

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Statement of Accounts 2019-20



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NARRATIVE REPORT

The purpose of the narrative report is to offer interested parties clear information about the financial position and the financial performance of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year 2019/20.

ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) serves the communities within the areas of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, Conwy and Denbighshire and Wrexham and Flintshire.

Governance of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is provided via the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) which is made up of 28 Elected Members nominated by each of the six local authorities.

NWFRA is responsible for providing, training and equipping a Fire and Rescue Service capable of undertaking the following functions:



The Service deals with a wide-range of emergencies, from house fires and road traffic collisions, to floods and chemical spills. Extensive work is carried out with schools, businesses and local communities to promote fire safety and prevention and to help keep people and property safe.

The Authority is financed by contributions from the six Constituent Authorities, in proportion to population.

Details of our service area, funding and activities can be found on the following pages.

About Our Service Area



Resources



44 fire stations across North Wales



54 fire appliances



31 special appliances including rescue boats and aerial ladder platforms



3 Community Safety Offices in Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay and Bangor



882 staff

Engagement Activities



249 school visits by staff attended by **21,251** pupils



230 pupils attended Phoenix courses



8 Fire cadet groups supporting **96** cadets



Member of the Regional Partnership Board and **4** Public Service Boards

Key Activities



18,994 Safe and Well checks completed



1,155 Business audits conducted



1,950 Accidental / deliberate fires attended



2,273 Incidents relating to false alarms



648 Special Service calls including **179** Road Traffic Collisions

THE AUTHORITY'S IMPROVEMENT AND WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales are required to publish improvement objectives in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For the purposes of the Authority's planning processes these are treated as one and the same.

These long-term objectives are changes that the Authority wants to help bring about in North Wales that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals. Having identified these long-term objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made.

In March 2019 the Authority published its Improvement and Well-being Plan for 2019/20, that confirmed its long term strategic objectives and explained what it was planning to do during the year towards achieving them. The Authority has continued its commitment to prevention activity and reducing numbers of accidental dwelling fires as well as helping people to stay safe if they do occur. Work has also continued in order to facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response can continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk.

The following link provides information relating to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service activity and performance against improvement objectives over the last twelve months-<https://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/about-us/performance-and-improvement/performance-information-and-statistics/>

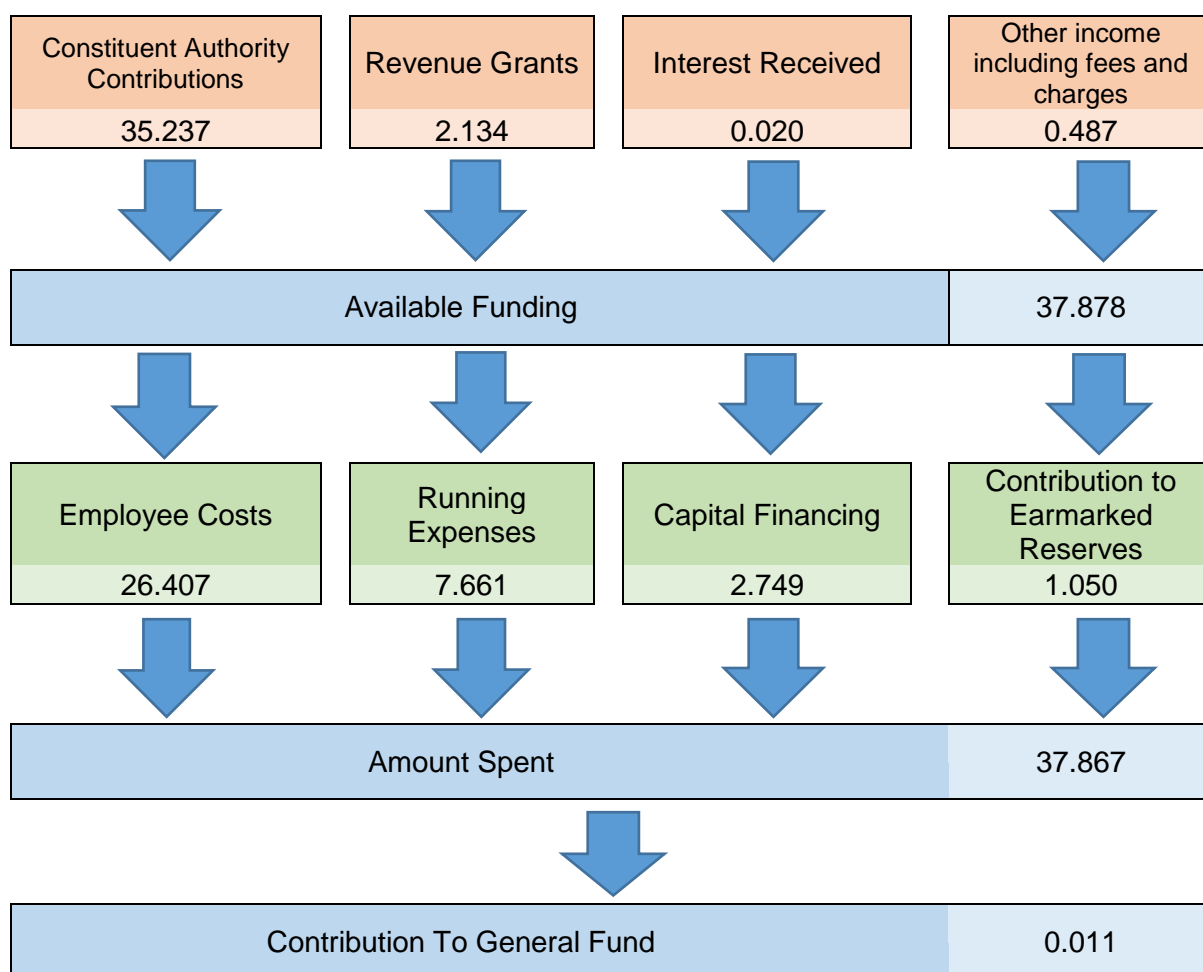
The statutory deadline for publishing an Annual Performance Assessment is 30th September 2020. This year, a greater emphasis will be placed on including real examples of how we have made a difference to people's lives. The Annual Performance Assessment will be available on the website at <https://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/about-us/performance-and-improvement/improvement-planning/>

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

At a time of extraordinary financial challenge, the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to continuing to provide excellent prevention services, fire safety enforcement services and emergency response. The Authority remains committed to playing its part in building stronger and safer communities, but also acknowledges that for the future the financial situation means that being able to sustain service delivery will require a great deal of flexibility and innovation.

In order to secure financial sustainability for the Authority and maintain service levels, Members agreed a 3 year medium term financial plan. Members agreed for 2019/20 to increase the contributions from the constituent authorities by £1.74m, to £35.237m. The Authority's position over the medium term is sound, but careful attention will need to be paid to cost pressures relating to pension and payroll costs and also anticipated changes to the funding mechanism that is used, by the Welsh Government, for Fire and Rescue Authorities

REVENUE PERFORMANCE (£m)



IMPACT OF PANDEMIC

In common with all public sector bodies, the Authority is experiencing significant challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The costs arising from the pandemic are ongoing and it is not possible to provide a full financial impact due to the evolving nature of the situation. Careful recording and monitoring arrangements are in place to ensure that additional costs are identified and external sources of funding are being explored.

PROVISIONS AND RESERVES

The Authority has made provision for known liabilities and established reserves for future liabilities or earmarked for future service developments. Reserves have been increased in 2019/20, to cover ongoing service requirements including protective equipment, environmental works and implementing additional staff training to conform to legislation. No reserves were utilised in 2019/20 but it is envisaged that they will be used in future years. Further information is available in Note 18 and Note 19.

CAPITAL PERFORMANCE

The table below highlights the expenditure in relation to our capital programme and how it was funded in 2019/20:

Capital Expenditure	£m	Funded By	£m
Station Refurbishments	0.156	Revenue Contribution	0.043
Vehicles	0.362	Capital Receipts	0.023
Information Technology	0.133	Grants	0.111
Assets Under Construction	0.124	Borrowing	0.598
TOTAL	0.775		0.775

An annual treasury report detailing the financial activity for the year is presented to the Fire Authority and made available on the website (www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk).

PENSION LIABILITIES

In 2019/20, 9 whole time uniformed staff and 10 retained duty system staff retired. The net cost of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme to the revenue budget was £3.58m (2018/19: £2.29m). The liability in terms of future pension commitments has decreased to £295.55m (2018/19: £315.81m) due to a change in the actuarial assumptions.

The actuarially assessed liability as at 31 March 2020 for the Local Government Pension Scheme was £16.57m (2018/19: £15.66m), the increase was due to a change in actuarial assumptions used to re-measure the schemes liabilities which has resulted in an increase in the schemes liabilities.

EXPLANATION OF ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

The Statement of Accounts summarises the financial performance of the Authority for year ended 31 March 2020. These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) which in turn is underpinned by International Financial Reporting Standards.

The **Core Statements** are:

- The **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** – this records all of the Authority's income and expenditure for the year. The top half of the statement provides an analysis by service area. The bottom half of the statement deals with corporate transactions and funding.

- The **Movement in Reserves Statement** is a summary of the changes to the Authority's reserves over the course of the year. Reserves are divided into "useable", which can be invested in capital projects or service improvements, and "unusable" which must be set aside for specific legal or accounting purposes.
- The **Balance Sheet** is a "snapshot" of the Authority's assets, liabilities, cash balances and reserves at the year-end date. •
- The **Cash Flow Statement** shows the reason for changes in the Authority's cash balances during the year, and whether that change is due to operating activities, new investment, or financing activities (such as repayment of borrowing and other long term liabilities).
- **The Pension Fund Account** which shows the movements relating to the Firefighters' Pension Fund.

The **Notes** to these financial statements provide further detail about the Authority's accounting policies and individual transactions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information about these accounts is available from the Treasurer. Interested members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed. Availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised on the website for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk) and a notice is displayed in the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Ffordd Salesbury, St Asaph, LL17 0JJ.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

THE AUTHORITY'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. In this Authority, that officer is the Treasurer.
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets.
- to approve the Statement of Accounts.

AUTHORITY'S CERTIFICATE

I approve the Statement of Accounts of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2020.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Councillor Peter Lewis
Chairman, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

THE TREASURER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). The Statement of Accounts is required to give a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020.

In preparing the Statement of Accounts, the Treasurer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently.
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.
- complied with the Code of Practice.
- kept proper accounting records which were up-to-date.
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

TREASURER'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the accounts provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

K W Finch FCPFA
Treasurer, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Independent auditor's report of the Auditor General for Wales to the members of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Report on the audit of the financial statements

Opinion

I have audited the financial statements of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority for the year ended 31 March 2020 under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

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

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20 based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the financial position of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2020 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with legislative requirements and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with applicable law and International Standards on Auditing in the UK (ISAs (UK)). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of my report. I am independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – effects of Covid-19 on property pension asset valuations

I draw attention to Note 33 to the financial statements, which describes material valuation uncertainty clauses in the valuation report's on Pooled Property Funds, held by the Clwyd pension fund, arising from circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Conclusions relating to going concern

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require me to report to you where:

- the use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- the responsible financial officer has not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the Authority's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

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

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information to identify material inconsistencies with the audited financial statements and to identify any information that is apparently materially incorrect based on, or materially inconsistent with, the knowledge acquired by me in the course of performing the audit. If I become aware of any apparent material misstatements or inconsistencies, I consider the implications for my report.

Report on other requirements

Opinion on other matters

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

- the information contained in the Narrative Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Narrative Report has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019-20;
- The information given in the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in accordance with guidance.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Authority and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Narrative Report or the Annual Governance Statement.

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

- proper accounting records have not been kept;
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

Certificate of completion of audit

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

Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the responsible financial officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts set out on page 11, the responsible financial officer is responsible for the preparation of the statement of accounts, which give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the responsible financial officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of statements of accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the statement of accounts, the responsible financial officer is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless deemed inappropriate.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

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

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

Adrian Crompton
Auditor General for Wales
10 November 2020

24 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9LJ

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME and EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with GAAP, rather than the amount to be funded from contributions. The Authority's expenditure is funded by contributions from the six Local Authorities in North Wales in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The contribution position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2018/19				2019/20			
Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000		Note	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
36,467	0	36,467			27,035		27,035
1,832	0	1,832			2,471		2,471
1,075	0	1,075			1,092		1,092
4,590	0	4,590			3,504		3,504
832	0	832			593		593
3,504	0	3,504			2,866		2,866
0	(1,716)	(1,716)			0	(2,621)	(2,621)
48,300	(1,716)	46,584			37,561	(2,621)	34,940
25	(8)	17		8	497		497
8,469	(12)	8,457		9	8,669	(20)	8,649
0	(33,493)	(33,493)		10	0	(35,237)	(35,237)
		21,565					8,849
		0		20	110	0	110
		(498)		20			(28,894)
		(498)					(28,784)
		21,067					(19,935)

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 contributions from the Constituent Authorities) and other reserves.

The Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Authority's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance which is funded by contributions from the six Constituent Authorities.

The Net Increase / Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Authority.

2019/20	Note	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked and Grant Reserves £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Authority Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2019		1,376	770	0	2,145	(317,091)	(314,946)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/2020							
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services		(8,849)	0	0	(8,849)	0	(8,849)
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		0	0	0	0	28,784	28,784
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		(8,849)	0	0	(8,849)	28,784	19,935
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	6	9,910	0	0	9,910	(9,910)	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		1,061	0	0	1,061	18,874	19,935
Adjustment		0	0	0	1	2	3
Other Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves		(1,050)	1,050	0	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in 2019/20	7	11	1,050	0	1,062	18,876	19,938
Balance as at 31 March 2020		1,387	1,820	0	3,207	(298,215)	(295,008)

2018/19	Note	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked and Grant Reserves £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Authority Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2018		2,057	639	0	2,696	(296,543)	(293,847)
Movement in Reserves during 2018/1918							
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services		(21,565)	0	0	(21,565)	0	(21,565)
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		0	0	0	0	498	498
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		(21,565)	0	0	(21,565)	498	(21,067)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	6	21,046	0	0	21,046	(21,046)	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(519)	0	0	(519)	(20,548)	(21,067)
Adjustment		0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves		(163)	131	0	(32)	0	(32)
Increase/(Decrease) in 2018/19	7	(682)	131	0	(551)	(20,548)	(21,099)
Balance as at 31 March 2019		1,376	770	0	2,145	(317,091)	(314,946)

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 assets 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 the

Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt).

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'.

31 March 2019 £'000		Note	31 March 2020 £'000
47,959	Property, Plant & Equipment	11	45,284
851	Intangible Assets	11	653
0	Long Term Debtors	15	80
48,810	Long Term Assets		46,017
479	Inventories	14	667
4,607	Debtors	15	3,448
0	Assets Held For Sale	11	0
46	Cash & Cash Equivalents	16	1,771
5,132	Current Assets		5,886
20,113	Short Term Borrowing	12	16,139
450	Provisions	18	370
3,612	Creditors	17	3,240
24,175	Current Liabilities		19,749
332,209	Pension Liability	33	312,118
0	Long Term Provisions	18	135
12,504	Long Term Borrowing	12	14,909
344,713	Long Term Liabilities		327,162
(314,946)	Net Assets		(295,008)
2,145	Usable Reserves	19	3,207
(317,091)	Unusable Reserves	20	(298,215)
(314,946)	Total Reserves		(295,008)

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 way of contributions 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.

2018/19 £'000		Note	2019/20 £'000
21,728	Net (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		8,849
(24,904)	Adjustments to Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements	21	(12,813)
(497)	Adjustments for Items Included in the net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities	21	(360)
(3,673)	Net Cash Flows From Operating Activities	21	(4,324)
1,605	Investing Activities	22	641
3,477	Financing Activities	23	1,958
1,409	Net (Increase) or Decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents		(1,725)
(1,455)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(46)
(46)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	16	(1,771)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The notes present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used. They provide information not presented elsewhere in the financial statements and are relevant to an understanding of the accounts.

1 CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

In applying the accounting policies set out in Appendix 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgement in the Statement of Accounts is due to the 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 impaired as a result of the need to reduce levels of service provision.

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

The Statement of Accounts contain estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the Authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account 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 main item in the Authority's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2020, for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year is as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ from Assumptions
Pensions Liability	<p>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, for the Local Government Pension Scheme, the expected return on pension fund assets. An assessment of the liabilities is provided by the government actuary department. Further information is provided within the pension fund account.</p>	<p>Relatively small changes in the assumptions made can have a significant impact on the pension net liability. The pension net liability shown in the balance sheet will only become payable over the retirement period of current and retired employees, so adjustments to the liability can be spread over a number of years through changes in employee and employer contributions. Increases in employer contributions have a direct impact on the budget.</p>
Pay Award	<p>Negotiations regarding the firefighters pay awards are ongoing. Provision has been made in respect of the outstanding agreement.</p>	<p>There is uncertainty as to what the outcome will be and the affect this would have on future budgets.</p>
Property Valuations	<p>The Authority revalues its assets every 5 years. The last valuation was undertaken in 2015-16. It is possible that property values could fluctuate considerably within this five year timeframe.</p> <p>It bases its valuations on assumptions about asset conditions, useful lives, residual values and market conditions.</p> <p>These judgements are underpinned by the best available information and made by qualified valuers but are still based on estimates.</p>	<p>A fluctuation in property values would impact on the values held in the Balance Sheet and on the corresponding depreciation charge.</p>

3 MATERIAL ITEMS OF INCOME AND EXPENSE

Due to changes in actuarial assumptions the net liability on the Firefighters pension scheme has reduced by £19m. This is due partly to changes in the key financial assumptions used being lower than those used in previous years such as CPI inflation, salary inflation and pension increase rate. There have also been changes in the demographic assumptions which again has impacted on the net benefit liability. The main change is a reduction in the life expectancy for both current serving members and current pensioners - 0.9 years and 0.7 years respectively

4 EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Statement of Accounts have been authorised for issue by the Treasurer to the Fire and Rescue Authority on the 9th November 2020. Events after the reporting period are those taking place between the end of the reporting period (31st March 2020) and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue (9th November 2020).

5 EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

The statement shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (grants, contributions etc.) by local authorities compared to resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices.

It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes according to the type of expenditure incurred.

Income and Expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) is presented more fully in the CIES.

2018/19				2019/20		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between the Funding and Accounting basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Exp Statement £'000		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between the funding and Accounting basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Exp Statement £'000
24,737	11,730	36,467	Employees	26,407	628	27,035
1,832	0	1,832	Premises	2,471	0	2,471
1,075	0	1,075	Transport	1,092	0	1,092
4,615	(25)	4,590	Supplies & Services	3,504	0	3,504
832	0	832	Support Services	593	0	593
2,649	855	3,504	Capital Financing Costs	2,750	116	2,866
(1,728)	0	(1,728)	Income	(2,641)	20	(2,621)
34,012	12,560	46,572	Net Cost of Service	34,176	764	34,940
			Other Income & Expenditure			
0	8,486	8,486	Other Income & Expenditure Adjustments	0	9,146	9,146
(33,493)	0	(33,493)	Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	(35,237)	0	(35,237)
519	21,046	21,565	Deficit or (Surplus) on Provision of Services	(1,061)	9,910	8,849
		(2,057)	Opening General Fund Balance			(1,376)
		681	(Surplus)/Deficit on General Fund Balance in Year			(11)
		0	Other Movements Not included above i.e.			
		0	Earmarked Reserves			0
		(1,376)	Closing General Fund Balance			(1,387)

Notes to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

	2019/20			
	Adjustment for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments £'000	Other Differences £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Employees	0	648	(20)	628
Supplies & Services	0	0	0	0
Capital Financing Costs	116	0	0	116
Income	0	0	20	20
Net Cost of Service	116	648	0	764
Other Income & Expenditure				
Other Income & Expenditure Adjustments	498	8,155	493	9,146
Difference between General Fund Surplus or deficit and CIES Surplus or deficit on the provision of services	614	8,803	493	9,910

	2018/19			
	Adjustment for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Change for the Pension Adjustments £'000	Other Differences £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Employees	0	11,637	93	11,730
Supplies & Services	0	0	(25)	(25)
Capital Financing Costs	1,364	0	(509)	855
Income	0	0	0	0
Net Cost of Service	1,364	11,637	(441)	12,560
Other Income & Expenditure				
Other Income & Expenditure Adjustments	(7)	7,960	533	8,486
Difference between General Fund Surplus or deficit and CIES Surplus or deficit on the provision of services	1,357	19,597	92	21,046

Reconciliation of Service Income and Expenditure presented in the Management Accounts to Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

This reconciliation shows how the figures in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis Statement relate to the amounts included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

2018/19 £'000			2019/20 £'000	
	34,012	Net Expenditure in the Service Analysis		34,177
		Amounts in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement not reported to management in the Analysis		
3,148		Depreciation	2,931	
(143)		Government Grant Released	(111)	
0		Released from Grant Reserve	0	
11,637		IAS 19 – Pensions Adjustment (Note 35)	648	
499		Impairment	42	
93		Accumulated Absences	(20)	
0	15,234	Adjustment CAA/Asset Disposal	3	3,493
		Amounts included in the Analysis not included in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
(2,140)		Debt Repayment (MRP)	(2,236)	
(509)		Interest Paid	(514)	
12		Interest Received	20	
(25)	(2,662)	Trading Account Deficit	0	(2,730)
	46,584	Cost of Services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		34,940

6. ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER REGULATION

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure recognised by the Authority in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the Authority to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

2019/20	Useable Reserves				Unusable Reserves
	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked Capital Reserves £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:					
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:					
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	3,447	0	0	3,447	(3,447)
Revaluation (losses)/Gains on Property, Plant and Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Loss on Disposal	27	0	0	27	(27)
Capital grants and contributions applied	(111)	0	0	(111)	111
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:					
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(2,236)	0	0	(2,236)	2,236
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:					
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustment primarily involving the Pensions Reserve					
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(8,829)	0	0	(8,829)	8,829
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (see Note 20)	17,632	0	0	17,632	(17,632)
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:					
Adjustment to Grants reserve	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	(20)	0	0	(20)	20
Total Adjustments	9,910	0	0	9,910	(9,910)

2018/19	Useable Reserves				Unusable Reserves
	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked Capital Reserves £'000	Capital Receipts Reserve £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Movement in Unusable Reserves £'000
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Adjustment Account:					
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:					
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	3,647	0	0	3,647	(3,647)
Revaluation (losses)/Gains on Property, Plant and Equipment	0	0	0	0	0
Gain on Disposal	(8)	0	0	(8)	8
Capital grants and contributions applied	(143)	0	0	(143)	143
Insertion of items not debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:					
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment	(2,140)	0	0	(2,140)	2,140
Adjustments primarily involving the Capital Receipts Reserve:					
Transfer of cash sale proceeds credited as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	0	0	0	0	0
Use of Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustment primarily involving the Pensions Reserve					
Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(8,627)	0	0	(8,627)	8,627
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (see Note 20)	28,224	0	0	28,224	(28,224)
Reversal of items debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement:					
Adjustment to Grants reserve	0	0	0	0	0
Adjustment primarily involving the Accumulated Absences Account:					
Amount by which officer remuneration charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis is different from remuneration chargeable in the year in accordance with statutory requirements	93	0	0	93	(93)
Total Adjustments	21,046	0	0	21,046	(21,046)

7 TRANSFERS TO AND FROM EARMARKED RESERVES

This note sets out the transfers to and from reserves as from the 1 April 2019.

	Balance 01-Apr-18 £'000	Transfers out 2018/19 £'000	Transfers In 2018/19 £'000	Balance 31-Mar-19 £'000	Transfers out 2019/20 £'000	Transfers In 2019/20 £'000	Balance 31-Mar-20 £'000
General Fund	(2,056)	680	0	(1,376)	0	(11)	(1,387)
Earmarked and Grant Reserves	(639)	0	(130)	(769)	0	(1,050)	(1,819)
Total	(2,695)	680	(130)	(2,145)	0	(1,061)	(3,206)

8 OTHER OPERATING EXPENDITURE AND INCOME

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
25	Surplus / Deficit on Trading Operations	0
(8)	(Gains) or Loss on the disposal of non-current assets	135
0	(Gains) or Loss on the derecognition of assets	362
17	Total	497

Note that the trading operation (Rhyl Community Fire Station) identified within the 2018/19 is now part of the revenue budget.

9 FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
509	Interest payable & similar charges	514
(12)	Interest	(20)
7,960	Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability	8,155
8,457	Total	8,649

10 CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES ARE DETAILED BELOW:

2018/19 Contribution £'000		2019/20 Contribution £'000
5,590	Conwy County Borough Council	5,876
3,356	Anglesey County Council	3,523
5,914	Gwynedd Council	6,227
4,569	Denbighshire County Council	4,806
7,409	Flintshire County Council	7,790
6,655	Wrexham County Borough Council	7,015
33,493	Total	35,237

11 PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT AND INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Assets are valued as outlined in Notes 14 of Accounting Policies. Details of the value of assets held at 31 March 2020 comparative figures for 31 March 2019 are shown below, together with details of the movement in the year.

2019-2020	Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicles and Equipment £'000	Infra - structure £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Property Plant & Equipment Total £'000	Intangible Assets Total £'000	Assets Held for Sale Total £'000
Gross Book Value at 1 April 2019	38,723	28,593	260	510	68,086	1,163	0
Recategorisation of assets*	0	(83)	0	0	(83)	83	0
Additions	156	472	0	124	752	23	0
VAT Refund from Previous Year	0	(40)	0	0	(40)	0	0
Derecognition - Disposals	0	(632)	0	0	(632)	0	0
Derecognition - Other*	0	(5,228)	(260)	(6)	(5,494)	(38)	0
Impairment losses / reversals recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(110)	0	0	0	(110)	0	0
Impairment losses / reversals recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(46)	0	0	0	(46)	0	0
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2020	38,723	23,082	0	628	62,433	1,231	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 1 April 2019	(3,130)	(16,747)	(251)	0	(20,128)	(312)	0
Recategorisation of assets*	0	57	0	0	57	(57)	0
Depreciation for Year	(817)	(1,873)	0	0	(2,690)	(240)	0
Derecognition - Disposals	0	474	0	0	474	0	0
Derecognition - Other*	0	4,887	251	0	5,138	31	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 31 March 2020	(3,947)	(13,202)	0	0	(17,149)	(578)	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2020	34,776	9,880	0	628	45,284	653	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2019	35,593	11,846	9	510	47,958	851	0

* The asset register has been reviewed and any assets being held at a £0 net book value have been derecognised, where appropriate.

As a result of this derecognition, the gross book value has been reduced with an equivalent reduction in the accumulated depreciation. In addition an exercise was completed to verify and correctly categorise all assets on the asset register. Where assets have been previously disposed of, but remained on the asset register, the net book value of these assets has been written out.

2018-2019	Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicles and Equipment £'000	Infra - structure £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Property Plant & Equipment Total £'000	Intangible Assets Total £'000	Assets Held for Sale Total £'000
Gross Book Value at 1 April 2018	38,640	29,035	260	6	67,941	864	0
Additions	582	471	0	504	1,558	299	0
Disposals	0	(913)	0	0	(913)	0	0
Impairment/Capitalised Under Statute	(499)	0	0	0	(499)	0	0
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2019	38,723	28,593	260	510	68,087	1,163	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 1 April 2018	(2,314)	(15,389)	(249)	0	(17,952)	(152)	0
Depreciation for Year	(816)	(2,171)	(2)	0	(2,989)	(160)	0
Disposals	0	813	0	0	813	0	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 31 March 2019	(3,130)	(16,747)	(251)	0	(20,128)	(312)	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2019	35,593	11,846	9	510	47,959	851	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2018	36,326	13,646	11	6	49,989	712	0

The last full property valuation was carried out by Wilks Head and Eve, on 1 April 2015. Office accommodation has been valued at existing use value and fire stations at depreciated replacement cost. To comply with the Code of Practice the valuer estimated residual lives for all the Authority's buildings. Depreciation is based on the Beacon Approach where an estimate is made of the components of the building and the useful life of each component. The weighted average method is then used to determine a straight line depreciation percentage. For Fire Stations the percentage used is 2.45% and for Office Buildings 2.21%. Other assets are recognised at historic cost which is a proxy for current cost on short life assets and depreciated over their useful lives.

12 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instrument are carried in the Balance Sheet:

	Long-term		Current	
	31 March 2020	31 March 2019	31 March 2020	31 March 2019
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Investments				
Loans and receivables	0	0	1,730	550
Available-for-sale financial assets	0	0	0	0
Total Investments	0	0	1,730	550
Debtors				
Loans and receivables	0	0	0	0
Financial assets carried at contract amounts	0	0	0	0
Total Debtors	0	0	0	0
Borrowings				
Interest Accrued	0	0	139	142
Financial liabilities at amortised cost	14,909	12,504	16,000	19,971
Total Borrowings	14,909	12,504	16,139	20,113
Creditors				
Financial liabilities carried at contract amount	0	0	2,459	3,269
Total Creditors	0	0	2,459	3,269

Note 1 – Under accounting requirements the carrying value of the financial instrument value is shown in the balance sheet, which includes the principal amount borrowed or lent and further adjustments for breakage costs or stepped interest loans (measured by an effective interest rate calculation) including accrued interest. The effective interest rate is accrued interest receivable under the instrument, adjusted for the amortisation of any premiums or discounts reflected in the purchase price.

Note 2 – Fair value has been measured by:

- Direct reference to published price quotations in an active market; and/or
- Estimating using a valuation technique.

Where assets are identified as impaired because of a likelihood arising from a past event that payments due under the contract will not be made, the asset is written down and a charge made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of the asset are credited/debited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Whilst there is no need to produce more detailed information, additional information will however be needed in the following, albeit unlikely, circumstances:

- Any unusual movements;
- De-recognition of instruments;
- Allowance for credit losses;
- Reclassification of instruments;
- Collateral;
- Defaults and breaches.

These are explained in more detail below.

Financial Instruments Gains/Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

	2018/19		2019/20	
	Financial Liabilities Measured at amortised cost £'000	Financial Assets Loans and receivables £'000	Financial Liabilities Measured at amortised cost £'000	Financial Assets Loans and receivables £'000
Interest expense	509		514	
Total expense in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	509		514	
Interest income		(12)		(20)
Total income in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services		(12)		(20)
Net gain/(loss) for the year	(509)	12	(514)	20

External Borrowing

The loans outstanding have been raised through the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and on the financial markets. The following table gives an analysis of the loans by maturity. The table excludes the interest accrual for the year which is shown under short term borrowing.

Source of Loan	Interest Rate Payable % 2019/20 2018/19	Minimum to Maximum approved limits %	Actual % March 2019	Total Outstanding at 31 March 2019 £'000	Actual % March 2020	Total Outstanding at 31 March 2020 £'000
Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)	1.45 – 4.9 1.45 – 4.9			15,475		14,909
Market Loans	0.85 – 1.20 0.80 - 0.98			17,000		16,000
Analysis of Loans by Maturity						
Within 1 Year		0% - 55%	61.50	19,971	51.76	16,000
Between 1 and 2 years		0% - 50%	8.59	2,790	3.65	1,129
Between 2 and 5 years		0% - 50%	19.26	6,254	31.43	9,716
Between 5 and 10 years		0% - 75%	3.07	998	4.05	1,252
Over 10 years		0% - 100%	7.58	2,462	9.10	2,812
Total				32,475		30,909

Conwy County Borough Council manages the treasury function on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority but all loans are under the name of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

13 FAIR VALUE OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES CARRIED AT AMORTISED COST

Financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost (in long term assets/liabilities with accrued interest in current assets/liabilities). Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- For loans from the PWLB and other loans payable, borrowing from the PWLB has been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or the billed amount;
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

The fair values calculated are as follows:

	31-Mar-19		31-Mar-20	
	Carrying amount £'000	Fair value £'000	Carrying amount £'000	Fair value £'000
PWLB debt	15,475	17,043	14,909	16,468
Non-PWLB debt	17,000	17,000	16,000	16,000
Total Debt	32,475	34,043	30,909	32,468

The fair value has been calculated with direct reference to published price quotations in an active market. In the case of the Fire and Rescue Authority they are based on premiums that would be payable if PWLB loans were surrendered and provides an estimate of the additional interest payable compared to the same loan at current market rates discounted back to the current period. The carrying amount excludes the accrued interest as per note 12.

14 INVENTORIES

An analysis of the stocks held and the movements during the year as at 31 March 2019 and 31 March 2020 is shown below.

	Main Stores		Fleet Stock		Totals	
	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000
Balance at start of year	448	381	116	98	564	479
Purchases	175	107	188	193	363	300
Recognised as an Expense in year	(242)	57	(206)	(169)	(448)	(112)
Balance outstanding at year end	381	545	98	122	479	667

In 2019/20 a review of the stockholding was carried out, which has resulted in the 2018/19 figures being restated. This was due to an element of main stock being reclassified as fleet stock.

15 DEBTORS

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
433	Other	360
2,959	Trade	2,794
1,215	Payment in Advance	374
4,607	Total	3,528

16 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

The actual cash in hand represented the cash shown in the balance sheet, together with transactions not effected within the cleared bank balance at 31 March 2019. The following table summarises the position:

31-Mar-19 £'000		31-Mar-20 £'000
550	Bank Call Accounts	1,730
0	Short Term Investments	0
(514)	Bank Current Accounts	31
10	Petty Cash Imprests	10
46	Total	1,771

17 CREDITORS

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
773	Other	711
2,839	Trade	2,529
3,612	Total	3,240

18 PROVISIONS

At 31 March 2020 the Authority held a provision with a value of £505k relating to employee liabilities. This provision will be utilised to offset revenue expenditure, when it occurs.

	Opening Balance £'000	Movements In £'000	Movements Out £'000	Closing Balance £'000
Pay settlements	450	55	0	505

19 USABLE RESERVES

General Reserves

It is prudent for the Authority to hold a General Reserve and it is anticipated that the areas where it will be used will be:

- pay increases;
- decrease in grant funding.

The balance on the reserve at 31 March 2020 is £1,387k (31 March 2019: £1,376k). The increase is due to a £11k underspend within the revenue budget.

Earmarked Reserves

A number of earmarked reserves have been set up for specific purposes, which the Authority has agreed to fund.

	Balance 1 April 2018 £'000	Transfers in/(out) 2018/19 £'000	Balance 31 March 2019 £'000	Transfers in/(out) 2019/20 £'000	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000
Pension Reserve	44	41	85	0	85
Radio Scheme	300	0	300	0	300
HFSC Grant	195	0	195	0	195
Reduction/Training	100	0	100	0	100
Vehicle Purchase	0	0	0	0	0
Fire Hydrant Repairs	0	90	90	0	90
PPE Uniform	0	0	0	250	250
Transformational Change	0	0	0	350	350
Facilities Improvement	0	0	0	150	150
Legal Liability	0	0	0	200	200
Training	0	0	0	100	100
Total	639	131	770	1,050	1,820

Grant Reserves

Under IFRS any grants that have been received by the Authority for specific schemes but have not yet been utilised in year have been shown under Capital Grants receipts in advance.

Total Usable Reserves

31-Mar-19 £'000		31-Mar-20 £'000
1,375	General Reserve	1,387
770	Earmarked Reserves	1,820
2,145	Total	3,207

20 UNUSABLE RESERVES

31-Mar-19 £'000		31-Mar-20 £'000
9,244	Revaluation Reserve	9,028
6,183	Capital Adjustment Account	5,164
(332,209)	Pensions Reserve	(312,118)
(309)	Accumulated Absences Account	(290)
(317,091)	Total	(298,216)

Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment.

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

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
9,460	Balance at 1 April	9,244
0	Upward revaluation of assets/Remove depreciation	0
0	Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services.	(110)
0	Adjustment from Capital Adjustment Account	(1,600)
(216)	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(216)
0	Asset disposal net	0
9,244	Balance at 31 March	7,318

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 cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement. The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Authority.

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

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
7,323	Balance at 1 April	6,182
	Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:	
(100)	Amount of non current asset written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to CIES	(50)
(3,432)	Charges for depreciation & impairment of non-current assets	(2,760)
0	Derecognition of non-current assets	(470)
0	Adjustment to the Revaluation Reserve through CIES	0
0	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	1,600
(3,532)	Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	(1,680)
	Capital financing applied in the year:	
107	Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	25
144	Capital grants & contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	111
2,140	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	2,236
(1,141)		692
6,182	Balance at 31 March	6,874

The opposite entries for depreciation, impairment charges and revaluations are posted to either the Revaluation Reserve or the Capital Adjustment Account according to the criteria detailed above. The table below shows the transactions that have been posted to the Revaluation Reserve and the Capital Adjustment Account.

2018/19					2019/20			
Fixed Asset Statement (Note 11)	Revaluation Reserve	Capital Adjustment Account	Totals		Fixed Asset Statement (Note 11)	Revaluation Reserve	Capital Adjustment Account	Totals
(3,149)	(216)	(2,933)	(3,149)	Depreciation	(2,931)	(216)	(2,715)	(2,931)
(599)	0	(599)	(599)	Impairments	(205)	0	(205)	(205)
0	0	0	0	Derecognition - Other*	(470)	0	(470)	(470)
(3,748)	(216)	(3,532)	(3,748)	Total	(3,606)	(216)	(3,390)	(3,606)

*An exercise was completed to verify all assets on the asset register. Where assets have been previously disposed of, but remained on the asset register, the net book value of these assets has been written out.

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding in accordance with statutory provisions

The Authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 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 any benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer contributions to pension funds 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.

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
(313,110)	Opening Balance 1 April	(332,209)
(28,134)	Reversal of Items related to retirement benefits debited to the Provision of Service in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(17,632)
8,537	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	8,829
498	Re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability	28,894
(19,099)	Movement on Pension Reserve	20,091
(332,209)	Closing Balance	(312,118)

Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund balance from accruing for compensated absence earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
(216)	Balance at 1 April	(309)
216	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	309
(309)	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	(290)
(309)	Balance at 31 March	(290)

21 CASH FLOW STATEMENT - OPERATING ACTIVITIES

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
21,728	Net (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	8,849
	Adjustment to net (surplus)/deficit for non-cash movements	
(85)	Increase/(decrease) in Inventories	188
(2,116)	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	(1,079)
787	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	372
(3,149)	Depreciation Charge	(2,931)
0	Asset Refund	41
(19,597)	IAS 19 Pension Adjustments	(8,803)
(599)	Impairment Charge	(45)
0	Carrying amount of Non Current Assets sold or derecognised	(520)
(270)	Contribution (to)/from Various Provisions	(55)
(32)	Other non-cash items charged to the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services	0
(93)	Accumulated Absences Reserve	19
(25,154)	Less Total	(12,813)
	Adjustments for Items Included in the net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities	
(509)	Interest paid	(514)
12	Interest Received	20
250	Contributions Received/Capital Receipts	134
(247)	Less Total	(360)
(3,673)	Net Cash Flow From Operating Activity	(4,324)

22 CASH FLOW STATEMENT – INVESTING ACTIVITIES

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
1,856	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	775
(107)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(23)
(144)	Other receipts from investing activities	(111)
1,605	Net cash flow from investing activities	641

23 CASH FLOW STATEMENT – FINANCING ACTIVITIES

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
(17,637)	Cash receipts of short-term and long-term borrowing	(28,536)
20,617	Repayments of short-term and long-term borrowing	30,000
497	Other payments for financing activities	494
3,477	Net cash flow from financing activities	1,958

24 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

2018/19 £		2019/20 £
	Full Year Allowances	
10,445	Chair	10,473
5,445	Vice Chair	5,473
5,445	Chair Audit Committee	5,473
1,745	Member	1,773
65,448	Total of Members' Allowances paid	66,724
6,585	Total of Members' Expenses paid	5,133
72,033	Total Paid to Members	71,856

25 OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

Senior Officers' Emoluments 2018/19 – Salary Between £60,000 and £150,000

POST TITLE	Year	SALARY (inc fees and allowances) £	EXPENSES REIMBURSED £	BENEFIT IN KIND (Provided vehicle) £	TOTAL (excl pension contributions) £	PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS £	TOTAL REMUNERATION £
Chief Fire Officer	2018/19	125,674	126	4,398	130,198	36,650	166,848
	2019/20	128,815	126	5,010	133,951	37,138	171,089
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Retired 06/10/2019)	2018/19	90,795	126	0	90,921	26,479	117,400
	2019/20	84,705	65	0	84,770	14,036	98,806
Assistant Chief Fire Officer	2018/19	90,795	248	2,444	93,487	23,153	116,640
	2019/20	93,065	126	2,793	95,984	27,249	123,233
Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (in post 03/09/2018)	2018/19	49,547	179	2,489	52,215	6,519	58,734
	2019/20	86,675	185	1,814	88,674	21,534	110,208
Assistant Chief Officer	2018/19	61,200	0	11,057	72,257	17,848	90,105
	2019/20	62,424	0	10,013	72,437	18,184	90,621
Temporary Assistant Chief Officer	2018/19	61,200	126	0	61,326	17,848	79,174
	2019/20	62,424	126	3970	66,520	18,184	84,704
Treasurer – Section 151 Officer (15 Days per Year)	2018/19	7,508	210	0	7,718	0	7,718
	2019/20	7,603	101	0	7,704	0	7,704

The Authority does not have any employees with a salary in excess of £150k. The Monitoring Officer is provided by Flintshire County Council as part of a Service. Level Agreement so no costs for an individual are shown in the table above. Further details on the Monitoring Officer costs can be found within Note 29 – Related Parties.

For those officers that are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme the employers contribution includes 14.7% of their salary plus an apportionment of the lump sum payable to the Pension Fund based on a percentage of total pensionable pay.

The number of employees whose remuneration was £60,000 or more in bands of £5,000 was:

REMUNERATION BAND	2018/2019 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	2019/2020 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
£80,000 - £84,999	0	0
£75,000 - £79,999	3	1
£70,000 - £74,999	0	0
£65,000 - £69,999	0	1
£60,000 - £64,999	5	4

The above excludes senior officers as they are separately within the remuneration table.

Remuneration includes all sums paid to or receivable by an employee, expense allowances chargeable to tax and the money value of benefits. The above data does not include employer's pension contributions.

The following table gives the ratio between the Chief Fire Officer's remuneration and the median remuneration of Fire and Rescue Service staff:

2018/19 £		2019/20 £
130,197	Chief Fire Officer	133,951
30,533	Median	31,144
4.26	Ratio	4.30

The staff that are employed under Retained Duty System Contracts have been included in the calculation on their Full Time Equivalent scale point rather than actual earnings. The above data includes total salary paid (excludes pension contributions).

Exit Packages

The number of exit packages with total cost per band and total cost of other redundancies are set out in the table below.

Exit Packages Cost Band (including special payments)	Number of Departures Agreed		Total Cost of Exit Packages in Each Band	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
£0 - £20,000	2	0	10,867	0
Total	2	0	10,867	0

26 EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
71	Fees payable to the Auditor General for Wales with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	60

27 GRANTS

The following grants were received by the Authority:

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
	Revenue	
416	Airwave	416
148	Arson Reduction Team	134
203	Interventions	192
107	NDG: Procurement of vehicles	0
0	Ask and Act	1
136	New Dimensions/All Wales Resilience	134
162	Phoenix	171
88	Resilience Officer	0
0	Firefighter Pension Scheme Employer Contribution Costs	1,086
1,260	Total	2,134
	Capital	
143	Mobile Data Terminals	0
0	NDG: Procurement of Vehicles	111
143	Total	111

Due to the increase in employers pension contributions the authority receives a grant from the Welsh Government in order to deal with the added budget pressure.

28 AGENCY SERVICES

The Authority acts as an agent on behalf of Welsh Government in administering two grant schemes for all the Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. The approved grants are paid to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service who are then responsible for distributing the grants to the other two Fire and Rescue Services.

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
2,010	New Dimensions/All Wales Resilience	2,261
225	Phoenix	225
2,235	Total	2,486

29 RELATED PARTIES

The Authority has a number of links with the constituent authorities:

- Each Member of the Authority is also a Member of one of the constituent authorities
- The Treasurer to the Authority was formerly the Strategic Director - Democracy, Regulation and Support, Conwy County Borough Council. The post is now employed directly by the Fire and Rescue Service.
- The Monitoring Officer is the Chief Executive of Flintshire County Council

Conwy County Borough Council manages the Treasury function on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority and brokers market loans and investments on behalf of the Authority. Conwy CBC also provides legal services to the Authority.

Carmarthenshire County Council provides a superannuation service for the Authority in relation to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme.

There are joint arrangements with North Wales Police which include Facilities Management, a shared control room and partnership working on a number of projects

During the year transactions with related parties arose as shown below:

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
14	Flintshire CC – Monitoring Officer	17
135	Conwy CBC – Financial Services	137
10	Conwy CBC – Legal Services	10
48	Carmarthenshire CC – Superannuation Service	51
19	Welsh Local Government Association	19
149	North Wales Police – Facilities Management	197
7	North Wales Police - Procurement	7

Due to a duplicate journal the North Wales Police - Procurement amount for 2018/2019 has been restated from £15k to £7k.

Members and senior officers of the Authority were asked to declare any third party transactions during the year.

All members have submitted declarations of interest and apart from allowances and expenses no other transactions were identified.

The table below provides details of all payments made to the related parties.

2018/19 £'000		2019/2020 £'000
48	Carmarthen County County	62
328	Conwy County Borough Council	341
76	Flintshire County Council	87
611	North Wales Police Authority	394
19	Welsh Local Government Association	23

The note has been compiled in accordance with the current interpretation and understanding of IAS 24 and its applicability to the public sector.

30 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING

The capital expenditure incurred during the year and the impact upon the Capital Financing Requirement is detailed below:

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
33,916	Opening Capital Financing Requirement	33,383
	Capital Investment in Year	
1,857	Fixed Assets	775
	Sources of Finance	
(144)	Grants & Contributions	(176)
(2,246)	Revenue and Other Provisions	(2,236)
33,383	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	31,746
533	Change in Capital Financing Requirement	1,637
	Explanation of change:	
533	(Increase)/decrease in underlying need to borrow	1,637

Capital Expenditure during the year was as follows:

Scheme	Operational Assets £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Total Expenditure £'000
Station refurbishments	156	0	156
Fleet - vehicles and equipment	362	59	421
Information Technology	133	65	198
Total	651	124	775

CAPITAL COMMITMENTS 2020/21 Onwards

The Authority is committed to capital expenditure in future periods arising from contracts entered into at the balance sheet date. Capital expenditure committed at the 31 March 2020 for future periods equates to £414k (2018/19: £421k). The commitments relate to the following:

Description	£'000
Building Works	344
Information Technology	2
Vehicles	1
Command & Control Refresh	67
Total	414

FINANCING OF CAPITAL SPEND

Capital expenditure in the year was financed as follows:

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
1,606	External Loans	598
144	Grant Funding	111
107	Capital Receipts	23
0	Revenue Contribution to Capital	43
1,857	Total	775

31 LEASES

Finance Leases

The Authority acquired the Wrexham Fire Station under a finance lease in 2016/17. The asset acquired under the lease is carried on the Balance Sheet under Property, Plant and Equipment with a net value of £5,619k.

The lease payment for the Wrexham Fire Station is a peppercorn rent, therefore there is no reconciliation between the total of future minimum lease payments and the present value.

Operating Leases

The Authority had no obligation for operating lease payments as at 31 March 2019 or 31 March 2020. Previous to the introduction of the Prudential Code in 2003 the Authority financed the majority of their short life assets through leasing. Following the introduction of the code the Authority was free to choose the most cost effective way of financing their assets. This has resulted in a move away from leasing as a method of financing to direct purchase.

32 TERMINATION BENEFITS

No contracts were terminated during 2019/20 (2018/19: £11k).

33 TRANSACTIONS RELATING TO POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Pensions

(i) Local Government Services and Control Staff

In 2019/20 the Authority paid employer's pension contribution of £1,489k (2018/19: £1,467k) representing 14.7% (2018/19: 14.7%) of employees' pensionable pay and included a lump sum payment of £747k (2018/19: £721k) into the Clwyd Pension Fund, which provides members with defined benefits related to pay and service.

The contribution rate is determined by the Fund's Actuary based on triennial actuarial valuations, the last review being at 31 March 2016. Following the review, the employer's contribution is 17.0% for 2020/21. Under current Pensions Regulations contribution rates are set to meet 100% of the overall liabilities of the Fund.

Pension contributions to be paid in to the scheme for the financial year 2019/20 are estimated to be £1,489k for the employer.

Further information on the Clwyd Pension Fund can be found in the Pension Funds Annual Report and Accounts which is available on request from the County Treasurer at Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, CH7 6NA or on the website www.flintshire.gov.uk.

(ii) Firefighters

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded scheme with defined benefits. In 2019/20 the Authority paid an Employer's Pension contribution of £3,166k (2018/19: £1,889k). The difference between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Employers Contribution was due to an increase in employer contribution rates. To subsidise this, a grant from Welsh Government was received, which has been included within Note 27.

Pensions payments relating to ill health paid from revenue amounted to £420,208 (2018/19: £404,915). In 2020/21 the employer's contribution to the scheme is estimated to be £3,036k and the estimate for Pensions paid from revenue is £415k. The majority of pension payments to retired firefighters are paid from a separate Pension Fund account administered by the Authority.

Within 2017/2018 a past service cost was recognised reflecting the extension of the interim solution regarding guarantee minimum pension ("GMP") indexation. Members of public service pension schemes with GMP entitlements who reach State Pension age on or after 6 December 2018 and before 6 April 2021 will be covered by this extension of the interim solution. As HMT have not announced any changes to the current solution, no past service cost has been recognised in 2019/20 in this respect.

International Accounting Standard No 19 – Retirement Benefits

In accordance with the requirements of International Accounting Standard No 19 - Retirement Benefits (IAS19) the Authority has to disclose certain information , concerning assets, liabilities income and expenditure related to pension schemes for its employees. As explained in Note 33 the Authority participates in two schemes, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme for Firefighters which is unfunded, and the Local Government Pension Scheme (Clwyd Pension Fund) for other employees which is administered by Flintshire County Council. In addition, the Authority has made arrangements for the payment of added years to certain retired employees outside the provisions of the schemes.

To comply with IAS19 the Authority appoints actuaries on an annual basis to assess the assets and liabilities of both schemes.

During March 2020 the full extent of the COVID-19 pandemic was becoming apparent, causing some turmoil in equity markets around the world. This gives rise to a risk that some asset valuations used in the IAS 19 disclosures (which produce the estimates of the pension deficit shown in the Balance Sheet, and the entries in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement relating to pension movements in year) might be misstated. This is because in some cases March valuations are unavailable when the IAS 19 disclosures are produced. Instead, valuations for earlier periods are used, adjusted for known differences. This is normal practice, but given the impact of COVID-19 the risk of significant difference between the valuations used for the IAS calculations and the finalised March valuations is considered to be higher. In addition, the nature of the asset holding of the Clwyd Pension Fund is such that around 13% of the assets attributed to the Authority, £3.8m, are investments in private markets making them harder to value. The Authority discussed this with the Clwyd Pension Fund and the Fund's actuary advised that in their view the valuations are as accurate as is possible given the constraints posed by the timescales for the production of IAS 19 calculations, and that any differences to March valuations confirmed later in the year are unlikely to be material.

The risk that the impact of COVID-19 will affect economic factors such as the valuation of assets, currency markets, interest rates and inflation rates remains high. Since these factors are used to inform the IAS actuarial calculations in respect of both assets and liabilities, this may have an impact on the calculation of the pension deficit in the future.

The following table provides a detailed breakdown of the data in line with the Code.

IAS 19 Pension Adjustment to the Net Cost of Service Income and Expenditure Statement

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
7,213	Current Service Costs	10,056
12,883	Past Service Costs	(629)
58	Administration Expenses	40
(3,772)	Employer's Contributions	(4,682)
(4,765)	Top Up Grant	(4,147)
0	Actuarial Adjustment/Curtailment	96
(90)	Transfer Out	(380)
110	Transfer In	390
11,637	Adjustment to Net Cost of Service	744

Pension assets and liabilities recognised in the balance sheet arising from the Authority's obligation, in respect of its defined benefit plan are as follows:

31st March 2019 £'000		31st March 2020 £'000
315,810	Estimated Present value of the defined benefit obligation in the Fire Fighters Pension Fund	295,550
45,355	Estimated Present value of the defined benefit obligation in the Clwyd Pension Fund	45,350
361,165	Total Estimated share of liabilities	340,900
(28,956)	Estimated Share of assets in Clwyd Pension Fund	(28,782)
332,209	Net Pensions Deficit	312,118

Assets and Liabilities in Relation to Post-employment Benefits

Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities (defined benefit obligation):

Liabilities	2018/19 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2019/20 £'000
	Clwyd	Firefighters	Clwyd	Firefighters
Balance as at 1 April	40,275	299,820	45,355	315,810
Current Service Cost	1,513	5,700	1,666	8,390
Transfer Values	0	110	0	390
Interest	1,075	7,640	1,128	7,770
Actuarial Loss/Gain	2,692	(2,450)	(2,434)	(28,340)
Benefits paid	(1,270)	(8,710)	(824)	(9,310)
Member contribution	337	1,550	338	1,590
Past Service Cost	733	12,150	121	(750)
Net Pension Liabilities at Year End	45,355	315,810	45,350	295,550

Transactions Relating to Retirement Benefits Recognised in the Accounts

	Funded		Unfunded	
	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19	2019/20
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement</u>				
Net Cost of Service				
Current Service Cost	1,513	1,666	5,700	8,390
Past Service Costs	733	121	12,150	(750)
Administration Expenses	58	40	0	0
Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure				
Net Interest Expense	320	385	7,640	7,770
Transfers out of scheme	0	0	(90)	(380)
Transfers in to scheme	0	0	110	390
Total Defined Benefit Charged to Provision of Service	2,624	2,212	25,510	15,420
Other Post Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement				
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit/liability comprising:				
*Return on Plan Assets (excluding Interest) (A)	(740)	1,880	0	0
*Actuarial (Gains)/Losses arising on Changes in Demographic Assumptions (B)	0	(2,170)	0	(9,820)
*Actuarial (Gains)/Losses arising on Changes in Financial Assumptions (C)	2,692	(564)	8,450	(11,350)
*Other (D)	0	300	(10,900)	(7,170)
Total Pension Costs Charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	1,952	(554)	(2,450)	(28,340)
Movement in Reserves Statement				
Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in accordance with the Code	(2,624)	(2,212)	(25,510)	(15,800)
Actual Amounts charged to the General Fund for pensions in the year				
Total Employer Contributions	1,467	1,489	2,305	3,193
Fire Fighters Pensions Top Up Grant	0	0	4,765	4,147

* A + B + C + D = Re-measurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability/(Asset) as quoted in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:
2019/20: (£28,894k); 2018/19: (£498k)

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. A reconciliation of the fair value of the scheme assets only relates to the Clwyd Pension Fund:

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
(26,985)	Balance 1 April	(28,860)
(755)	Interest on Plan Assets	(743)
(644)	Remeasurements (Assets)*	1,784
58	Administration Expenses	40
(1,467)	Employer Contributions	(1,489)
(337)	Member Contributions	(338)
1,270	Benefits Paid	824
(28,860)	Net Pension Assets at Year End	(28,782)

*The 2018/2019 Remeasurement (Assets) figure (previously £740k) has been restated as per the Mercer Report.

The Local Government Scheme is a funded scheme and as such has built up assets over the years to generate income to meet future liabilities. Assets in the Clwyd Pension Fund consist of:

Asset Category	Quoted Prices in Active Markets	31-Mar-19	31-Mar-19	31-Mar-20	31-Mar-20
		£'000	%	£'000	%
Equity Securities					
Global Quoted	Y	2,316	8%	2,223	8%
Emerging Markets	Y	1,795	6%	1,597	6%
Bonds					
Overseas Other	Y	3,214	11%	2,892	10%
LDI	Y	6,602	23%	5,039	18%
Property					
UK	Y	1,593	6%	1,914	7%
Overseas	Y	319	1%	125	0%
Alternatives					
Hedge Funds/Private Equity/ Commodities/GTAA	Y	13,059	45%	14,607	51%
Cash & Cash Equivalents					
All	Y	58	0%	385	1%
Totals		28,956	100%	28,782	100%

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has impacted global financial and property markets. As a result of the volatility in market conditions, year-end valuation reports provided to the Clwyd Pension Fund include a statement that there is a material valuation uncertainty related to the UK property fund managed on behalf of the Clwyd Pension Fund.

The total value of this fund as at 31st March 2020 is £127.5m of which, £2m is attributable to NWFRA.

Details regarding the changes in the rules can be found at Local Government Pension Scheme Rules.

Sensitivity Analysis

If the assumptions were changed the effect on the data would be as per the following table.

	LGPS % Change	LGPS Impact £ Million	Firefighters % Change	Firefighters Impact £ Million
Rate of Discounting	0.1	15.7	0.5	--26.0
Rate of Increase in Salaries	0.1	16.7	0.5	2.0
Rate of Increase in Inflation	0.1	17.4	0.5	21.0
Life Expectancy + 1 Year	1.0	17.7	1.0	9.0

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been valued on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method which assesses the future liabilities of the fund discounted to their present value. The Firefighters' Scheme has been valued by the Government Actuary's Department and the Clwyd Pension Fund liabilities have been valued by Mercer, an independent firm of actuaries. The main assumptions used in the calculations are:

	Firefighters' Scheme		Clwyd Pension Fund	
	2019 %	2020 %	2019 %	2020 %
Rate of Inflation	2.35	2.00	2.2	2.1
Rate of Increase in Salaries	4.35	4.00	3.45	3.35
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.35	2.00	2.3	2.2
Rate of Discounting Scheme Liabilities	2.45	2.25	2.5	2.4
Life Expectancy	Estimated as at 31 March 2020			
Life Expectancy at 65	Males	Females	Males	Females
Current Pensioners	21.3	21.3	22.5	24.9
Future Pensioners	23.0	23.0	24.1	26.9

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded scheme and as such holds no assets to generate income to meet the scheme's liabilities. Funding for the payments made from the scheme is met from employers and employees contributions in the year and an annual grant from the Welsh Government.

34 NATURE AND EXTENT OF RISKS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Credit Risk

This is the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Authority. The highest credit risk is for investments. These are managed through the Treasury Management Strategy. In the current market the Authority only invests short term, up to a maximum of 3 months, with institutions that are on the Authority's counterparty list. On a daily basis the Authority is updated with any changes to the credit status of institutions on the counterparty list. If any institutions are downgraded and fail to meet the criteria set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, they are removed from the list. If an institute failed to repay an investment then the financial loss to the Authority could be in excess of £0.865m. However, due to careful management of the portfolio no institutions have failed to repay monies due.

Liquidity Risk

This is the possibility that the Authority might not have funds available to meet its commitments, to make payments. The Authority has ready access to borrowings from the Public Works Loan Board. There is no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments, under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Authority will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates.

Market Risk

This is the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Authority as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movements. An assessment of the financial effect of a 1% increase in interest rates has been undertaken. Interest on variable rate and temporary borrowing would have increased by £80k and interest from investments would have increased by £9k.

The Authority has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which ensures the Authority has measures in place to manage the above risks. At the beginning of the financial year Members are presented with a report outlining the Treasury Management Strategy and setting out the Prudential Indicators (PI's) for the year. Half way through the year a report details progress against the strategy and if necessary a revision of the PI's. At year end the final report sets out how the Authority has performed during the year. How the Authority manages risks arising from financial instruments is detailed in the treasury reports presented to Members and can be accessed from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website - www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk.

35 CONTINGENT LIABILITY

There are legal claims currently being dealt with by the authority but there is less than 50% likelihood of settlement.

The Authority has the sum of £0.2m reserved for insurance in relation to current emerging claims not currently recognised.

36 ACCOUNTING STANDARDS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BUT NOT YET ADOPTED

At the balance sheet date the following new standards and amendments to existing standards have been published but not yet adopted by the Code of Practice of Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom:

- * Amendments to IAS 28 Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures:
Long-term Interests in Associates and Joint Ventures
- * Annual Improvements to IFRS Standards 2015–2017 Cycle
- * Amendments to IAS 19 Employee Benefits: Plan Amendment,
Curtailment or Settlement.

Due to the Covid-19 outbreak the implementation of IFRS 16 has been deferred to the 2020/21 Code.

The various changes covered by the Annual Improvements to IFRS's cycles are relatively minor updates to the relevant standards to clarify the correct treatment. None will have a material impact on the Statement of Accounts.

FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION FUND ACCOUNT

This shows the financial position of the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account, indicating whether the Authority owes, or is owed money by the Welsh Government in order to balance the account, together with details of its net assets.

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
	INCOME	
	Contributions Receivable:	
(1,889)	Employer normal contributions	(3,166)
(31)	Employer ill health charge	(24)
(1,466)	Members normal contributions	(1,491)
(83)	Members backdated contributions	(89)
(120)	Transfers In	(388)
(3,589)	TOTAL	(5,158)
	EXPENDITURE	
	Benefits Payable:	
6,954	Pension Payments	7,296
1,262	Commutation of Pensions and Lump Sum benefits	1,636
43	Backdated Commutation Payments	(6)
	Payments to and on Behalf of Leavers:	
95	Transfers out	379
8,354	TOTAL	9,305
	NET AMOUNT (PAYABLE)/RECEIVABLE BEFORE TOP UP GRANT	
(4,765)	Top Up grant receivable from WG	(4,147)
0	NET AMOUNT (PAYABLE)/RECEIVABLE FOR YEAR	0

2018/19 £'000		2019/20 £'000
	Net Current Assets and Liabilities:	
(628)	Prepayment to Pensioners	(651)
(1,294)	Top Up payable (from)/to WG	(1,018)
1,922	Amount owed (from)/to the General Fund	1,669
0	Net Assets at year end	0

Notes to the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account

The Fund was established 1 April 2007 and covers the 1992, 2007 and 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes and is administered by the Authority.

Employee and employer contributions are paid into the Fund, from which payments to pensioners are made. Employees' and employer's contribution levels are based on percentages of pensionable pay set nationally by the Welsh Government and subject to triennial revaluation by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD). The scheme is an unfunded scheme with no investment assets and any difference between benefits payable and contributions receivable is met by Top Up Grant from the Welsh Government.

Transfers in to the scheme are a transfer of pension benefits from another pension scheme, for new or existing employees and transfers out are transfer of benefits for employees who have left the Authority and joined another pension scheme.

The Authority is responsible for paying the employer's contributions into the fund. These are the costs that are included in the accounts for the Authority.

Carmarthenshire County Council, acting on behalf of the Dyfed Pension Fund, manage the payments made to firefighter pensioners on behalf of the Authority. They are also responsible for managing the records of current pensioners and active members of the scheme.

In 2019/20 the estimate for the Top Up Grant due was £3,896k and the actual was £4,147k. At the year end the WG owed £1,669k to the Authority.

Contribution Rates

Under the Firefighters' Pension Regulations the employer's contribution rate for the 2015 scheme was 27.3% (14.3% - 2018/2019) of pensionable pay with employees' rate as per the pensionable pay banding detailed below:

Pensionable Pay Band	2019/20 Contribution Rate %
Up to £27,818	11.0
£27,819 to £51,515	12.9
£51,516 to £142,500	13.5
More than £142,501	14.5

Under the Firefighters' Pension Regulations the employer's contribution rate for the 2007 scheme was 26.6% (16.8% - 2018/2019) of pensionable pay with employees' rates as per the pensionable pay banding detailed.

Pensionable Pay Band	2019/20 Contribution Rate %
Up to and including £15,609	8.5
More than £15,609 and up to and including £21,852	9.4
More than £21,852 and up to and including £31,218	10.4
More than £31,218 and up to and including £41,624	10.9
More than £41,624 and up to and including £52,030	11.2
More than £52,030 and up to and including £62,436	11.3
More than £62,436 and up to and including £104,060	11.7
More than £104,060 and up to and including £124,872	12.1
More than £124,872	12.5

For the 1992 scheme the employer's contribution rate was 29.3% (25.5% - 2018/2019) of pensionable pay with employees' rate as per the pensionable pay bandings detailed below:

Pensionable Pay Band	2019/20 Contribution Rate %
Up to and including £15,609	11.0
More than £15,609 and up to and including £21,852	12.2
More than £21,852 and up to and including £31,218	14.2
More than £31,218 and up to and including £41,624	14.7
More than £41,624 and up to and including £52,030	15.2
More than £52,030 and up to and including £62,436	15.5
More than £62,436 and up to and including £104,060	16.0
More than £104,060 and up to and including £124,872	16.5
More than £124,872	17.0

The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account does not take account of liabilities for pensions and other benefits after the period end as this is the responsibility of the Authority. Details of the long term pension obligations can be found in Note 33 to the core financial statements.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. BASIS OF PREPARATION

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Authority's transactions for the 2019/20 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2020. The Authority is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices, under section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003, primarily comprise of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2019/20 (the Code) supported by 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. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

In the revenue accounts, income and expenditure are accounted for, net of VAT (unless the VAT is irrecoverable), in the year in which they arise, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

- Fees, charges and rents due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the Authority provides the relevant goods or services.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and consumption they are carried as stocks on the Balance Sheet.
- Interest payable on borrowings and receivable on investments is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where income and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. A de-minimus limit of £100 is set for these transactions. Where it is doubtful that debts will be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

3. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments that mature in no more than three 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.

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

4. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits payable during employment

Salaries and employment-related payments are recognised in the period in which the service is received from employees. The cost of annual leave entitlement earned but not taken by employees at the end of the period is recognised in the financial statements to the extent that employees are permitted to carry-forward leave into the following period.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are amounts payable as a result of a decision by the Authority to terminate an officer's employment before the normal retirement date or an officer's decision to accept voluntary redundancy and are charged on an accruals basis to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement at the earlier of when the authority can no longer withdraw the offer of those benefits or when the authority recognises costs for a restructuring.

5. POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

The Authority participates in distinct pension schemes for Fire fighter and corporate members of staff. The schemes are as follows:

Firefighter's Pension Scheme (FPS)

The Firefighters' pension scheme is an unfunded defined benefit scheme, meaning that there are no investment assets built up to meet the pension liabilities and cash has to be generated to meet the actual pension payments as they fall due. Employee and employer contributions are based on a percentage of pensionable pay set nationally by the Welsh Government and this is subject to triennial revaluation by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD).

The pension fund is treated as a separate income and expenditure statement in the Statement of Accounts and is ring fenced to ensure accounting clarity, please see Notes 21, 34 and the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account for more detail. It is through the pension fund that the Authority discharges its responsibility for paying the pensions of retired officers, their survivors and others who are eligible for benefits under the scheme.

The estimated long term liability to the Fire and Rescue Authority to meet these costs is disclosed by a note to the accounts as required by IAS 19.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

Support and control room staff are part of the Clwyd Pension Fund (the 'fund'). This is a funded scheme with pensions paid from the underlying investment funds administered by Flintshire County Council.

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme.

Actuaries determine the employer's contribution rate. Further costs, which arise in respect of certain pensions paid to retired employees, are paid on an unfunded basis.

Discretionary Benefits:

The Authority also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

6. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

Events after the reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified.

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period (adjusting events after the reporting period), and
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period (non-adjusting events after the reporting period).

7. EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS

When items of income and expense are material, their nature and amount is disclosed separately, either on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement or in the notes to the accounts, depending on how significant the items are to an understanding of the Authority's financial performance.

8. PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS, CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND ESTIMATES AND ERRORS

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Authority's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, 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. Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

A Financial Instrument is defined as 'any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another'. Financial liabilities (loans) and financial assets (investments) are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. The annual interest paid and received in the Income and Expenditure account is based on the carrying amount of the loan or investment multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For all of the loans and investments the Authority has, the amounts presented in the Balance Sheet are the principal outstanding plus any accrued interest for the year.

The authority recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost.

10. INVESTMENTS

Investments are shown in the Balance Sheet at their cost to the Authority and are itemised in a separate note.

11. FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS

The majority of transactions of the Authority are in sterling. Where the Authority has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where equipment has been purchased from abroad it has been necessary to pay for the goods in the currency of the country the transaction took place.

12. ACCOUNTING FOR GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Whether paid on account, by instalments, or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Authority when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Authority will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due, are not credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When the conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation & Non-specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure

13. LEASES

Finance leases

Where substantially all risks and rewards of ownership of a leased asset are borne by the Authority, the asset is recorded as Property, Plant and Equipment and a corresponding liability is recorded. The value at which both are recognised is the lower of the fair value of the asset or the present value of the minimum lease payments, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease. The implicit interest rate is that which produces a constant periodic rate of interest on the outstanding liability. The asset and liability are recognised at the inception of the lease, and are de-recognised when the liability is discharged, cancelled or expires. The annual rental is split between the repayment of the liability and a finance cost. The annual finance cost is calculated by applying the implicit interest rate to the outstanding liability and is charged to Finance Costs in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.

Operating Leases

Where assets are available for use under leasing arrangements, the rentals payable are charged to the appropriate service account on a straight-line basis irrespective of the payment arrangements. Since the Authority does not own these assets, the cost does not appear in the Balance Sheet. The liability to pay future rental charges is similarly excluded, but a separate note is annexed to the Balance Sheet.

14. 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 & Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant & Equipment is capitalised on an accruals 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.

A de-minimus expenditure level of £5,000 has been set for Property, Plant & Equipment, below which expenditure will not be subject to capital accounting requirements. Where an asset is revalued below £5,000, any associated expenditure and depreciation will normally be written out and the asset removed from the Fixed Asset Register.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- 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
- an initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located

Assets are carried in the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Land & Buildings – fair value
- Assets under construction - historical cost
- All other assets - current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value - EUV).

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for all property, plant and equipment assets, by systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives.

Useful Economic Life of Assets

Land	Infinite (no depreciation)
Buildings	20-75 years
Buildings (leased)	Term of lease
Infrastructure	10-20 years
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	3-20 years
Intangible Assets	5-15 years

Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis, with acquisitions being depreciated in the year following purchase. A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of disposal.

Buildings are depreciated using the Beacon Approach. An estimate is made of the components of the building and the useful life of each component. The weighted average method is then used to determine a straight line depreciation percentage. The percentages used are:

Buildings – fire stations	2.45%
Buildings – offices	2.21%

Depreciation is charged within the income and expenditure account. This amount is credited to the General Fund Balance and has a neutral impact on the contributions made by the constituent authorities.

The Authority is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution from General Fund Balances (MRP) by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Impairments

Assets are carried at no more than their recoverable amount, and impairment is measured by comparing the carrying value with the higher of fair value less costs to sell (equivalent to net selling price) and value in use. Impairment is assessed annually, and the indicators to reverse an impairment are the same for tangible and intangible assets. All impairment losses on re-valued assets are recognised in the Revaluation Reserve up to the amount in the Revaluation Reserve for each individual asset.

Disposals

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) 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.

Revaluation

When an asset is re-valued, an entry has been made between the Revaluation Reserve and the Capital Adjustment Account which represents the difference between depreciation based on historic cost and the re-valued amount.

A revaluation loss that is due to a clear consumption of economic benefit, if there is a previous revaluation surplus on that asset, is first charged against the surplus to the extent of the surplus, with the balance of the loss being charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account.

15. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Internally generated intangible assets are capitalised where the recognition criteria are met. The criteria are as follows:

- it must be possible to separate the asset from the entity, the entity must control the asset,
- there must be future economic benefit from the asset,
- it must be probable that the economic benefits will flow to the entity, and
- the cost of the asset can be measured reliably.

The intangible asset will be initially measured at cost, all revaluations are charged initially to the revaluation reserve, and there is no maximum useful life for the asset.

16. CAPITAL RECEIPTS

The proceeds from disposed of assets are held as Usable Capital Receipts in the Usable Capital Receipts reserve until used to finance capital expenditure. All receipts from the sale of assets above £10k are treated as capital receipts. The exception to this rule is when the receipt relates to specific vehicles for which the proceeds have been factored in to the repayment schedule, these amounts could be less than £10k.

17. MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY

Regulations require that the Fire and Rescue Authority approve an MRP statement in advance of each year. For Land and Buildings the MRP policy is to repay expenditure incurred using the Asset Life Method-straight line. For Vehicles, Plant, Equipment and Infrastructure the MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets.

18. INVENTORIES

Stock is valued on a Last In First Out (LIFO) basis.

19. RESERVES and PROVISIONS

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Authority an obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits, but where the timing of the transfer is uncertain.

Provisions are charged to the appropriate service revenue account in the year that the Authority becomes aware of the obligation, based on the best estimate of the likely settlement. When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision set up in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year - where it becomes more likely than not that a transfer of economic benefits will not now be required (or a lower

settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service revenue account.

The Authority maintains reserves to meet future expenditure. These are disclosed within the balance sheet and their purposes are explained in the notes to the balance sheet.

20. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured reliably.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Annual Governance Statement 2019-20



Delivering Good Governance Framework

The CIPFA/Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016) (the Framework) requires the Fire and Rescue Authority to publish an Annual Governance Statement, and to be responsible for ensuring that:

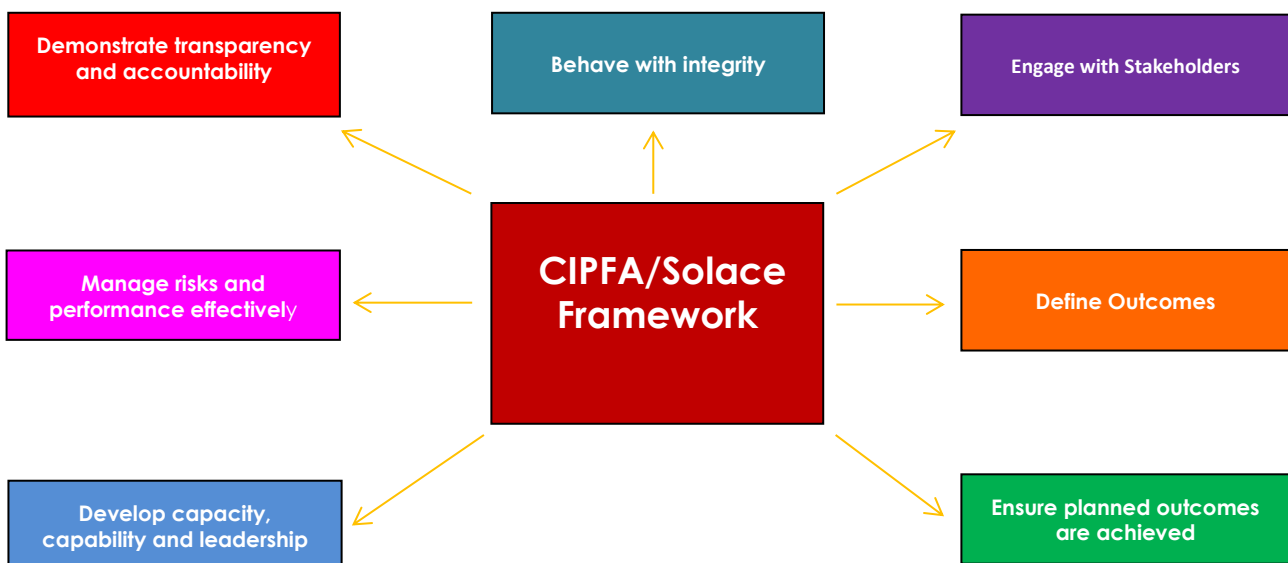
- business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations;
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for ; and
- resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.

To fulfil its wide range of functions, the Authority must satisfy a range of political, economic, social and environmental objectives over the short, medium and longer term. This subjects it to a different set of external and internal constraints and incentives from those found in the private sector, all of which affect its governance arrangements. A key piece of legislation in Wales is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Authority to consider the longer term in making its decisions and to work collaboratively with other public bodies to improve well-being in Wales.

Stakeholders are, therefore, interested in issues such as:

- whether the Authority's planned outputs have been delivered and outcomes achieved; and
- whether this has been done in an efficient, economic, effective and equitable manner.

The core principles underpinning the CIPFA/Solace Framework are set out below. The following pages detail how the Authority is meeting these principles.



Summary: Governance Arrangements

The Authority is required to review the effectiveness of its arrangements each year to ensure that there is a sound system of governance. The key contributors to this process are summarised on page 10 and include:

- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of the Authority's Constitution.
- Having an Authority and committee structure that:
 - monitors the effectiveness of risk management arrangements;
 - regularly reviews the governance arrangements;
 - considers and reviews internal and external audit strategies, plans and reports; and
 - reviews, scrutinises and approves the annual statement of accounts.
- Having an Executive Group that:
 - provides leadership on governance;
 - contributes to the completion and review of the Annual Governance Statement; and
 - provides clear direction to the Service and senior managers.
- The use of information from various sources to inform the governance arrangements, for example:
 - performance reports;
 - risk management arrangements;
 - external regulator reports; and
 - the Internal Audit Annual Report.

Achievements against the core principles are set out within pages 5 – 11. The Authority's agreed improvement actions for 2019/20 are contained on page 13, which confirms the progress made.

Covid-19 Governance Impact

During March 2020, the Coronavirus pandemic resulted in a nationwide lockdown as attempts were made to lessen the impact of the evolving crisis. The Authority responded to maintain an emergency response across North Wales, whilst putting the necessary control measures in place to reduce the risks associated with Covid-19 and to maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of our staff and the communities that we serve.

Whilst we were still able to deliver our emergency response, this has impacted on our 'business as usual' for non-emergency service delivery with, where possible, alternative models being used to continue the delivery of our services. This has and will continue to have an impact on the Authority's governance arrangements. The impacts on governance will fall into the following broad categories:

- Impact on business as usual delivery of services;

- New areas of activity as part of the national response to coronavirus and any governance issues arising;
- The funding of the financial implications and logistical consequences of delivering the local government response;
- Assessment of the long-term disruption and consequences arising from the coronavirus.

This continues to be closely monitored and we will conduct a review of the lessons to be learned from our response and identify any improvement actions.

A number of meetings were cancelled during the lockdown period and arrangements were revised in accordance with the amended regulations issued by the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government has issued the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020. These regulations make temporary provision until 1 May 2021, in relation to fire and rescue authority meetings, and for public and press access to these meetings during the COVID-19 emergency. Moving forward remote meetings will be held during the period that social distancing arrangements are in place.

During the lockdown period following consultation with the Chief Fire Officer, and with the approval of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Monitoring Officer implemented temporary governance arrangements to enable essential decision making to continue, including:

- 1 The scheduled annual, business and committee meetings of NWFRA up to December 2020 will be replaced by a single meeting of the full Authority conducted via videoconferencing on 9 November 2020, 9.30am-1pm;
- 2 Part of the agenda at the November meeting will be dedicated to matters that would normally be dealt with at the Authority's annual meeting, including the election of Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the Authority and the Audit Committee for the period up to the next annual meeting in June 2021;
- 3 Between March and September 2020 meetings have been held between the Chief Fire Officer and the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority;
- 4 From September 2020 onwards, informal, closed sessions will be held for all Members to receive information from officers and to discuss key issues ahead of the November 2020 meeting. These sessions will focus primarily on shaping the Authority's improvement priorities and budget-setting for 2021/22; and
- 5 In addition to the regular contact that already exists between the Chair and the Chief Fire Officer, a new "Temporary Consultative Committee"

will be meeting on an ad hoc basis to act as a sounding board if and when any significant issues arise during this time. This Temporary Consultative Committee will comprise the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit Committee, the Treasurer, the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk.

Actions for 2020/21 and monitoring arrangements

The action plan for 2020/21 is set out in Appendix A, which will be monitored, quarterly by the Executive Group.

Core Principles

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

- The Constitution sets out the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority and its committees and includes the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.
- The Monitoring Officer ensures that decisions taken are within the law and comply with the provisions of the Constitution.
- The Constitution includes the Code of Conduct for Members and this is monitored by the Standards Committee.
- Where necessary legal advice is sought to inform decision making.
- Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers are in place, which requires the declaration of business interests and recording of the receipt of gifts and/or hospitality.
- The Authority has a procedure to receive and respond to any complaints received. A summary report of complaints and appreciations is provided to the Fire and Rescue Authority annually.
- Key policies are in place to prevent and minimise the risk of fraud. Policies include: Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules. Where irregularity is suspected arrangements are in place to ensure that it is thoroughly investigated.
- The recruitment policy, induction and training processes incorporate personal behaviours with ethical values. The core values of the Service are fully embedded and include; service to the community, people, diversity and improvement.
- Attainment of the Public Health Wales Corporate Health Bronze and Platinum awards.
- The Inclusive Fire Service Group (IFSG) considers matters relating to equality, diversity and cultural issues. The Group reviewed and updated the core values in 2019/20 to reflect our modern and professional ways of working.
- Disciplinary cases and any allegations of wrongdoing are investigated in accordance with the Service's Discipline Handbook.
- A Strategic Equality Plan is published in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Equality objectives are reviewed annually and monitored throughout the year.
- As part of our commitment to the Welsh language, all new members of staff are required to achieve a minimum of Level 2 Welsh language skills.
- The Improvement and Well-being Plan is published on the Authority's website. This details the improvement objectives as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place to refer vulnerable people the Service come into contact with, to other agencies.

Core Principles

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

- All meetings are advertised and open to the public and full Authority meetings are webcast. Agendas and papers are available on the Authority's website.
- Information is published on the Authority's website as part of the publication scheme. Easy read/read speak/Welsh versions of documents are provided.
- Public consultation arrangements are in place to invite the views of stakeholders prior to developing and implementing key changes. This includes consultation on the Improvement and Well-being Plan
- The commitment to openness is also shown through:
 - completion of impact assessments for all key decisions;
 - the Complaints and Compliments Procedure which includes Authority reporting arrangements;
 - the Public Engagement and Consultation Strategy (presented to the July 2018 meeting of the Executive Panel);
 - engagement with Employee Representative Bodies;
 - membership of the North Wales Equality Group.
- A variety of engagement methods are used including:
 - directed communication using social media, with accounts on Facebook and Twitter. Ability to sign up for email updates on specific issues via the website;
 - engagement with young people via the Phoenix programme and school visits;
 - community safety engagement with householders and businesses;
 - Positive Action events and attendance at park runs for firefighter recruitment;
 - attendance at open days/events – for example the Eisteddfod;
 - quarterly bulletin on the website;
 - internal communications include the Weekly Brief and Y Fflam newsletter;
 - participation in the Local Resilience Forum's Warning and Informing Group including an agreement to retweet messages to reach a wider audience;
 - public media campaigns, led by the Community Safety Managers.
- Partnership arrangements are in place to deliver certain outcomes. For example, Principal Officers attend the four local Public Services Boards and the Regional Partnership Board. They also participate in the Emergency Services Collaboration Board and undertake joint training and exercises.
- The Service is a key member of Let's Get Moving North Wales whose collaborative aims are to support everyone in North Wales to move more, and by doing so support their physical and mental wellbeing.

Core Principles

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

- The Improvement and Well-being Plan sets the strategic direction for the Authority and details the improvement objectives in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- The Service has amended its four core values – People, Diversity and Inclusivity, Striving For Excellence and Service to the Community. These summarise the principles and personal values that staff are encouraged to adopt and demonstrate.
- The Service has gained White Ribbon accreditation which demonstrates a commitment to stop violence against women.
- The Service has a statutory duty to put in place business continuity arrangements. Plans across the Service have been updated. There is ongoing collaboration with the other fire and rescue services in Wales to improve planning and consider current risks. The National Issues Committee includes a business continuity work stream.
- The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and annual budget process ensures that financial resources are directed to the Authority's priorities.
- Partnership working is undertaken where there are shared objectives and advantages from working together - for example, the Strategic Arson Reduction Board and Public Services Boards.
- The Strategic Risk Management Policy sets out the process used to identify and control exposure to uncertainty, which may impact on the achievement of the objectives or activities. This is reviewed throughout the year to ensure that risks are identified and appropriately assessed. The Corporate Risk Register records these risks, and they are regularly monitored, by the Corporate Planning Department and reported to the Executive Panel.
- The Wales Fire and Rescue Procurement Strategy 2016/2021 sets out the procurement strategic objectives and documents the areas for development to ensure the Welsh Procurement Policy Statement Principles are met.
- Key decisions are subject to an integrated impact assessment, which takes account of equality, protection, health, safety and wellbeing, Welsh language, finance, sustainability and staffing, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place to refer vulnerable people the Service come into contact with, to other agencies.

Core Principles

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

- Public consultation is carried out as part of setting the Authority's annual objectives which are set out in the Improvement and Well-being Plan. This outlines how the Authority intends to work together with other public bodies to tackle the complex issues that affect people's lives. An assessment of the Authority's performance is produced in October each year and published.
- The Authority's Strategic Risk Management Policy sets out the process used to identify and control exposure to uncertainty, which may impact on the achievement of the objectives or activities. This is reviewed throughout the year to ensure that risks are appropriately managed.
- Following scrutiny from senior managers, performance and financial reports are presented to the Authority and its committees. Accountability meetings are held regularly with all senior managers to review objectives and budget management.
- Monitoring of availability, the workforce and budgets ensure interventions occur when required. Issues are discussed at Chief Officers Advisory Team and Senior Manager meetings.
- National Operational Guidance available and an operational learning forum manages and implements any changes
- There is a significant amount of partnership working across Wales to respond to issues facing the fire sector and other more general public sector issues. Collaboration with multiple agencies is an important aspect of the Authority's work including prevention and protection, responding to incidents and use of resources.
- The budget planning processes ensure budgets are prepared in accordance with objectives, strategies and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This involves input from both Service leads and Authority Members. It shows how the resources will be deployed over the next few years to deliver agreed outcomes and agreed priorities.
- The Wales Fire and Rescue Procurement Strategy 2016/2021 sets out the procurement strategic objectives. Specialist procurement advice is sought and contracts are awarded in line with recognised frameworks, ensuring both value for money and that ethical principles have been followed.

Core Principles

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

- The Authority's Constitution outlines the roles of elected members and designated officers to enable shared understanding of roles and objectives. The designated posts include the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer.
- The Principal Officers hold regular reviews of service delivery, performance and risk through accountability meetings.
- Collaborative and partnership working is in place regionally and nationally. For example, the three fire and rescue services in Wales are part of the all Wales Fire Investigation Training Forum. This supports shared learning and promotes a consistent approach across Wales.
- The All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy 2018-2021 underpins the commitment to lifelong learning and workplace competence.
- Induction processes are in place for Members and employees. These include an introduction to the organisation's core values, the standards of conduct and the role requirements.
- The development needs of employees are identified through one to one, supervision and appraisal meetings. This year a future leaders programme has been developed for staff already employed and future leader apprenticeships have also been advertised.
- The health and wellbeing of the workforce is key to the organisation and support is provided to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. This is achieved through a range of measures including HR policies and guidance documents, flexible working approach, the occupational health service and the employee assistance programme.
- The Service has a dedicated training department, with competency frameworks for operational staff. Training is delivered using a variety of methods including e-learning modules which are mandatory for certain subjects e.g. Data Protection.
- Arrangements are in place for internal reviews of compliance with Service standards and health and safety requirements.
- Staff are members of relevant professional bodies and undertake the required continual professional development.

Core Principles

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

- The Treasurer is responsible for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs as required by S151 Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- The Monitoring Officer ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations.
- The Strategic Risk Management Policy details the process for the identification and control of risks. A corporate risk register is maintained by the Corporate Planning Department and is monitored throughout the year.
- Reports to the Authority and its committees include an integrated impact assessment to inform and support decisions.
- Business continuity arrangements are in place to ensure that critical services can continue to be delivered at all times.
- Management arrangements ensure that recommendations for improvement made by the Internal Auditor are agreed and monitored.
- Members and senior management are provided with regular reports on Service performance against key performance indicators and milestones.
- The Authority has arrangements to maintain registers of Members' personal and business interests and a register of gifts and hospitality.
- Policies for Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistle-blowing are in place which confirms the Authority's commitment to operating in a fair and transparent manner.
- Policies and arrangements are in place to manage the handling of data. These are the Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Data Retention Policy and Communications and Information Security Policy. These policies are supplemented with training and the e-learning module on data protection is mandatory for all staff.
- Information sharing protocols have been developed and agreed with partners.
- Financial management supports the delivery of services and transformational change as well as securing good stewardship. A financial update is presented to each Authority meeting, with reports available to the public on the website.
- The Treasury Management arrangements follow professional practices and are reviewed annually by members.
- The Authority's Statements of Accounts are subject to scrutiny by external audit.

Core Principles

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

- The Fire and Rescue Authority, with assistance from the Monitoring Officer, oversees and reviews the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance arrangements and internal control environment.
- Agendas and minutes of meetings are publicly available on the internet along with webcasts of the Authority meetings (when available).
- Authority reports follow a structured format which ensures that key information is presented in a clear and consistent manner to aid decision making.
- The Authority has a publication scheme and complies with the requirements of the Information Commissioner in relation to Freedom of Information requests which ensures the public have access to information held.
- The Improvement and Well-being Plan documents the objectives of the Authority.
- The Annual Statement of Accounts was reviewed to ensure a more user friendly format. This provides clear information on income and expenditure and demonstrates the stewardship of public money for the year. The accounts are submitted for audit by the statutory deadline of 31 May.
- The Annual Pay Policy Statement is approved and published in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. Members' salaries are paid in accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel decisions and reported on the internet.
- Members and senior officers declare relevant interests in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK. These declarations enable the Authority to identify and report any related party transactions.
- The Annual Governance Statement provides transparency on the governance arrangements and the planned improvements for the coming year.
- The Annual Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement are subject to scrutiny and approval in accordance with the Authority's Constitution.
- The Wales Audit Office is the appointed external auditor and provides an opinion on the Statement of Accounts, which is published on the Authority's website. The Authority acts on recommendations and, where necessary, takes corrective action.
- The Internal Audit arrangements include a risk based approach, which provides assurance that key risks are being managed. The Authority acts on recommendations and where necessary, takes corrective action.
- Processes are in place to ensure that recommendations from inspection and regulatory bodies are actioned.

Key Contributors to Developing and Maintaining the Governance Framework

Fire and Rescue Authority	The Authority provides the strategic leadership, political interface and corporate challenge in relation to the provision of fire and rescue services across North Wales, encouraging public participation and conducting its affairs in an open and transparent manner. It agrees the Improvement and Wellbeing Plan, and the revenue and capital budgets.
Executive Panel	Monitors the performance of the Service and makes recommendations to the Authority on its key policies including the Improvement and Wellbeing Plan. The Panel reviews the strategic risk register.
Planning Working Group	Undertakes detailed work associated with the Authority's planning and budget-setting process. It submits its observations to the Executive Panel which in turn makes recommendations for improvement/risk reduction/well-being objectives to the Authority.
Audit Committee	Provides independent review of the governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting, including the Treasury Management Strategy and annual accounts.
Standards Committee	Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Members of the Authority and oversees the whistle-blowing policy for complaints against Members of the Authority. Also, where statute permits, to receive reports and complaints about Members and to conduct or oversee investigations and make recommendations to the Authority.
Executive Group	Sets and leads the implementation of the governance standards across the Service. Receives the annual improvement plan and feeds into the annual self-assessment.
Internal Audit	Provides an annual independent and objective opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements. Investigates fraud and irregularity.

How has the Authority Addressed the Governance Improvement Actions from 2019/20?

The Annual Governance and Improvement Assessment 2019/20 contained the following improvement actions. Here is how they have been addressed:

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Progress as at March 2020
Engage and participate with the Minister on the Governance and Funding Arrangements of Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities.	Chief Fire Officer and Chair	Engagement with the Welsh Government has continued and updates to the Fire and Rescue Authority have been provided. The Authority will maintain a watching brief to ensure that any changes are fully action.
White Fleet review Undertake a review and update of policy, procedures and guidance for the management of white fleet vehicles; and Revise the vehicle log system to strengthen the governance regarding vehicle tracking and management.	ACO (Finance and Resources) ACFO (Operations) Head of Finance Fleet Manager	Action has been taken to fully implement HMRC rules and guidelines whilst maintaining operational requirements. Robust monitoring by the Fleet department is carried out to ensure the use of vehicles is maximised for service delivery.
Financial Regulations and Finance Policies to be reviewed in line with the CIPFA model to ensure they reflect the requirements of the Authority.	ACO (Finance and Resources) Head of Finance	A review has been carried out to ensure completeness in line with the CIPFA guidance. Further work to be undertaken to update the regulations to reflect the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Authority.
Undertake procurement of Treasurer Services.	ACO (Finance and Resources)	The contract with current Treasurer extended for 12 months.
Review of structure and pay arrangements to ensure effective strategic management.	Monitoring Officer	The Chief Fire Officer presented to Fire and Rescue Authority members following the December 2019 meeting.

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Progress as at March 2020
Standards of Conduct for staff to be reviewed.	ACFO (Operations) Head of HR	The Standards of Conduct have been updated for approval by the Executive Group. Meetings currently suspended due to COVID-19.
Complete Cyber Essentials Plus to guard against cyber threats.	ACO (Finance and Resources) Head of ICT	A baseline assessment has been undertaken by the ICT Department with action plans in place to address risks and ensure compliance. Regular updates are provided to the Information Strategy Group.

Governance Opinion and Conclusion

The Authority recognises that good governance provides the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet the needs of stakeholders and ensures that public money is well spent. This review confirms the governance systems and monitoring in place for 2019/20 and the steps taken to ensure that they are working effectively.

The Authority is satisfied that appropriate governance arrangements are in place and remains committed to enhancing these through the implementation of the action plan for 2020/21.

Signed: (Chair)2020

Signed:(Chief Fire Officer)2020

Appendix A - Governance Improvement Action Plan 2020/21

Improvement Action	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Standing Financial Instructions	The Financial Regulations and Finance Policies will be reviewed to ensure they reflect the requirements of the Fire and Rescue Authority.	ACO (Finance and Resources) Head of Finance	March 2021
Standards of Conduct	The Standards of Conduct for staff will be finalised and approved by the Executive Group.	ACFO (Operations) Head of HR	September 2020
Cyber Security	Continuation of 2019/2020 action by the ICT department, in relation to Cyber Essentials Plus to guard against cyber threats,	ACO (Finance and Resources) Head of ICT	March 2021
Embed a co-ordinated corporate planning and financial planning cycle	In order to assist with the future planning and financing of the service objectives, a co-ordinated corporate planning and financial planning cycle will be introduced to ensure the Fire and Rescue Authority is engaged in forward planning in line with the corporate objectives and Medium Term Financial Plan.	Head of Finance Corporate Planning Manager	March 2021
Environmental Strategy	Following on from the environmental and energy policy statements adopted previously, the Planning Working Group will develop a new environmental strategy.	ACO (Corporate Services) Corporate Planning Manager	March 2021

Improvement Action	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
Fire Safety regulatory environment	Support a regional and national response to the Grenfell incident and implement any procedural changes resulting from the independent review.	ACFO (Fire Safety) Senior Fire Safety Manager	March 2021
Review of Business Continuity Arrangements	Following the implementation of business continuity plans, in March 2020, a review will be completed to ensure lessons learned and where applicable arrangements updated.	Principal Officers	December 2020
Ensure government guidance in relation to transitional pension arrangements is actioned	Complete all actions and requirements arising from the Scheme Advisory Board for Wales.	ACO (Finance & Resources) Pensions Manager	March 2021

Appendix B - Summary of the Authority's Governance Framework

Principles of Good Governance

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law
 Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement
 Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits
 Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes
 Developing the Authority's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and employees
 Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong financial management
 Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Evidence Sources

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Financial planning
- Partnership arrangements
- HR strategy & policies
- Procurement Strategy
- Constitution
- Job descriptions
- Chief Fire Officer
- Treasurer
- Monitoring Officer
- Published reports
- Community Engagement Plan
- Communication Strategy
- Improvement and Well-being Plan
- Integrated Impact Assessments

Assurance Sources

- Performance reports
- Financial reports
- Democratic arrangements
- Reports from external audit and regulators
- Internal Audit reports
- Partnership boards
- Customer feedback
- Consultations

Members

- Fire and Rescue Authority and its committees

Executive

- Executive Group

Evidence Sources

- Leadership
- Core Values
- Equalities arrangements
- FOI arrangements
- Codes of Conduct
- Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy
- Whistle-blowing Policy
- Audit and Standards Committees
- Expert advice and guidance
- Risk management
- Internal controls
- Internal Audit service
- Information management
- Staff and elected member development
- Complaints processes



Annual Governance and Improvement Assessment signed by Chair and Chief Fire Officer



Governance Improvement Action Plan reviewed quarterly by Executive Group