.

Non-Current Assets
Assets that give us value for more than one year.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)
A government agency which provides longer term loans to local authorities, at interest rates below market rate. It also acts as a lender of last resort (at a higher rate of interest).

'Prudent' Level
In this instance the term relates to amount charged to the Income and Expenditure Account for the provision for the repayment of debt. This is a more cautious approach thus linking borrowing to asset lives rather than just the standard 4% charge in previous years regardless of asset life.

Revaluation Reserve
Records unrealised revaluation gains arising (since 1 April 2007) from holding fixed assets.

Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay / Direct Revenue Financing (RCCO) / (DRF)
A contribution to the financing of capital expenditure by a charge to the income and expenditure account, i.e. as a source of capital expenditure funding also can be used to avoid borrowing.

Virement
The transfer of resources between budget heads.

Work in Progress
The cost of work done on an uncompleted project at a specified date that has not been recharged to the appropriate account at that date.

Draft Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

Contents

Glossary

AGS	Annual Governance Statement	**HMICFRS**	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services
CFO	Chief Fire Officer of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue	**PFCP**	Police, Fire and Crime Panel
ETAP*	Ethics Transparency & Audit Panel	**PSIAS**	Public Sector Internal Audit Standards
FARS	Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Services	**SCO**	Staffordshire Commissioners Office
SC	Staffordshire Commissioner	**NFCC**	National Fire Chiefs Council
SCFRA	Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority		

* These functions are made up of members of the public

1. Introduction

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner
Police, Fire & Rescue, Crime

As the Police, Fire & Rescue and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire I have the duty to ensure that we have robust Corporate Governance arrangements in place.

To comply with this duty my office is delegated the responsibility for the preparation and delivery of two Corporate Governance Frameworks, one relating to Staffordshire Police and the other relating to Staffordshire Fire & Rescue.

This Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides the public of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent an overview of how I have ensured compliance with the published Corporate Governance Frameworks for the year ending 31st March 2023.

My office, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service all have a strong commitment in obtaining the best possible value for money and with the recent financial crisis, I realise it is immensely important for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent residents to see we are doing this. I am assured that the services and functions within them have completed financial challenge sessions and that we have procurement processes in place to support our commitment.

The Staffordshire Commissioner first became responsible for the governance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, in addition to the existing role overseeing Staffordshire Police, from August 1, 2018. Whilst the Staffordshire Commissioner has responsibility for the governance of both Police and Fire, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service remain separate organisations with separate budgets, staff and governance processes.

As Commissioner it is my responsibility for delivering the strategic vision and holding the Chief Fire Officer to account in delivering that vision. It is important that I have oversight and apply scrutiny and in turn the Police, Fire and Crime Panel scrutinises publicly my decisions – an important check and balance in the system.

In order to support effective decision making and to drive continuous improvement across Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, as Commissioner a number of boards have been established. These boards provide the required support and ensure that proper guidance, support and advice from the right people is available when important decisions need to be made.

Public Performance meetings are also held during the year which provides important scrutiny of the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service and its most senior officers'. These meetings can be attended by members of the public in person and are also made available to listen to via a podcast.

As required within his statute, the strategic vision, priorities and objectives are published within the Fire and Rescue Plan which sets out the basis on which the Service is held to account.

In January 2022 my Police and Crime Plan and Fire and Rescue Plan were published and are accessible via this link:

Reports - Staffordshire Commissioner (staffordshire-pfcc.gov.uk)

Ben Adams
Staffordshire Commissioner: Police, Fire & Rescue, Crime.

2. Scope of Responsibility

The Staffordshire Commissioner is responsible for ensuring that business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Staffordshire Commissioner has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the functions of the Authority are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging these overall responsibilities, the Commissioner is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Authority has approved and adopted the Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. Copies of the Code can be obtained from the Monitoring Officer and Chief Executive for the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office.

This statement explains how the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has complied with The Code and meets the requirements of Regulation 6(1)(a) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 that requires the Staffordshire Commissioner to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include a statement reporting on the review with any published statement of accounts. Regulation 6(1)(b) requires that the statement is an Annual Governance Statement.

3. Implementation

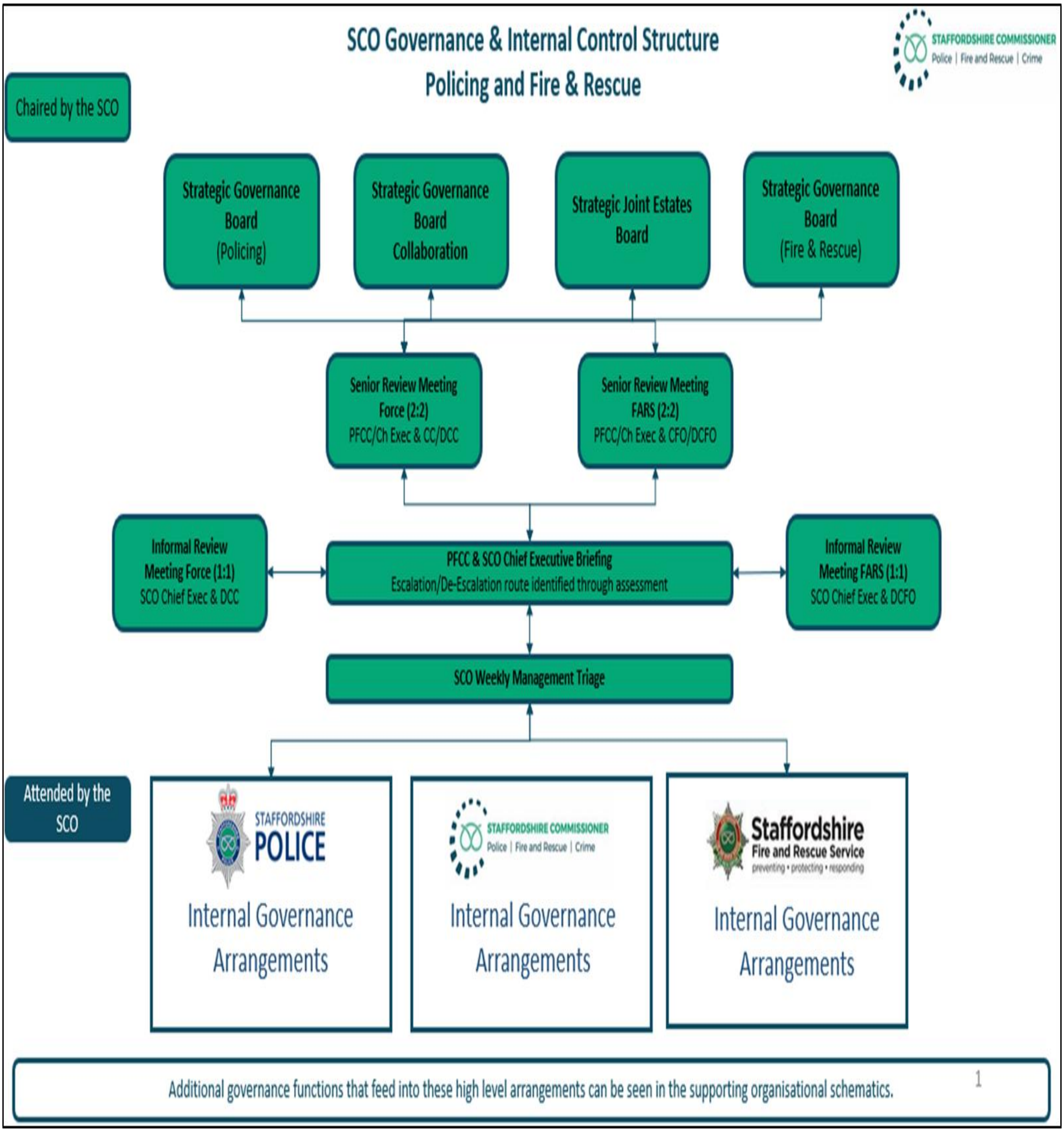
The Governance Framework comprises of the systems and processes, culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives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

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the potential risks to the achievement of the Authority’s policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Corporate Governance Framework has been in place at Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31st March 2023 and up to the date of approval of the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

A new Corporate Governance Framework was introduced on 1 August 2018 following the change in governance arrangements. The key elements of the Governance Framework are as follows:



Framework

The framework for Governance of the Fire and Rescue Authority is embodied in various statutes, standing orders, financial regulations and scheme of delegation. These are regularly reviewed and induction and training is provided where appropriate. Terms of

Reference are in place for Authority meetings which are reviewed annually by the Strategic Governance Board.

There are a range of policies including anti-fraud and corruption, anti-money laundering and a confidential reporting code (whistle-blowing) which are all reviewed and updated as appropriate.

A robust process for risk management and business continuity is in place across the Service with strategic risks that are linked into corporate objectives. These processes are regularly tested and reviewed.

The Statement of Assurance for 2021/22 has also been published, a document that supports and sets out the financial, governance and response arrangements that the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority had in place for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. It was written in accordance with the guidance published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England.

The Staffordshire Commissioner has well established methods of communication in place with various stakeholders ensuring that key messages are received by both staff and the communities that we serve.

Contained within the Governance Frameworks is the Code of Corporate Governance which sets out 7 principles of good governance which are taken from the international framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector (CIPFA/IFAC, 2014), with the aim of encouraging better service delivery, improved accountability ensuring that organisations achieve their intended outcomes whilst operating in the public interest at all times.

The 7 principles are as follows:

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

B Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

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

D Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

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

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

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

This AGS will address each one of the seven principles, demonstrating areas of consistent compliance and additional work undertaken in the last year by the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue.

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

The Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority is compliant with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. A Service Level Agreement has been put in place between the Authority and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office as the Director of Finance performs the Statutory Role for the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner in addition to the Fire and Rescue Authority.

In accordance with CIPFA guidance, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is:-

- a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the authority's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest;
- is actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the authority's financial strategy;
- leading on the promotion and delivery by the whole authority of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively.

The finance function for the Authority is provided through a shared service arrangement with Staffordshire Police and includes both the Deputy Chief Finance Officer and Deputy S151 Officer and also a dedicated Management Accountant. These two posts are both undertaken by highly competent and professionally qualified individuals.

The SCO Chief Executive is the designated Monitoring Officer as well as the 'Head of Paid Service' for the purposes of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The 'Head of Paid Service' aspect of the Chief Executive means taking responsibility for the coordination and discharge of the SC's functions and managing the SCO and the staff within it. This also includes the role of Monitoring Officer for the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Fire Service locally and nationally through the National Fire Chiefs' Council has adopted the Core Code of Ethics which consists of five ethical principles. The code, which is closely aligned to the Service's original Cultural Framework and its values, reflects best practice principles and has been designed to underpin the commitment to serving the communities of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent. The five ethical principles are as follows:

Putting our communities first – the Service put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity – the Service 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 – for all staff to be 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) – to 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.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carries out its own independent inspections of all 44 Fire and Rescue Services in England in addition to carrying out all national policing assessments. The inspection assesses how effectively and efficiently Fire and Rescue Services' prevents, protects the public against and responds to fires and other emergencies. They also assess how well the Service looks after its people.

These inspections focus upon three key themes:

1. Effectiveness (how effective we are at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks).
2. Efficiency (how efficient we are at keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks).
3. People (how well we look after our people).

The Service was inspected in the Autumn of 2021 with the inspection report released in July 2022. The Service was rated as good for effectiveness, requires improvement for efficiency, and requires improvement for people.

The inspection noted how the Service has responded positively and proactively to learning from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and have improved the safety of residents in Staffordshire who live in high-rise buildings through our sprinkler scheme. A 'Good' in how for how we make the Service affordable now and in the future was also included. The Service continuously looks for ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency and in doing so embrace the best use of new technologies to transform the services provided. The inspectors rated the Service 'Good' at getting the right people with the right skills, managing performance and developing leaders as well as looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of its staff.

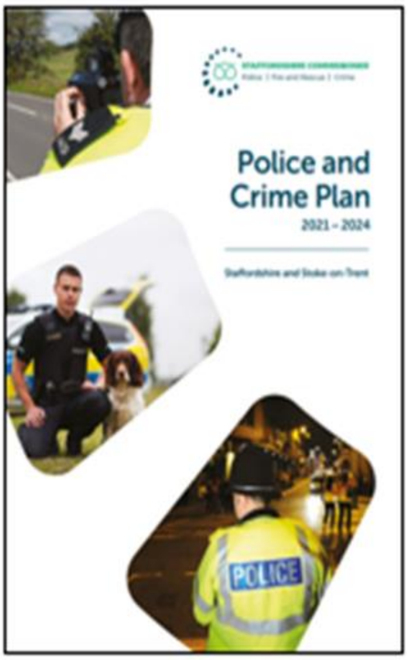
However, there were a number of areas in which the Service rated as 'Requires Improvement'. These included: protecting the public through fire regulation, responding to fire and other emergencies, making the best use of resources, promoting the right values and culture, and ensuring fairness and promoting diversity.

HMICFRS recognised that following their inspection carried out in 2021 there were 20 areas for improvement identified by the Inspectorate and good progress being made by the Service. The next inspection is scheduled for Autumn 2023.

B Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

As the elected representative of the public the SC has made a commitment for policing and crime and Fire and Rescue clear in the election manifesto and embedded this with development and publication of a Police and Crime Plan 2021-24. In addition, the SC through responsibility for the governance of Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service has developed and published a Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24.

STAFFORDSHIRE COMMISSIONER
Police | Fire and Rescue | Crime



The SCFRA and FARS is committed to ensuring openness, transparency and accountability and can be demonstrated by: -

- The FARS have signed up to a published Core Code of Ethics which is underpinned by the Nolan Principles of public life;
- Corporate Safety Plan (FARS) and other published documents, including the Annual Report, the budget report, the statement of accounts;
- Information provided through the FARS website, social media and other routes that provide local people with relevant information on performance and outcomes and the SCs intentions;
- Appropriate use of the press and media by FARS;
- The live webcasts of the Public Performance Meetings and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel Meetings;

- Decision forms relating to significant public interest, made available online for public scrutiny;
- Information available on the FARS website as part of the Publication Scheme
- Publication of information on remuneration and expenses;
- The establishment of a number of forums independent of the SC, comprised of members of the public, in particular ETAP. The panel scrutinise a number of areas within the SCO, the Force and FARS;
- ETAP hold regular public meetings, meeting papers and minutes are published on the SCO website;

The commitment to stakeholder involvement is demonstrated by: -

- Consultation and engagement activity through FARS
- Reports to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel and attendance at other democratically led forums;
- The establishment of a number of forums independent of FARS including ETAP.
- Working closely with a wide range of partners; local authorities, Criminal Justice agencies, NHS bodies, private and voluntary sector organisations etc.;
- Utilising a number of channels of communications for the public and other stakeholders. FARS engages with various groups, organisations and people throughout the year, updating them on the work of the Service, hearing their questions and views and providing answers that meet their needs.

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

The strategic priorities are set out in the SCFRA Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-24 and within the Service's Corporate Safety Plan. These documents underpin the overarching ambitions for delivering positive and sustainable economic, social and environmental outcomes for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The SC has an established office that works beyond governance and scrutiny to ensure that there is a longer term strategic direction around all aspects of policing, fire and community safety and that when put into practical terms enables or influences delivery against the priorities.

Each of the priorities are reflected within the SC's performance arrangements which inform how effectively the outcomes are being delivered. The SC can then hold to account Chief Officers for that performance. There are three levels of accountability which each include multiple functions for obtaining information on desired outcomes that are linked to the priorities, these being:

Public Accountability
Ensures that the SC demonstrates the primary role of holding the Chief Officers to account and ensuring value for money whilst meeting the priorities and needs of the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Examples of this function would be the regular Public Performance Meetings, ETAP Meetings and Thematic Reviews, SNP Meetings and Scrutiny Reports and the performance information available on the SC's and FARS websites.

SCO Level Accountability
Examination of key activity at a strategic level allowing the SC to take a detailed, searching approach with consideration of all relevant issues. Examples of this function would be the, various joint management meetings and boards, and SC & Chief Officer's informal and formal review meetings.

Operational Level Accountability
Generates a detailed understanding of operational areas where there are matters of concern affecting the effective and efficient operation FARS or partner agencies. Examples of this function would be operational working groups, ETAP dip sampling and multi-agency workgroups.

All parties are committed to continuous improvement in managing performance as demonstrated by the commitment to have agreed Performance & Accountability Framework's in place.

FARS and the SC are committed to improving outcomes for the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent through partnership working with other agencies who are responsible for economic, social and environmental benefits. To ensure this happens the SC has strategic overview and regular operational updates on the delivery plans owned by each team within the SCO.

Through the Local Business Case for Joint Governance of the Police Service and Fire and Rescue Service in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in the last year, there have been new collaborations between the fire and rescue service and police service which has already seen buildings shared in Hanley, Tamworth and Chase Terrace as well as some support and administration services. The aim being to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness in both services for the people of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This has helped to make sure that more of the money available can be spent by both services on the frontline keeping people and communities safer.

The SC's commitment to protecting frontline resources requires that budgets are managed effectively and are sustainable in the medium to long term. Financial reports including the Medium Term Financial Strategies are presented to both ETAP and the Police, Fire and Crime Panel in addition to the Strategic Governance Board. These link to the delivery of the Fire and Rescue Plan: and the Corporate Safety Plan 2020 - 2024 for which progress is also reported to the panel.

The formal decision making process for expenditure and changes to programmes, policies and procedures requires that an Equality Impact Assessment is completed as part of the process. This assesses the impact of any changes that may affect staff, stakeholders and the public.

D	Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

As required by the government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, every fire and rescue service must produce a high-level Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which explains how they use their resources to respond to and reduce the risks they have identified in their local area.

The Authority has consolidated the IRMP and the Strategic Plan into one document called the Corporate Safety Plan that has established our Corporate Aims and Objectives for the four years to 2024. This new and updated Plan was approved by the Commissioner during the year and sets out the objectives and strategic priorities of the Authority based on extensive consultation with all stakeholders.

This Safety Plan sets out the priorities, which support our vision of making Staffordshire 'the safest place to be' and are driven by our assessment of the risks across the county. Ensuring that our communities are protected by a first-class fire and rescue service is at the heart of everything that we do. We recognise that delivering these priorities will depend on collaboration, co-operation and effective communication.

The Staffordshire Commissioner's Office has developed and published a Fire and Rescue Plan that sits alongside the Corporate Safety Plan and has been actively involved in the development of the updated Corporate Safety Plan document.

Whilst the current Corporate Safety Plan is in place until 2024, the Service are reviewing and updating the existing document and will be updating relevant sections.

Monitoring Arrangements

There are formal arrangements in place to monitor against outcomes associated with decision making, performance and financial management across the SCO Police and Fire & Rescue services. Monitoring methods and frequencies are contained within the relevant Performance Management Frameworks and meetings are held separately for each service to enable detailed scrutiny and challenge where exceptions occur. Where the response to agreed actions does not deliver expected outcomes, escalation to the Strategic Governance Board allows for robust challenge and necessary interventions by the Commissioner.

Collaboration

A Strategic Governance Board for Collaboration and the Strategic Joint Estates Board oversee progress in developing collaborative arrangements and shared facilities between the two services to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

Shared sites are currently in place at Hanley, Tamworth Belgrave, Chase Terrace with stations at Stone, Kidsgrove, Uttoxeter and Kinver all currently being considered as part of the joint estates strategy. Sharing of sites has already delivered significant recurring revenue savings for both Police and Fire as well as capital receipts generated through the disposal of older Police buildings.

Community use also remain an important part of the offer at a number of Fire Stations where community groups meet and receive fire safety advice. This is in addition to recent support for the NHS where stations have been utilised to support the Covid vaccination programme.

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

Officers within the FARS have access to continuous professional development through the support mechanisms that are available at a national level (NFCC). In addition, regular seminars are available that provide for more specific development needs. All staff have access to learning and development opportunities supported by line management and team meetings.

The Service has proudly supported the launch of the national Core Code of Ethics, which has been formally adopted across the Fire and Rescue sector. The code, which is closely aligned to the existing Cultural Framework and its values, reflects best practice principles and has been designed to underpin the way the Service serves our communities and carries out its role and supports all parties to work together.

Anecdotal evidence has shown that where a service has an established ethical framework, and where these are well embedded, the culture has improved compared with those services that do not have such a framework.

A number of Culture Sessions, where the Core Code of Ethics will be discussed have been held during the year and Zero Tolerance Statement has been developed and shared with all staff. These sessions have all been open and honest with the Chief Fire Officer meeting with any staff who have had either positive or negative experiences working for the Service and wished to discuss these experiences with the senior executive team.

The Code of Ethics is easy to understand and is broken down into five ethical principles.

The five Fire and Rescue Service ethical principles:

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.

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

A well-established and robust performance management system is in place internally throughout the Fire and Rescue Service with regular performance monitoring being carried out by Principal Management and reported through to the Service Delivery Board and Strategic Governance Board.

A detailed Finance Report is published internally on a monthly basis and incorporates all of the key information expected as part of a professional, commercially focused, set of Management Accounts; including revenue and capital spend and a cash flow management with performance comparison to budget. The Resource Control Report closely monitors the performance of the Authority and achievement of actual savings realised against targets. The Finance Report continues to be developed to ensure that it contains clear, relevant and timely information at all times.

The review of the effectiveness of internal control is informed by the work of Principal Managers who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment, as well as the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit and Managers who have day to day responsibility for ensuring the Governance Framework is functioning properly. Additional comments are made by external audit, internal audit and the Ethics Transparency and Audit Panel and other review agencies and of course HMICFRA.

The Service Delivery Board, the Service Management Board, and the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office have maintained their governance by setting the budget for 2022/23 and approving the Medium Term Financial Strategy and also both the Capital and Reserve Strategies. During the financial year they have received, reviewed and scrutinised reports. Performance delivery and budget management have been kept under regular review and where appropriate remedial action and resource reallocation has been instigated.

Detailed financial reports are presented to, and scrutinised by the Strategic Governance Board on a quarterly basis. The reports include full details of performance against budget for the key reporting areas namely; revenue, capital, cash and delivery of efficiencies and savings.

Under the governance arrangements the Audit Committee arrangements are undertaken by the Ethics, Transparency and Audit Panel (ETAP), which also has a separate Finance Panel that receives bi monthly finance and audit reports from both internal and external audit. The Finance Panel includes a number qualified accountants who are able to provide detailed scrutiny to the monthly Resource Control Report, Internal and External Audit Reports and also the Annual Statement of Accounts.

There is a robust process in place within the Service in order to ensure that strategic risks are reviewed on a quarterly basis ensuring that the level of risk exposure is monitored regularly against a rapidly changing environment. It includes those risks that could have significant impact on the Services' ability to deliver services and objectives.

A Strategic Risk report is presented to the Service Delivery Board to review and approve the current Strategic Risk Register, to provide organisational assurance that the Service's current risk exposure is being managed and suitable controls and mitigations are in place.

This report is also considered by the Commissioner at the Strategic Governance Board as part of the robust governance process.

The strategic risks and associated action plans identified within the Strategic Risk Register are reviewed as part of this process taking into consideration changes to the operating environment, political and funding constraints and local and national intelligence. The Service is a Category 1 responder as designated by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and has a statutory duty to support a multi-agency response to any ‘malicious risks’ within Staffordshire. The Strategic Risk report provides assurance that risks are considered that are not only faced internally but those that could have an impact on the ability to provide a multi agency response and duties under both the Civil Contingency Act 2004 and the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

As part of its corporate planning the Authority sets out the key performance indicators both quantitative and qualitative that measure the delivery of its strategic objectives. Achievements against these key performance indicators are reported regularly to the Service Delivery Board.

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

RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP were appointed to undertake the internal audit work for the year 2022/23 with RSM undertaking the internal audit work and delivery of the Internal Audit Plan for the Staffordshire Commissioner’s Office, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

This importantly has provided the opportunity to undertake a number of combined audits across both Police and Fire ensuring a more efficient and effective service can be delivered.

Throughout the year internal audit has carried out a range of planned reviews of systems and internal controls across the Service. Seven audit reviews were undertaken during the year, this included; PFI contract, Freedom of Information Compliance, Firefighters’ Pension Arrangements, Cyber Risk Assurance as well as key financial control audits.

The internal audit team also provided support to the Authority’s continued participation in the latest National Fraud Initiative exercise.

The opinions for the reviews completed have all been positive in that substantial assurance has been given to 6 audits and partial assurance to 1 audit, with a follow-up audit on previous audit recommendations showing reasonable progress. No limited assurance opinions were awarded during the year.

In relation to internal audit work in 2022/23, no high priority recommendations have been made during the year reflecting the robust control environment in place within the Service.

This has been the third annual opinion for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service provided by RSM and as such the annual report has been discussed with the Director of Finance to further explain the rationale and context behind the positive annual opinion that has been provided.

It is important that internal audit resource continues to be effectively directed to those areas of the business where management have identified risks, are aware of weaknesses, or where new system are being implemented. Consequently, management actions and themes have been agreed for the organisation to implement and embed across the control frameworks.

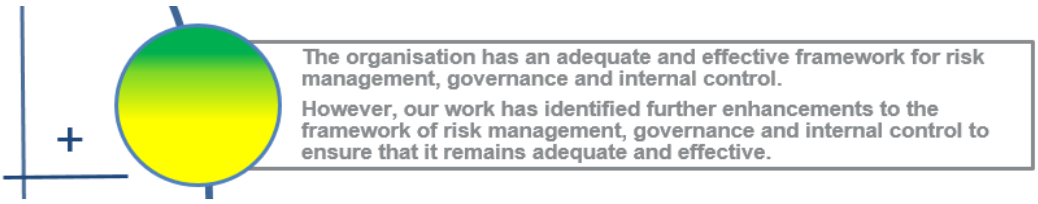
The UK PSIAS requires that the Head of Internal Audit must deliver an annual internal audit opinion on the overall internal control environment of the Authority. The methodology for formulating this opinion is set out within the Internal Audit Strategy and Plan each year.

RSM has stated that Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and control in place. However, the work undertaken by RSM has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and in control.

To ensure that RSM remains compliant with the PSIAS framework a dedicated internal Quality Assurance Team who undertake a programme of reviews is in place to ensure the quality of our audit assignments. This is applicable to all Heads of Internal Audit, where a sample of their clients will be reviewed. Any findings from these reviews are used to inform the training needs for the audit teams.

The opinion

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2023, the head of internal audit opinion for Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (The Authority) is as follows:



External Audit discharge a statutory function because of the special accountabilities attached to public money and how public business is conducted. External Audit are appointed independently from the Authority and the scope of the auditors work is to not only give opinion of the financial statements but to also include governance arrangements that secure the economic, efficient and effective use of resources, this being termed as the value for money being achieved by the organisation.

The appointed external auditor, (Grant Thornton LLP), provide regular reports at ETAP's formal meetings. ETAP members due to their independence have the opportunity to consider the audit findings, to challenge and ask for further clarification where necessary and also to make recommendations on their findings.

4. Significant Governance Issues

To consider the impact of the government's white paper for Fire and Rescue and the associated implications for Governance of the FRS

To further develop the Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the CIPFA Standard

5. Overall levels of Assurance

The details given within this statement represents a clear approach to ensuring that appropriate and proper governance arrangements are in place for Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority.