



Awdurdod Tan ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Authority

Annual Governance Statement

For the year ended 31 March 2025



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Mid and West Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

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This Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the *'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework' 2016*. This Annual Governance Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the framework and its seven core principles of good governance to ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policies and priorities.

Scope of Responsibility

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (Authority) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and appropriately accounted for; and used economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably.

The Authority has a duty under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity. The Well-being of Future-Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a well-being duty on public bodies to set and publish well-being objectives, designed to maximise their contribution to the seven national well-being goals, with a focus on sustainable development.

The introduction of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 has also introduced the establishment of a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance, including the provision of a multi-location policy for meetings.

In discharging its overall responsibility, Fire Authority Members and Senior Officers are responsible for putting in place appropriate arrangements for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Strategic leadership is given by and discharged through the Fire Authority and its various Committees, panels and working groups, which enable Members to decide on issues affecting the running of the Fire Authority, in accordance with the principles of openness and democratic accountability.

The day-to-day management and delivery of the Service's functions is carried out by Fire Service Officers under the overall control and guidance of the Chief Fire Officer, who discharges these functions in accordance with the governance framework and the determinations of the Fire Authority and its Committees. In so doing, the Chief Fire Officer is assisted by the Executive Leadership Team.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Governance Arrangements

The Authority is committed to demonstrating that it has the necessary corporate governance arrangements in place to perform effectively. The Authority provides clear strategic direction, and its Constitution clearly defines the roles of Members and Officers. Internal Audit and the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee are committed to ensuring that governance arrangements are effective and robust. The key roles of the Constitution and those responsible for developing and maintaining the Authority's Code of Corporate Governance Framework are set out below.

Constitution	The purpose of the Constitution is to set out in clear language how the Fire Authority works and how it makes decisions.
Fire Authority	Approves the Constitution (including Standing Orders and Financial Regulations). Approves key policies and budgetary framework. Is the main decision-making body of the Authority. Comprises twenty-five Members (including the Chair).
Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee	Provides independent assurance to the Fire Authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance arrangements, risk management framework and internal control environment. Promotes high standards of Member conduct. Makes recommendations to the Fire Authority on the approval of the Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement, and in appropriate circumstances approves the Annual Statement of Accounts.
Resource Management Committee	Responsible for the effective management of the resources of the Fire Authority, in particular, managing and developing the financial, human and property resources of the Authority together with its procurement, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), human resources and transport functions and its engagement with stakeholders.
Executive Leadership Team	Implements the policy and budgetary framework set by the Fire Authority and provides advice to the Fire Authority on the development of future policy and budgetary issues. Oversees the development and implementation of policy and service delivery.

Treasurer / Section 151 Officer	<p>Ensures lawful and financially prudent decision-making.</p> <p>Administration of financial affairs.</p> <p>Accountable for developing and maintaining the Fire Authority's governance, risk and control framework.</p> <p>Contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the Fire Authority.</p>
Clerk / Monitoring Officer	<p>Reports on contraventions or likely contraventions of any enactment or rule of law.</p> <p>Reports on any maladministration or injustice where the Local Government Ombudsman has carried out an investigation.</p> <p>Maintains and updates the Constitution.</p> <p>Establishes and maintains registers of Member interests and gifts and hospitality.</p> <p>Advises Members on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members.</p> <p>Contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the Fire Authority.</p>
Internal Audit	<p>Provides independent assurance and annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Fire Authority's governance, risk management and control framework.</p> <p>Delivers an annual programme of risk-based audit activity, including counter-fraud and investigation activity.</p> <p>Makes recommendations for improvements in the management of risk.</p>
Managers	<p>Responsible for developing, maintaining, and implementing the Fire Authority's governance, risk and control framework.</p> <p>Contribute to the effective corporate management and governance of the Fire Authority, through monthly Directorate meetings, Service Leadership Team meetings and Operational Response Forums.</p>

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Governance Framework

A Code of Corporate Governance was developed by the Authority in 2010 and revised in 2017 in accordance with the CIPFA / SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2016.

The Code of Corporate Governance comprises the systems, processes, culture and values by which Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) is directed and controlled and also the way it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its Strategic Aims and to consider whether the Service has delivered appropriate, effective and efficient services. The system of internal control forms a significant part of the Code of Corporate Governance and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It evaluates the likelihood and impact of identified risks being realised and manages each risk appropriately.

The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance brings together in one document all the governance and accountability arrangements the Service has in place. The Code of Corporate Governance Framework is based on best practice guidance set out in the CIPFA / SOLACE Framework, Delivering Good Governance in Local Government and is used to review the Authority's governance arrangements on an annual basis.

The Authority has conducted an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance against the CIPFA / SOLACE Delivering Good Governance Framework (2016) during 2024/25. The annual review of the Code of Corporate Governance was informed by managers within the Service who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and by comments made by internal and external audit, as well as other inspection agencies. The reviewed and revised Code of Corporate Governance to year end 31 March 2025, was approved by the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2025.

This Statement assures as to how the Authority has complied with the seven core principles and sub-principles of its Code of Corporate Governance Framework during the financial year 2024/25.

This statement also meets the requirement of The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014.

Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Governance Assurances for 2024/25

The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance sets out the Authority's commitment to the principles of good governance. A copy of the Authority's full Code of Corporate Governance for the year ending 31 March 2025 can be accessed on the Service's website. The following section provides a brief overview of the governance assurances undertaken by the Authority during 2024/25.

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

Community Risk Management Plan 2040

As a public sector organisation, the Service is accountable to the communities it serves, and as such, effective governance is central to improved decision-making. Accountability isn't just about taking responsibility – it involves us committing to a set of actions, attitudes, aspirations, and expectations, which establish how we lead and manage, the value we can add to our existing Service as well as driving any innovation we wish to undertake.

Recognising this, the Service's Vision and Behaviours were reviewed and aligned to the National Fire Chief Council's Leadership Framework and Core Code of Ethics, as part of the Service's commitment to longer-term planning and the creation of the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2040, which was approved in April 2024.

The CRMP 2040 is a strategic framework developed to enhance community safety by proactively addressing risks, threats, and challenges. It aligns with legal requirements under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the National Fire and Rescue Framework, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Cultural Journey

On Monday 11th March 2024, Hannah Blythyn MS, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership released a statement on the culture and values within Mid and West Wales Fire & Rescue Service (MAWWFRS) and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS). In that statement, the Deputy Minister outlined the progress to date and reiterated the good work that she had witnessed. She did however refer to continued concerns and in this regard, she proposed for an independent review of each Fire and Rescue Service's cultural journeys to be undertaken in a bid to provide further reassurance to their staff and the communities they serve.

MAWWFRS and NWFRS concurred with the Deputy Minister's statement that the public sector in Wales can be a beacon of inclusivity and support, not just for their workforces, but for the communities in which they serve.

In accordance with the public procurement route for Welsh Fire and Rescue Services, MAWWFRS and NWFRS procured the services of a specialist provider to undertake an independent review of both organisations' culture via the YPO framework for Managing Consultancy and Professional Services framework. The successful provider was sourced and recommended by the managed supplier Consultancy+ in line with their area of expertise and past experience, to ensure impartiality. The chosen supplier to undertake both Fire and Rescue Service's Culture reviews was Crest Advisory and their work commenced in September 2024. The information gathering consisted of staff surveys, one-to-one interviews, group discussions, written and oral submissions with an employee reach stemming back to June 2021 which enabled staff who had left the Service during this period to be able to contribute and share their views.

The Crest Advisory Review of the Service's Cultural Journey was published in February 2024. Progress is being made with the next phase of the cultural journey, which includes:

- Turning the report recommendations into actions that will guide improvements to workplace culture.
- Engaging staff and stakeholders at all levels to foster awareness and participation, to make sure change is meaningful and reflects the needs of everyone.
- Maintaining transparency and accountability through regular updates and feedback opportunities with staff and wider stakeholders.

The next steps in further developing and improving workplace culture include the formation of a Culture Change Team. This newly formed team will bring together perspectives, experiences and skills from across the organisation to help identify, develop and implement cultural change initiatives within the Service, in line with the recommendations outlined within the Crest Report.

Work is also progressing to enlist an Organisational Culture Specialist (OCS) through an external recruitment company. This will directly meet one of the recommendations of the Crest report and will provide the Service, and the Culture Change Team, with the expert guidance and direction required to bring sustainable cultural change.

The Service's Internal Culture and Inclusion Working Group (C&IWG) are currently prioritising the following key themes:

- Communication and engagement with the wider organisation on matters relating to the Service's cultural journey. A newsletter has been developed to provide updates. This will form the platform for all culture updates across the Service including progress against the Culture and Inclusion Plan and what we plan to do next.
- Embedding the Service's behaviours, as published in the Service's CRMP 2040. A workshop has been developed to run with a cross-section of the Service, offering the MAWWFRS staff the opportunity to shape how behaviours evolve in their role. This information will form guidance for recruitment, promotion and appraisals.
- Supporting the development and delivery of a revised Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) training package, to include Active Bystander training. Active Bystander training has been completed, and the ED&I package is in the final development stages with the external provider. This will be rolled out as an e-package.

An agreement was made during the recent Safeguarding Board meeting to publish the meeting minutes on the Service's intranet (Insight) system to provide greater transparency regarding organisational safeguarding matters.

Professional Standards Board

A Professional Standards Board has been established, which has the overall objective of ensuring that any concerns raised regarding employees' standards of behaviour and conduct are processed and recorded consistently, in line with the Service's procedures relating to Discipline, Grievance Resolution, Complaints and its Independent Reporting Line.

The purpose of the Board is to provide assurance that concerns regarding employees' behaviours and conduct, which falls below the standards expected by the Service, are investigated and dealt with appropriately and consistently in line with the Service's commitment towards a safe, fair and inclusive culture, and the standards expected of emergency service workers.

Independent Reporting Line

MAWWFRS has signed up to the Crimestoppers 'Speak-Up' system, which is an independent reporting mechanism for employees to raise work-related matters of concern, anonymously and confidentially. The Service has documented frequently asked questions in relation to 'Speak-Up', which are available to all

staff and are working towards a documented policy/procedure over the coming months. The implementation of 'Speak-Up' was a step taken by MAWWFRS during 2023, in response to a HMICFRS's recommendation, as an additional method to enable staff to raise concerns regarding inappropriate behaviours and practices. The formulation of a policy/procedure will assist the Service in ensuring that all staff are clearly aware of the process that will be adopted in the event of a 'Speak-Up' report being received by the Service, and to ensure that all such reports are dealt with appropriately and consistently, with adequate supporting documentation retained.

Fire Standards: Code of Ethics

Designed, developed and published by a Fire Standards Board, the purpose of these Standards is to oversee the identification, organisation, development and maintenance of professional Standards for Fire and Rescue Services. Although not legislatively applicable to Fire and Rescue Services within Wales, it is without doubt that they directly correlate to the work the Service does, and as such, undertaking this exercise has been critical in identifying areas for improvement.

Whilst meeting the Fire Standard does not impact the Service's legislative requirements as a devolved public service within Wales, the Service will adapt working practices to embed the Standards throughout the organisation.

Where it is felt that it is not possible to adopt the Fire Standard in its entirety due to the unique regulatory position within Wales, the Service will instead align working practices as far as practicably possible, making adaptations as necessary to meet the requirements of the Standards.

Staff Appraisal Process

The Staff Appraisal process, aligned to the National Fire Chief Council's Leadership Framework, was launched in 2023/24 and replaced the Individual Development Review process.

Following the introduction of a revised Staff Appraisal process in 2023, the People and Organisational Development (POD) department has commenced an evaluation of the process.

Early discussions have taken place to identify how the Service's Behaviours can now be embedded within the Appraisal process. Appraisals form an integral part of the progressive staff development process including career pathways, and line manager endorsements which sit within the Grey Book (operational staff) promotion process. Pre-requisites to this process include accredited leadership training, knowledge-based modules, and health and safety training. Staff are assessed across a range of weighted elements measured against the NFFCC Leadership Framework.

Staff Induction Process

A digital on-boarding programme is currently being trialled, which includes organisational expectations relating to dignity at work, Service behaviour standards and safeguarding. This will be further supported by the outcomes of reviews of our recruitment processes.

Code of Conduct for Members and Officers

The Code of Conduct for Members and Officers, which is enshrined within the Authority's Constitution, outlines the behaviours and conduct expected of Members and Officers and is based on the Nolan Principles.

As part of their induction process, all new Members and Officers receive an overview of the standards of conduct and behaviour expected of them.

This is further supported by the Member Development Strategy and Annual Training Programme, which ensures Members receive appropriate training and support for their roles.

Fire Authority Constitution

The Fire Authority's Constitution is publicly available on the Authority pages of the Service's website and outlines how the Authority operates and how it makes decisions. The Constitution is subject to periodic comprehensive reviews, with ongoing updates as required to reflect legislative changes and according to need. As such, in December 2024, the Authority received and approved a paper proposing changes to sections of its Constitution.

Revisions were focused on four main areas:

- A review and update of Article 21 Financial Procedure Rules.
- An update of terminology and references, for example, Community Risk Management Plan 2040.
- To set the quorum of the Democratic Service Forum as four Members.
- To amend Article 22 in line with the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023, Procurement Regulations 2024, and Procurement Regulations (Wales) 2024.

Clerk / Monitoring Officer and Treasurer / Section 151 Officer

Legal and Financial advice is provided on all appropriate reports for decision by the Authority's Clerk / Monitoring Officer and the Authority's Treasurer / Section 151 Officer, who approve all Authority and Committee meeting paperwork before publication. Reports clearly outline financial and legal advice being provided to Members for their decision-making purposes, and arrangements are in place to ensure the decisions of the Authority and the basis on which those decisions are made are recorded.

The Authority's Monitoring Officer has a specific duty to ensure the Authority, its Officers and Elected Members maintain the highest standards of conduct. The Authority's Monitoring Officer also has a specific duty to report matters they believe are, or likely to be, illegal or amount to maladministration. The Monitoring Officer therefore ensures the lawfulness and fairness of the Authority's decision making. The Monitoring Officer also ensures that the necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate effective communication between Officers and Members and the formal recording and publication of the democratic decision-making process.

Pre-meetings are held before all Authority and Committee meetings.

Minutes, including decisions made at all Authority and Committee meetings, are published on the Service's external website.

Policies & Procedures

The Authority's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy and Corporate Criminal Offence Policy were reviewed and reported to the PASC in May 2024. The next review is scheduled for January 2027.

An initial review of the Complaints, Compliments and Comments Procedure was undertaken in October 2024 to realign responsibility for the procedure and recognise additional reporting provisions introduced within the Service. The handling of complaints and comments was also audited in January 2025, and the findings of that audit will inform any additional update to the procedure, which will be concluded during 2025/26.

Standards Committee

The Standards Committee, which is composed of three Authority Members and four independent people, has an important role in promoting, maintaining and improving the standards of conduct of the Authority's Members.

The Standards Committee is a statutory committee under the Local Government Act 2000 which meets twice per Fire Authority calendar year and continues to play a pivotal role in setting and managing the conduct and standards of Fire Authority Members.

Procurement Strategy

A review of Contract Standing Orders has been completed to ensure it aligns with the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024, and was approved by the Fire Authority in December 2024.

Over 110 members of staff across all Service departments and members of the Resource Management Committee have now viewed the UK Government Knowledge Drop videos.

Carbon Reduction, Sustainability and Social Value are now embedded into our procurement processes where relevant, and several case studies have been written to demonstrate the success of a number of Estates-related trades frameworks that the procurement team has set up. These include frameworks for electrical contractors, flat roofing and carpentry and building, where the majority of successful contractors are Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) from within our Service area. A case study for the carpentry and building framework has recently been published on the Welsh Government Cyd (Procurement Centre of Excellence) website to share best practice and the Service's Procurement team is shortlisted for the Go Wales Procurement Excellence Awards Best Procurement Delivery Category for the same framework.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Authority Website

Recognising our desire to ensure robust communication channels with all our stakeholders, the Service embarked on a project to design, develop and implement a new website during 2023/24, ensuring it pays cognisance to and supports the Service's wider governance commitments and our equality, diversity and accessibility obligations.

Further to a significant piece of work for the ICT department, which was required to put in place a robust and secure infrastructure on which we would host our new website, the website went live in July 2024 and continues to be monitored and modified in accordance with best practices and user analytics provided by various tools.

Minutes, including decisions made at all Authority and Committee meetings, are published on the Service's external website

Effective Communication, Consultation and Engagement

Our CRMP 2040, constructed around our Behaviours, Enablers and Improvement and Well-being Objectives, sets out our long-term approach to the delivery of services within the communities that we serve.

Published in April 2024 and running until 2040, our CRMP marks a wholesale shift in the way we monitor, manage and modify our approach to safeguarding our communities. As the largest Fire and Rescue Service in Wales in geographical terms, communications, marketing, and engagement are critical to successfully delivering the priorities we have set out in our CRMP 2040.

The effective two-way flow of information, managed by the Service's Corporate Communications department and driven and monitored through our Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy, ensure that communication with both internal and external stakeholders and our public is purposeful, clear, honest, timely and relevant.

Following the approval of the CRMP 2040, MAWWFRS recently held a total of 34 community engagement drop-in sessions at a variety of different locations and venues over six counties of mid and west Wales.

The purpose of the drop-in sessions was to gather valuable input from residents and stakeholders, to assist in identifying any issues or challenges the Service may face in the delivery of the CRMP 2040. Alongside the drop-in sessions MAWWFRS held two online webinars hosted by Deputy Chief Fire Officer Iwan Cray,

meetings with members of Parliament, members of the Senedd and Town and Community Councillors to gain as much feedback as possible.

The interactive sessions proved a resounding success with an impressive 721 'Re-Shaping Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service...together' surveys being completed. A further 130 '[Have Your Say](#)' surveys were received from a wide range of stakeholders, also providing their views and expectations of a modern Fire and Rescue Service.

To support the work of Objective 6 of the CRMP 2040, '*We will engage and consult with our communities to understand their expectations of us*', a network of Community Ambassadors has been established. The Ambassadors, including representatives with a broad range of different experiences from across the mid and west Wales area, will play a pivotal role in helping to shape the services we provide and assist with building a positive and supportive environment within communities. They will also act as a liaison between the Service and community members, helping to communicate important information, promote community engagement and represent the views of local communities.

Review of our Internal Governance and Decision-Making Process.

Good governance is crucial for MAWWFRS and requires a robust framework to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making, which in turn, enables us to deliver high-quality public services that meet the needs of the communities we serve.

A review of organisational governance and decision-making was concluded in 2023/24 and resulted in a modernised approach to making strategic decisions across the Service going live on 1 April 2024. The new approach aimed to improve our commitment to good governance, supporting openness, transparency and engagement in our decision-making; and driving effective, compliant and accountable behaviour across the organisation. Following the initial 12-month period an evaluation will be conducted in 2025/26 to assure ourselves of its effectiveness, with a report to be provided post-completion to confirm the approach meets the needs of the Service and supports our governance commitments.

Corporate Budget Planning with Fire Authority Members and Constituent Authorities

The Service's Communications, Consultation and Engagement Strategy outlines the Service's approach to communication, including an overview of key stakeholders to be communicated with and the most appropriate mechanism to ensure effective communications and engagement with key target groups.

Throughout 2024/25, the Service's Executive Board, including the Authority's Section 151 Officer have engaged in several Corporate Budget Planning workshops with elected Members to identify the levy

requirement for 2025/26. This consultation process has also involved the Chief Fire Officer, Section 151 Officer and Fire Authority Chair providing presentations at Constituent Authority meetings, as well as meeting with Constituent Authority Treasurers.

Public Services Boards (PSBs)

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, establishes Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales, all Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities are statutory partners of the relevant Public Service Boards (PSBs) of the Constituent Authorities within their area.

The Service has taken its role as a statutory partner within the PSBs very seriously and has committed employee resources to deliver the Act, with Chief Fire officer and Director level representation on each of the six PSBs, along with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority who are represented on three Public Service Boards each. Subject matter experts also attend the subgroups created to support each of the Public Services Board's Well-being Objectives.

Social Partnership Duty

The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023 (SPPP Act) which came into force on 1 April 2024, requires forty-eight public bodies, of which the Authority, is one of them, to produce an annual report to evidence how they have complied with the Social Partnership Duty.

The report must be agreed with the public body's recognised trade unions or contain a statement explaining why it was not agreed. The report must be published and submitted it to the Social Partnership Council (SPC) for scrutiny, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of the financial year.

MAWWFRS's Social Partnership Duty Annual Report 2024/25 was agreed by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 24 March 2025.

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

Our commitment to the Well-being of Future Generation's Act (Wales) 2015

The Service remains committed to supporting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and embraces its duties and role as a statutory partner on its six Public Services Boards.

The Service's CRMP 2040 was developed following the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and ensures the Service continues to consider the long-term impact of its decision-making on its communities. The CRMP 2040 also highlights how the Service's Vision, Behaviours and Improvement and Well-being Objectives contribute to the Act's seven Well-being Goals; and how the Service will consider and incorporate, where appropriate, the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working in delivering its Improvement and Well-being Objectives.

The Service continues to play a key role as a statutory partner on six Public Service Boards, which represent the communities of mid and west Wales. Representatives from the Service also participate in several delivery and implementation groups across each of its six Public Services Boards, ensuring that the objectives identified as priority partnership areas are successfully delivered.

Capital Investment

The Capital Strategy, approved by Members annually, sets out the Service's long-term context in which capital expenditure and investment decisions are made. It also provides the framework for ensuring the Service's 5-year Capital Programme is aligned with the Service's strategic commitments as outlined in its CRMP 2040. The Service's Strategic Asset and Capital Management Group met quarterly throughout 2024/25 to monitor and review the 5-year capital programme.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, as approved by Members annually, sets out the limits and controls to be applied when borrowing and investing funds. It includes Capital Prudential Indicators which show the financial impact of capital expenditure decisions so that it can be determined as to whether those decisions are affordable, prudent and sustainable. It also includes Treasury Management Indicators which set constraints on Treasury Management decisions to ensure that they are made following good practice.

A mid-year Treasury Management report was reported to Fire Authority in December 2024, and updated Members on treasury activity in the year to date. An annual Treasury Report, a backward-looking review which provides details of actual Capital Prudential indicators and Treasury Management indicators and

actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy, will be reported to Fire Authority after the year end.

Treasury Management training was delivered to Fire Authority Members, and Officers involved in the daily Treasury Management function in February 2025.

Environmental Strategy & Carbon Reduction Road Map

A Sustainability and Environmental Strategy has been implemented for the period 2020–2025. This strategy addresses key themes such as sustainable procurement, energy usage, waste management and recycling, decarbonisation, and the protection of biodiversity and wildlife, among others.

The Service have further outlined its commitments to 'Our Environment' in the CRMP 2040, and specifically Objective 7, which highlights the Service's environmental ambition to work in an 'environmentally friendly and sustainable way'.

During Summer 2024, the Service published a Carbon Reduction Road Map 2030 to support its efforts in lowering carbon emissions and aligning with the Welsh Government's Net Zero target. In March 2021, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 was updated to set a national net zero target for 2050. In line with the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Wales, there have been carbon budgets set for emissions. This legislation requires a 37% reduction by 2025, and a 58% reduction by 2030 across Wales. The Welsh Government has set a more ambitious target for the Public Sector, which is required to be net zero carbon by 2030.

Over recent years, the Welsh Government has strengthened its legislative framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve biodiversity, through legislation such as, the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the supporting Section 6 Duty. As well as there being an emphasis on achieving net zero, there is a requirement on Public Sector organisations to enhance and promote resilient ecosystems on their land. The Service have successfully achieved this by collaborating with Welsh Government funded '*Local Places for Nature*' initiatives, supported by Keep Wales Tidy, to develop a number of wildlife gardens at Service locations, implement swift boxes to Stations and develop and improve green infrastructure.

Progress towards these environmental objectives is actively monitored by the Service's Sustainability and Environment Manager, the Sustainability and Environment Group, and the CRMP Objective 7 Group. An Annual Environmental Report is published to capture achievements and monitor statistical data on emissions over the financial year

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Fire Authority Members are closely involved in scrutinising performance data, which is reported at both Committee and full Authority meetings. As already outlined in Principle A, the Authority, through the appointment of the Monitoring Officer, ensures that the necessary arrangements are in place to facilitate effective communication between Officers and Members; whilst the Authority's scheme of Standing Orders sets out the roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers ensuring informed and effective decision making by the Authority.

During 2024/25 the Service delivered against eight Improvement and Well-being Objectives set out within its CRMP 2040. These Objectives were developed recognising the challenges we face as both a Service and an Authority, and furthermore were designed in conjunction with Members and representative bodies at Corporate Budget Planning meetings, which were held throughout 2023/24 to discuss the budget planning requirements for the 2024/25 financial year. This process ensured that the Authority forecasts for future planning purposes and that the improvement planning process aligns with the Service's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Consultation process associated with the CRMP 2040 was supported by a Communication, Consultation and Engagement Plan. The full report, detailing the findings and recommendations from the consultation process, was reported to the Fire Authority in March 2024, outlining how any changes as a result of the consultation process had been incorporated within the final version of the CRMP 2040, which was subsequently published on 1 April 2024.

A similar approach is taken to the development of the Service's Sustainability and Environment Plan, Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Standards, to ensure all statutory guidance is adhered to and objectives delivered.

Monitoring reports, identifying progress and performance against the Improvement and Well-being Objectives for 2024/25, including updates on the Service's strategic and key performance indicators were presented to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. An Annual Performance Assessment (APA), providing an overview of performance to year-end, is also presented to the Fire Authority and published for annual audit by Audit Wales.

Compliance certificates were received from Audit Wales in respect of the publication of the Authority's APA 2023/24 and the Authority's Improvement and Well-being Objectives for 2024/25.

The Service's Performance and Improvement Progress Reports for 2024/25, along with the Service's Strategic Equality Plan Progress Reports for 2023/24, Annual Sustainability and Environmental Report and Annual Welsh Language Monitoring Report, are available on the Service's website.

Following the introduction of the CRMP 2040, the Service established Performance Monitoring Groups, one for each Objective, which meet on a quarterly basis to monitor the progress against each of the Objectives and Actions.

The Service also introduced a CRMP 2040 Chairs of Chairs group which discusses the progress being made, provides scrutiny and challenge and identifies any cross-cutting themes. A Community Risk Management Delivery Board (CRMDB), chaired by the CFO and attended by ELT, SLT, Chair of PASC and Trade Union representatives has also been established to discuss and scrutinise the progress being made against the delivery of Objectives and their associated actions.

Quarterly and six monthly progress reports were presented to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and Resource Management Committee throughout 2024/25.

All documentation is published on the Service's external website.

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

Our People

The Service maintains robust strategic workforce planning processes to ensure that the Service employs the correct number of people, with the necessary skill sets to meet the objectives set out in its corporate plans. Strategic workforce planning is embedded in the organisation and analysis of workforce data enables proactive identification of future staffing requirements.

The Service maintains the Corporate Health Award requirements and biennial fitness tests are undertaken for all operational staff as part of the all-Wales approach to operational firefighter fitness. A fitness assessment programme for operational staff is fully embedded in the Service and fitness equipment is provided at all Fire Stations. Risk critical training plans, along with performance appraisals ensure staff have the appropriate training and development to undertake their roles competently and safely.

The Service remains a signed-up partner to the all-Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy with career pathways mapped out for all sectors within the organisation.

The Service's Strategic Workforce Group met regularly throughout 2024/25, as well as the Service's Transfer and Promotion Panel and Fitness Advisory Panel.

Options are being explored to update the recruitment process and embed the Service's Behaviours, as outlined within the CRMP 2040 in the following:

- Application process;
- Interview questions;
- Promotion process.

Discussions are also underway in relation to the Service's exit interview process and how learning from this process can be shared and implemented.

Training and Development Review

Phase one of a review of the training and people development functions has been completed resulting in some realignment of middle manager roles along with the introduction of new, higher level management positions intended to support clear ownership of references aligned to the all Wales People and Organisational strategy. Implementation of phase one has also seen investment in resources to increase capacity for the delivery of incident command training.

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

Risk Management

The Corporate Risk Department maintains the Service's Risk Management Policy and associated methodologies. The Risk Management Policy outlines roles and responsibilities for both Service staff and Elected Members.

To coordinate its arrangements for matters of risk management, the Service has established a dedicated Business Risk Management Group. Chaired by the Director of Risk Management and Improvement, this group meets quarterly and includes representation from each of the Service's Directorates and Fire Authority.

Following these meetings, an updated report on the Service's Business Risk Register is provided quarterly to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

The underpinning risk ranking methodology used by the group is derived from the 2023 publication by Her Majesty's Treasury titled 'The Orange Book – Management of Risk – Principles and Concepts'.

For any risk identified on the Business Risk Register, there is a documented audit trail and rationale as to why the risk has been identified and what mitigation is in place by the Service as part of its risk control measures.

Business Risk Register updates and current 'risks' are communicated to personnel as and when required, with ongoing risk management training provided by the Corporate Risk Department.

The Service's Business Risk Management Group monitored progress in relation to the Code of Corporate Governance during 2024/25 and progress on the Service's Internal and External Audit processes.

Financial Procedure Rules & Contract Standing Orders

Both Financial Procedure Rules and Contract Standing Orders have been reviewed, updated and approved by Fire Authority during 2024/25.

Financial Procedure Rules provide the framework for managing the Authority's financial affairs and are part of the Authority's Constitution. They apply to every Member and employee, and anyone acting on the Authority's behalf.

Medium Term Financial Planning

A robust budget-setting process was followed in 2024/25 which included Officers, Members and participation by representative bodies.

The Service is acutely aware of the financial pressures faced by its Constituent Authorities and the high level of uncertainty regarding the WG Local Government Settlement. In accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, the Service is committed to limiting the Levy to the minimum required *‘to ensure comprehensive cover is maintained’*.

The Service continually reviews the arrangements it has in place to ensure Value for Money for the resources it uses. In May 2024, the Chief Fire Officer and Section 151 Officer launched a Value for Money Exercise involving both the Service Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team. Budget holders were asked to critically review their budgets to identify indicative areas of efficiencies including the associated risks and impacts. The Value for Money proposals originating from the exercise have informed the budget setting process for 2025/26 and beyond.

The Service’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which supports the planning of resource allocation and spending, and provides the financial framework for supporting the budget-setting process, was considered by the Fire Authority in September 2024.

The Service’s Medium-Term Financial Plan, which includes the Revenue Budget requirement for the coming financial year and the 5-year Capital Programme, was reported to the Resource Management Committee in November 2024 and Fire Authority in December 2024, culminating in approval by the Fire Authority in February 2025.

Revenue Budget and Capital Programme monitoring reports, summarising the actual expenditure to date and forecast outturn, were presented to the Resource Management Committee every quarter throughout the year.

Both the Executive Leadership Team and Service Leadership Team receive monthly budget monitoring reports, and the Finance Team meet regularly with Budget Managers. Revised budget guidance was presented to the Service Leadership Team in April 2024.

The Draft Annual Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was completed by 31 May 2024 and the final audited version was subsequently approved by Fire Authority at their meeting in September 2024, the unqualified audit report was also presented at this meeting.

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

The Annual Governance Statement provides assurances that the Authority has the necessary corporate governance arrangements in place to perform effectively. The Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 was published on 31 May 2024 and presented to the Fire Authority in September 2024 as part of the audited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance Framework supports the development of the Annual Governance Statement. The Code of Corporate Governance for 2024/25 was reviewed and revised in conjunction with Members and Officers during 2024/25 and was approved by the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2025.

Finance is a standing item on the agendas for all Directorate meetings, Service Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team meetings, which are held monthly. Finance reports, including budget setting, budget monitoring and the Statement of Accounts are also considered at Fire Authority, Resource Management Committee and Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meetings. A full overview of the Service's financial planning arrangements has been provided at Principle F.

Minutes, including decisions made at all Authority and Committee meetings, are published on the Service's external website.

Opinion on the level of assurance that the governance arrangements can provide.

Review of Effectiveness

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Executive Leadership Team and other Senior Officers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment. The work is supported by reports from internal and external auditors, while recommendations from peer assessors are also considered.

The effectiveness of the governance framework draws on evidence and assurances from:

- Fire Authority.
- Executive Leadership Team and appropriate Senior Officers.
- Scheme of Delegation to Officers.
- Resource Management Committee (RMC).
- Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (PASC).
- Standards Committee.
- Internal Audit.
- External Audit.

Internal Audit

Carmarthenshire County Council Internal Audit Section has provided the Internal Audit function for MAWWFRS since Local Government reorganisation in 1996. A 3-year Internal Audit Plan is agreed with the Section 151 Officer and Director of Resources and approved by the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The 3-year plan is reviewed and updated every year to reflect current circumstances and priorities.

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards, the Audit Manager is required to provide an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's risk management, control, counter fraud and governance processes.

The Internal Audit Plan for the 2024/25 financial year was agreed with the Director of Resources, the Section 151 Officer and approved by the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2024. The Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee has received progress reports on delivery of the plan along with final Internal Audit reports issued throughout 2024/25.

To date, nine final reports and one draft report have been issued relating to the 2024/25 Audit Plan. In addition, three reviews relating to 2023/24 were finalised during 2024/25. The assurance levels gained are summarised in the following table:

Level of Assurance	Number of 2024/25 Reports
High	4
Reasonable	5
Limited	3
Low	1

For the report receiving a “low” assurance there were five recommendations and all agreed actions were addressed during 2024/25. A follow-up audit for this function is planned for during 2025/26.

The Head of Internal Audit, within the MAWWFRS Internal Audit Annual Report 2024/25, which will be reported to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in May 2025, provided the following overall opinion:

‘No system of control can provide absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss, nor can Internal Audit give that assurance. This statement is intended to provide reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance, and control processes.

In arriving at the overall opinion, the Head of Internal Audit has considered:

- *the results of all work undertaken as part of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Programme.*
- *the results of work undertaken as part of the 2023/24 Internal Audit Programme, which have been concluded following the issue of last year’s Annual Report.*
- *the results of follow-up action of Internal Audit Reviews from current and previous years; and*
- *the acceptance of actions by Management (especially those deemed significant).*

It is my opinion that the Authority has a REASONABLE control environment in operation. There are clear Governance arrangements with defined management responsibilities and Committee Structures in place and the control framework is generally sound and operated reasonably consistently. The Authority has an established Constitution, has developed Policies and approved Financial Regulations that provide advice and guidance to all staff and members.

Where weaknesses have been identified through Internal Audit review, we have worked with management to agree on appropriate corrective actions and a timescale for improvement’.

The recommendations from Internal Audit have been addressed via internal departmental action plans as applicable. Progress of agreed actions is monitored by the internal Business Risk Management Group.

Full details of the assurance provided by the Audit Manager along with plans to address the recommendations is detailed within the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2024/25.

External Audit

The Service's external audit arrangements are facilitated by Audit Wales in respect of Audit of Accounts; Value for Money; Continuous Improvement; and the Sustainable Development Principle. Audit reports and certificates of compliance have been presented as required to Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and Fire Authority meetings during 2024/25.

Audit Wales, as an external auditor to the Authority, reviews and comments on the financial aspects of Corporate Governance, which includes the legality of financial transactions, systems of internal financial control and standards of financial conduct and fraud and corruption.

During 2024/25, in accordance with statutory timelines, the Authority presented the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2023/24 to Audit Wales for audit. The Auditor General is responsible for providing an opinion on whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority and the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account and its income and expenditure for the year that ended. Following the audit process, the Auditor General issued an unqualified opinion on the financial statements in September 2024.

As part of the Auditor General's local government studies programme in 2023/24, Audit Wales reviewed the governance arrangements across the three Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales. The review sought to answer the question *'Do special purpose local authorities in Wales have effective governance arrangements that support good outcomes for citizens?'* To answer this, Audit Wales looked at structures of governance, the model of governance, how members and officers work within structures, and the approaches taken to review and improve governance arrangements.

The report *'Governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities'* published September 2024, highlights weaknesses in the governance model for FRAs and made two recommendations. Firstly that Welsh Government reviews the governance model, and secondly that FRAs strengthen the provision of training and development for FRA Members. In respect of the latter recommendation it was noted in the report that only Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority provided a programme of training and development events for Members.

The report was presented to the Fire Authority on 23 September 2024 where Members referred the report to the Democratic Services Forum for the forum to consider any issues arising and to formulate a draft response on behalf of the Authority. The response was approved by Fire authority at its meeting on 16 December 2024 and subsequently submitted to Welsh Government.

Through the Social Partnership Forum for Fire and Rescue Services, the Service is aware that Welsh Government in 2025/26 will be consulting on proposals for future FRA governance and may include funding models. The Service will actively contribute to the discussion and respond to the consultation to reform FRA governance.

Strategic and Service Director Assurances

The Authority has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of its governance framework. The review of effectiveness is informed by the work of the Senior Managers responsible for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Corporate Communications and Business Development department and by comments made by the External Auditors and other review agencies.

The CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government (2016) demands that assurance is provided on several governance arrangements relating to the organisation including financial control, reporting, approach to decision-making, compliance with relevant codes and the influence of the Chief Finance Officer within the organisation. These have been considered within the context of this Statement and it has been established that the Authority's arrangements conform to the CIPFA requirements.

The Authority has in place, via Internal Audit, a comprehensive assurance assessment process to ensure that electronic data is secure and configured to current best practices to protect the organisation. The results of these assurances provide a positive opinion, but there are opportunities for improving the internal control environment to further mitigate risks.

The Internal Audit programme referred to in earlier paragraphs obtained assurances from the Service's Executive Board around the arrangements for managing their recognised core risk areas. This reflects the Executive Directors' responsibilities for both the management of risk and the effectiveness of controls. These discussions were also informed by the regular assurance reports presented to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee by the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit and External Audit.

Governance issues to be addressed in 2025/26

Over the next twelve months, the Service will continue to deliver critical services to the communities it serves.

Led by the Service's Executive Leadership Team, the key focus areas for 2025/26 include:

- Internal and external audit recommendations.
- Our Community Risk Management Plan 2040.
- Crest cultural review report recommendations
- Managing our ICT infrastructure and developing a digitisation strategy.
- Developing our Strategic Workforce Planning arrangements.
- Internal and external governance arrangements.

The continuing impact of the increased demand for public sector services, against the settlements received by its Constituent Authorities and spending reductions in the public sector, will continue to be carefully considered by the Authority in determining its Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The Service will continue to monitor the progress being made by Welsh Government in its discussions around the publication of a new Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales, any new thematic reviews undertaken by the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor, and any other changes to how we are governed and advise the Authority on any implications for the Service.

We propose, over the coming year, to take actions relating to the above matters and others to further enhance our governance arrangements and reassure ourselves that we have robust, procedures, process and arrangements in place to ensure we are fully accountable. An update on the outstanding actions from previous years' Action Plans and our Action Plan for 2025/26 are detailed below.

Updates on outstanding actions from previous years (as per AGS 2023/24)

Governance	Responsibility	Planned Action	Current Status
Introduce a new Service Website	Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development	Design, develop and implement a new Service website, ensuring it pays cognisance to and supports the Services' wider governance commitments and ongoing desire to support a robust communication, engagement and consultation programme with communities.	The development phase of the Service's new website has now been completed, and the website went live in July 2024. Status: Complete.
Internal Audit recommendations	Relevant Heads of Service	Reflect on recommendations from Internal Audit and build them into action plans.	Interim monitoring of recommendations and management responses is undertaken by the Service's Business Risk Management Group. Internal Audit has completed its Follow-up review for 2023/24, the report was presented to the Authority's Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in July 2024. Status: Complete.
External Audit recommendations	Relevant Heads of Service	Reflect on recommendations from External Audit and build them into action plans.	Monitoring of recommendations and actions is undertaken by the Service's Business Risk Management Group. The 2023/24 Audit Wales report on Targeted High-Risk Prevention was received and a new false fire alarm policy has been implemented which has resulted in a significant impact on reduction in the number of false fire alarm incidents. Status: Complete.

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2040	<p>Head of Community Risk Management Plan Team</p> <p>Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development</p>	<p>Embed new procedures, processes and frameworks in line with the Authority's CRMP 2040.</p> <p>These will need to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of the Improvement Planning Framework • A system to embed, promote, manage and measure adherence to the Authority's new behaviours. • A mechanism to report progress against the Improvement and Wellbeing Objectives contained in the Plan. <p>A new Communication, Marketing and Engagement Strategy which considers the new Plan, the strategic intent it outlines and the process by which improvements will be searched for, selected, implemented and captured.</p>	<p>A new Communication, Engagement and Marketing Strategy 2024/2027, aligned to the Service's CRMP 2040, has now progressed through the Service's governance process, receiving approval and being subsequently published in July 2024.</p> <p>Each Objective Performance Monitoring Group is in the early stages of identifying a set of Key Performance Indicators/ measures for success.</p> <p>Work is also underway to explore opportunities to utilise the Evotix Assure, Health and Safety system as a mechanism to record and monitor the performance and progress being made against the Improvement and Well-being Objectives.</p> <p>A review of the Improvement Planning Framework is currently underway and is due to be complete shortly.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
Organisational Culture	<p>Executive Leadership Team</p> <p>Service Leadership Team</p> <p>Culture and Inclusion Board</p>	<p>Introduce an action plan to monitor progress against the findings of the Service's Cultural Audit undertaken in 2023.</p> <p>In collaboration with North Wales Fire and Rescue Service' undertake an independent external review of progress against the Service's cultural journeys, as per the terms of</p>	<p>Following Welsh Government's direction in March 2024, both MAWWFRS and NWFRS were required to undertake a staff culture review using an external independent provider. A supplier in the name of Crest Advisory was appointed and commenced its information gathering of MAWWFRS in September 2024. The findings</p>

	<p>Culture and Inclusion Working Group</p>	<p>reference set out by the Welsh Government. Both reviews will commence in June 2024 and the findings published to both Fire Authorities and Welsh Government in November 2024.</p> <p>Continue to progress and provide updates to the Welsh Government against the recommendations within the HMICFRS's Values and Culture in Fire and Rescue Services report.</p> <p>Continue to progress and provide updates to the Welsh Government against the recommendations within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Independent Review of Culture.</p>	<p>from this new Culture review were published on the 5 February 2025.</p> <p>Following the publication of the Crest Culture report the Service has developed revised a Culture and Inclusion Action Plan to address the areas of concerns outlined within the new Crest Culture report which have taken into account the areas which emerged from the Service's 2023 Culture review and other wider FRS Culture review reports.</p> <p>A Culture & Inclusion Working Group made up of representation of staff and trade union from across the Service has been formed which report into a Culture & Inclusion Board chaired by the CFO.</p> <p>The Service is currently out to contract tender for an external culture specialist who will provide independent advice to the Service on its culture improvement journey. It is anticipated that the external culture specialist will be in position by the end of June 2025.</p> <p>Following an open and transparent process involving four external stakeholders, the Service has recently appointed a new Culture Implementation</p>
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			<p>Team to facilitate the delivery of the Culture Review report recommendations. This new team of six Service staff will provide the proposed external Culture Specialist with the support required to deliver on the Culture & Inclusion Action Plan.</p> <p>Active Bystander training has been delivered to all staff and a new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training package will be delivered to all staff from August 2025.</p> <p>Welsh Government Fire Branch has offered up dedicated training courses to support the Service's culture improvement journey. This training will be bespoke to Middle and Senior Managers on the subject of Grievance and Misconduct and delivery will commence in June 2025.</p> <p>On all Wales FRS level, Culture improvement updates will be provided by each Welsh FRS at the newly formed All Wales FRS Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group meeting. This will be an opportunity for each Welsh FRS to share best practice solutions of culture improvement arrangements from within their Services.</p> <p>Status: Business as Usual</p>
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Procurement Strategy	Head of Procurement	A full review of the Welsh Fire and Rescue Service's Procurement Strategy and associated procedures and processes needs to be undertaken as soon as the secondary legislation for the Procurement Act 2023 is published.	<p>Due to the UK Government delaying the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 and Procurement Regulations 2024 until 24/02/25 there is still a considerable amount of information that we are awaiting before the review of certain documents and associated processes and procedures can be undertaken. However, sufficient information has been divulged to enable the review of Contract Standing Orders. This was due to go to Fire Authority for approval in September 2024 but was deferred to the December Fire Authority meeting as the changes made cannot be implemented until the new Act is implemented on 24/02/25. Changes to the Procurement Strategy and associated documents, processes and procedures will be undertaken as soon as all the finer detail of the legislation is made known and will all be completed before implementation in February 2025.</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
Compliments, Complaints and Comments Procedure	Head of Human Resources	A review of the Service's Compliments, Complaints and Comments Procedure is required to align with revised internal processes for dealing with such matters.	An initial review of the complaints, compliments and comments Procedure was undertaken in October 2024 to realign responsibility for the procedure and recognise additional reporting provisions introduced within the Service. The handling of complaints and comments was also audited in January 2025 and the findings

			<p>of that audit have informed any additional update to the procedure. The procedure will be presented through the internal governance process during 2025/26.</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
ICT Cyber Security	Head of Information and Communication Technology	A robust strategy has been developed and will continue to be implemented to address the recommendations set out within a Cyber Security Resilience Audit Report.	<p>Currently have a number of ongoing projects in this area. We are following the NCSC Cyber Action Framework as part of the NFCC project and separately, and in parallel, as part of the WLGA project. We are also utilising a number of other Cyber Security recommendations from trusted sources and progressing with the Cyber Action Plan with 10 out of 38 complete and 25 in progress.</p> <p>Status: Business as usual</p>

2025/26 Action Plan

Governance	Responsibility	Planned Action	Target Date
Digitisation Strategy	Head of Information and Communication Technology	To develop a digitisation strategy and delivery plan.	March 2026
Update our Strategic Assessment of the External Environment Document	Head of CRMP	Systematically analyse the external factors that can impact the Service's operations and strategic decisions. This analysis will help identify opportunities and threats, enabling the Service to adapt and thrive in a dynamic environment.	September 2025
Strategic Workforce Planning	Head of Human Resources	Review and further develop strategic workforce planning processes supported by a formal workforce planning procedure.	September 2025
CIPFA Financial Management Code	Head of Finance	Full self-assessment was completed in 2021/22. Review current practices against Financial Management Code to identify and implement improvements to strengthen controls.	March 2026
Review of our Internal Governance and Decision-Making Process	Executive Leadership Team Service Leadership Team	A new approach to strategic decision-making was introduced 1 April 2024, an evaluation will be undertaken to assure ourselves of its effectiveness, with a report to be provided post-completion to confirm the approach meets the needs of the Service and supports our governance commitments.	March 2026
Fire Authority Governance and Funding	Executive Leadership Team	Welsh Government will be consulting on proposals for future FRA governance. The Service will actively contribute to the discussion and respond to the consultation to reform FRA governance.	March 2026

The Governance Statement

The Authority considers that its governance arrangements for 2024/25 continue to be regarded as fit for purpose. The Authority's Code of Corporate Governance sets out in detail the Authority's Governance Framework, which is consistent with the CIPFA / SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016). The Authority has assessed and can confirm that the arrangements detailed within the Code are in place.

It is the view therefore of the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer, that the review of the governance arrangements for the financial year 2024/25 has in the main been satisfactory. We believe that the evidence provided demonstrates that the Corporate Governance in this organisation is effective, existing arrangements are fit for purpose, and the Authority is well placed to meet its strategic aims, to achieve its intended outcomes for citizens and service users. The organisation operates in an economical, effective, efficient and ethical manner.

The Authority recognise its responsibility as a public service organisation to both provide a vision for the community it serves and to lead by example in its decision-making and other processes and actions, with Members and Officers acting in accordance with high standards of conduct.

Certification

We have been advised on the implications of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by Senior Management and the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Actions identified to further develop the Authority's Governance arrangements to ensure continuous improvement of the Authority's systems are in place.

We pledge our commitment that over the coming year we will take steps to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that we will address the need for any improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review.

Signed:

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Chair of the Performance, Audit and
Scrutiny Committee

Signed:

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Chief Fire Officer