

Scrutiny & Audit Panel

28 September 2021



Membership:

Councillors: Maples (Chair), Azad, Lambert, Redstone, Scott and Theobald
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You are requested to attend this meeting to be held in the The Yarrow Room, Lewes Town Hall, High Street, Lewes BN7 2QS at 9.30 am

Quorum: 3

Contact: Ellie Simpkin, Democratic Services Officer 01323 462085, democraticservices@esfrs.org
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Agenda

16. Declarations of Interest

In relation to matters on the agenda, seek declarations of interest from Members, in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Authority's Code of Conduct for Members

17. Apologies for Absence

18. Notification of items which the Chair considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chair's business items

Any Members wishing to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently

19. Minutes of the last Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting held on 22 July 2021

5 - 14

20. Callover

The Chairman will call the item numbers of the remaining items on the open agenda. Each item which is called by any Member shall be reserved for debate. The Chairman will then ask the Panel to adopt without debate the recommendations and resolutions contained in

the relevant reports for those items which have not been called

21. External Auditor's Audit Results Report (ISA 260) and Statement of Accounts 2020/21 15 - 152

Report of the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

ABRAHAM GEBRE-GHIORGHIS
Monitoring Officer
East Sussex Fire Authority
c/o Brighton & Hove City Council

Date of Publication: 20 September 2021

Information for the public

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend public sessions of its Fire Authority and Panel meetings.

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SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the SCRUTINY & AUDIT PANEL held at The Yarrow Room, Lewes Town Hall, High Street, Lewes BN7 2QS at 10.00 am on Thursday, 22 July 2021.

Present: Councillors Maples (Chair), Lambert, Redstone and Theobald

Also present: Councillor Roy Galley, M O'Brien (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), M Matthews (Assistant Chief Fire Officer), L Woodley (Deputy Monitoring Officer), D Savage (Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer), L Ridley (Assistant Director Planning & Improvement), H Scott-Youldon (Assistant Director Operational Support & Resilience), P Fielding (Internal Audit), S Norman (Business Fire Safety) and E Simpkin (Democratic Services Officer)

1 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Scott and Councillor Azad. Apologies had also been received from Helen Thompson, EY (External Audit).

3 Notification of items which the Chairman considers urgent and proposes to take at the end of the agenda/Chairman's business items

There were none.

4 Minutes of the last Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting held on 29 April 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel held on 29 April 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 Callover

Members reserved the following items for debate:

- 7 Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021
- 8 Outcome of the Internal Audit into the Management of Operational Assets – 2019/20
- 9 Internal Audit Report – ESFRS Procurement Cards
- 10 Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 1 2021/22

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel

- 11 2019/20 Service Benchmarking Report
- 12 Performance Report for Quarter 4 2020/21
- 13 Protection Update
- 14 The Reduction of False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals from Automatic Fire Detection – A Risk Based Approach
- 15 Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Update

6 External Audit Update

The Panel received a report from the Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer (ADR/T) which provided an update on the external auditor's audit planning document for the audit of the 2020/21 financial accounts. The report covered the areas of the addition of a new risk concerning how the Authority accounted for new grants received in relation to Covid-19 and investment in protection services and progress on planning work for the auditor's value for money conclusion. External Audit had confirmed that at the current stage no significant risks to the Authority's proper arrangements had been identified.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the external audit plan update.

7 Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

The Panel received a report from the ADR/T which set out the Internal Audit Opinion on East Sussex Fire Authority's internal control environment and reported on the work of Internal Audit for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The Panel welcomed Paul Fielding, Principal Auditor, to the meeting and asked whether there would be a reduction in audit fees due to delays incurred. The Principal Auditor explained that fees were calculated on the number of days delivered and that any reductions in days or changes to the audit schedule were agreed by the Senior Leadership Team. Payment was made on the actual number of days delivered. In 2020/21 there had been additional days agreed with the audit plan totalling 90 days. In 2021/22 the audit plan would return to the 'normal' figure of 70 days.

Members asked for a further explanation as to why only two of the 10 previously agreed actions from the 2019/20 audit review of HR/payroll had been fully implemented. The Assistant Director Operational Support & Resilience (ADOS&R) responded that the outstanding actions were in progress and delays had been encountered due to the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, it had not been possible to undertake the data cleanse as restrictions had meant they could not physically access records. All actions were monitored and reported to the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group.

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The Panel also asked for further information on network security (page 32 of the agenda). The ADR/T explained that since IT provision had been outsourced to telent an improvement project for IT security had been in place. This had considered the processes in place as well as the policies which underpinned IT security. An annual health check was carried out with regular reports made to the IT Strategy Board on which Councillor Tutt sat as Lead Member for IT. There were still improvements to be made but network security had now been embedded in business as usual and had significantly improved over the last 5 years. The ADR/T offered to meet with Panel Members to provide a further briefing on the matter.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

- (i) noted the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the Fire Authority's internal control environment for 2020/21;
- (ii) noted the full reports on Management of Operational Assets and Procurement Cards; and
- (iii) considered that the Fire Authority's system for internal audit proved effective during 2020/21

8 Outcome of the Internal Audit into the Management of Operational Assets 2019/20

Members received a report from the ADOS&R which informed the Panel of the outcome of the recent internal audit undertaken into the Service's management of operational assets. Partial Assurance had been provided in respect to how the Service managed its Operational Assets. The audit had highlighted seven areas for improvement and an action plan was in place. It was expected that most actions would be completed by the end of 2021. It was noted that the review would help to inform the Fleet and Equipment Strategy which was currently going through the approval process as part of the broader Engineering improvement journey.

The Panel expressed their concerns over the outcome of the audit and urged officers to urgently address the weaknesses identified. The ADOS&R offered reassurance that an improvement plan was in place and that the Fleet and Equipment Strategy would be presented at the September Fire Authority meeting for approval. She added that funds had been provided in the IT Strategy budget for a replacement asset management system and a project plan was in place. A collaborative business case for fleet was being developed with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. Work was also being undertaken to support the Engineering Team. Two key members of staff had recently retired after 30 years' service and with that knowledge had been lost. Processes were now being mapped to ensure that knowledge was organisational and not individual. The previously vacant Asset Co-ordinator role was now in post. It was noted that work was underway to consolidate training records with a new system due to go live in January 2022.

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Members asked whether a collaboration with Police to deliver engineering services was being considered. The ADR/T explained that collaboration through the Integrated Transport Fund included a workstream around vehicle workshops. Consideration had been given to the development of a new build 'hub' in partnership with Sussex Police and a feasibility study had been carried out which demonstrated that the proposals were unaffordable. Sussex Police subsequently withdrew from the project. South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) had looked into the possibility of joining but they had also withdrawn their interest. Consideration was now being given to how existing sites could be utilised, either as a standalone operation or in partnership with West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The ADOS&R added that it was important to ensure that any collaboration created tangible business benefits.

The Panel noted that a follow-up internal audit to check on progress would be carried out April/May 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the outcome of 'partial assurance' of the internal audit undertaken into the Service's management of operational assets and were assured that an action plan for improvement had been developed.

9 Internal Audit Report - ESFRS Procurement Cards

The Panel received a report from the ADR/T which updated Members on the findings and assurance opinion of the follow up internal audit report of procurement cards.

Initially undertaken in January 2020 as part of the agreed audit plan for 2019/20, the review aimed to provide assurance that PCards were only issued to appropriately authorised and trained staff and were being used only to purchase goods and services that were wholly, exclusively and necessary for the use of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The audit opinion given at that time was Partial Assurance and contained fifteen actions, including twelve rated as medium priority.

The latest audit was part of the agreed Audit Plan for 2020/21 to ensure that the previously agreed actions had been implemented. The Panel noted that all but two recommendations had been completed by the end of May 2021, with the remaining actions planned to be complete by December 2021. Internal Audit was to carry out a follow up review in quarter 4 to provide assurance that this had happened.

Members raised some concerns that there were continuing issues with proper procedures and over the time taken to complete the actions. The ADR/T responded that written procedures and a training package was in place and reminders to cardholders and approvers on their responsibilities had been issued. Resources had been diverted to the Covid-19 response which had delayed some actions. The ADR/T reassured Members that there had been no evidence of any fraud and that Pcards had proved a more cost effective way of purchasing. There had been a reduction in low value invoices and

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel

purchase orders. The Panel noted that approximately 120 Pcards had been issued and use varied from regular users and those which were primarily for emergency use (incident ground refreshments etc). Individual spend could be restricted by transaction or per month. Line managers were required to review and approve transactions monthly and spot checks were carried out by Procurement. It was possible to apply sanctions to remove a card if necessary or reduce spend limits. The ADR/T assured the Panel of the control measures which were more effective than when dealing with petty cash and that the use of Pcards was standard across the sector.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the final audit report, its opinion and recommendations.

10 Corporate Risk Register Review Quarter 1 2021/22

The Panel received a report from the ADR/T on the first quarterly position of Corporate Risk. The report detailed the business risks identified, including newly identified risks and how they had been or were being mitigated. The Panel noted that no new risks had been added to quarter 1 and no risk scores had changed. CR15 Health & Safety Non-compliance remained the only red rated risk and work was continuing under the auspices of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee to implement the agreed mitigations and secure a reduction in the residual risk score. CR14 had been substantially revised in line with the discussion at the last Panel meeting to reflect the narrower scope of the Financial and Operational impacts of the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The Panel queried whether a new risk relating to the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP) (item 15 on the agenda) should be added to the register given the current uncertainty around coverage and financials. The ADR/T responded that the financial risk relating to ESMCP was highlighted in the budget setting report and was highlighted in the Fire sector's Comprehensive Spending Review submissions. At officer level the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group also maintained an oversight. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO) also drew attention to the timeframe of the project, meaning that adding it to the register now would see the risk remaining on the register for a period of 4-5 years as the earliest delivery date of the project was currently 2024.

Members asked about adding risks relating to Council Tax revenue loss and climate change. The ADR/T informed the Panel that reductions in Council Tax income would be accounted for in the revised Medium Term Financial Plan. Consideration could be given to adding climate change and environmental impacts to the register. A report on the work being undertaken on the environment, sustainability and carbon neutrality was due to be considered by the Fire Authority at its meeting in December. The ADR/T would be meeting with Councillor West as Lead Member for this area to discuss the progress being made.

The Panel expressed concern over the remaining 204 outstanding actions referenced in CR15 (Health & Safety non-compliance). The ADOS&R

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informed the Panel that remaining actions were being carried out and managers had identified priority areas. Progress was being made and corporate visibility would be maintained via the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

- a) noted and approved the Q1 Corporate Risk Register including the updates made since Quarter 4; and
- b) asked that consideration be given to adding a risk regarding climate change to the register.

11 2019/20 Service Benchmarking Report

The Panel considered a report from the Assistant Director Planning & Improvement (ADP&I) which presented the Fire Statistics for 2019/20 and comparative benchmarking of East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service against its family group in order to provide context to support the Authority's future decision making.

The Panel welcomed the report and asked for a further explanation on East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service's ranking in having completed the lowest number of fire safety audits within family group 2 in 2019/20 (paragraph 4.4.1 of the report). The ACFO responded that this was partly due to reporting and the need for more consistent measuring had been recognised. The Service had set targets of 1,250 audits to be completed in 2021/22 and 1,500 in 2022/23.

Members were interested in the Service's position in having the lowest area per pumping appliance. The DCFO informed the Panel that this was mainly due to the geography of the area and having a large coastal population. The recent Integrated Risk Management Plan had shown that the Service did have the right number of stations and appliances in the right locations in order to meet the area risk profile and attendance standards.

The Panel also queried the accident figures (page 120 of the report) which placed East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service as the 2nd highest for the number of operational injuries. The ADOS&R highlighted that she felt this indicated that the Service had achieved a strong health and safety culture and welcomed having an accurate reporting of accidents so that any reoccurring issues could be identified and addressed.

Members were pleased to note the increase in female firefighters, however, there had been a decrease in operational staff from ethnic minorities. The ADOS&R explained that this was due to retirement of staff and it was recognised that it was area that needed improvement. A comprehensive positive action campaign had been run as part of the recent wholetime firefighter recruitment.

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RESOLVED: That the Panel considered and noted the results as set out in the report.

12 Performance Report for Quarter 4 2020/21

The Panel received a report from the ADP&I which provided a summary of Service performance information for the 4th quarter of 2020/21 and year end results. The report contained information against 21 indicators and additional information on sickness and road traffic collision data, as requested by Members at previous meetings. Due to the national pandemic, the Service had adapted new models of service delivery including telephone home safety visits and business safety audits. The direction of travel indicators in these areas were not comparable and therefore had not been included.

The ACFO highlighted the reduction in accidental dwelling fires and stressed the need to continue to focus on the 'who and why' in order to identify how the figure could be reduced further. The Service was looking further into the correlation with factors such as mental health and hoarding and would assess the impact of any initiatives.

The Panel thanked officers for the useful report.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

1. considered and noted the performance results and the progress being made towards achieving the Service's purpose and commitments as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report; and
2. considered and noted the performance results and remedial actions that had been taken to address areas of under performance in the Fire Authority's priority areas.

13 Protection Update

The Panel considered a report from the ACFO which provided an update on areas of work nationally and locally impacting the Business Safety Department. The report included an overview of legislative changes following the Grenfell Tower Tragedy and the work being undertaken by the Business Safety Support Team and the Business Safety Legislation Delivery Board to ensure that all aspects of the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill were being monitored and that the implications and impact were being considered in a timely manner. This included the potential financial and other resource impacts of additional statutory duties placed upon the Service. The Panel also noted updates on sprinkler protection and Primary Authority Partnerships.

The Panel welcomed the report and were pleased to note the progress which was being made.

RESOLVED: That the Panel:

Unconfirmed minutes – to be confirmed at the next meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel

- a) noted the content of the report;
- b) noted the update on the current work streams and progress in response to the emerging detail contained in the Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Bill as a result of the Home Office responses to the Fire Safety consultation, and
- c) did not require any further information or assurance from officers at this time.

14 The Reduction of False Alarms and Unwanted Fire Signals from Automatic Fire Detection - A Risk Based Approach

The Panel received a report from the ACFO which set out the strategy to reduce Service resource commitment to Unwanted Fire Signals (UwFS) from automatic fire alarm systems. The report resulted from the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) decision to implement a 'nil response to automatic fire alarms from commercial premises'. The Panel noted that the aim of the strategy was to achieve a step reduction in UwFS calls, whilst minimising risk and in turn addressing the improvement needed in the area highlighted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue.

The Panel heard from Steve Norman, Business Fire Safety, who explained that over the next 6 months work was being undertaken to ensure that business owners were putting processes in place to accommodate the change in policy. He added that false alarms did not normally occur when premises were empty as they were usually a result of individual action.

Members asked for further clarification on the cost saving figures. The ACFO explained that it was envisaged that the reduction in attendance to false alarms would allow the Service to refocus resources to other prevention and protection activities rather than resulting actual cashable savings. Steve Norman added that current legislation was not clear on the provision for charging for false alarm calls and therefore it was difficult to use this as a mechanism to recover costs.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the content of the report.

15 Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme Update

The Panel received a report from the ACFO which advised Members on the latest position of the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP), a cross Government Programme involving the Home Office, Department for Health and Social Care, Scottish Government and Welsh Government and run by the Home Office which would provide the next generation of mission critical communications for the emergency services in Great Britain.

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EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Meeting Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Date 28 September 2021

Title of Report External Auditor's Audit Results Report (ISA 260) and Statement of Accounts 2020/21

By Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Lead Officer Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Background Papers None

Appendices

1. External Auditor's Audit Results Report (ISA 260)
2. 2020/21 Statement of Accounts
3. Letter of representation

Implications

CORPORATE RISK		LEGAL	✓
ENVIRONMENTAL		POLICY	
FINANCIAL	✓	POLITICAL	
HEALTH & SAFETY		OTHER (please specify)	
HUMAN RESOURCES		CORE BRIEF	
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			

PURPOSE OF REPORT To present the results of the External Auditor's Results Report (ISA 260) and to report an unqualified opinion on the Authority's 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY The Authority's External Auditor, Ernst & Young (EY), is obliged to produce an Audit Results Report (ISA 260) which reports formally on the outcome of the audit of the Authority's financial statements. The ISA 260 is attached as Appendix 1, as a separate document.

EY has substantially completed its audit of the Authority's financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. Subject to concluding the outstanding matters listed in their report, EY expect to issue an unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements. However, it is not clear how quickly these outstanding matters will be resolved and it is possible

that the audit opinion and certificate will not be issued until after the statutory deadline of 30 September 2021.

In this eventuality the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended) require that the Authority publishes a notice stating that it has not been able to publish the statement of accounts and its reasons for this. Furthermore it requires that the Authority must publish its statement of accounts together with any audit opinion or certificate as soon as reasonably practicable after the receipt of any report from the auditor which contains the auditor's final findings from the audit which is issued before the conclusion of the audit. It is our intention, if the statutory deadline is not met to publish both the required notice and a revised set of unaudited accounts on the Authority's website.

Should the conclusion of the audit, after the meeting of this Panel, identify the need for any material adjustment to the accounts then a revised version would need to be submitted to the Panel for approval at a future date.

There is no penalty for failing to meet the statutory deadline for the publication of the audited accounts.

It is pleasing to note that EY, as at 17 September 2021, has made no recommendations for improvement as a result of its audit of the accounts, and raised no specific issues which require a response in the Letter of Representation.

The ISA 260 confirms that the Authority has in place proper arrangements for securing value for money.

The audit process this year has been a lengthy and challenging one for both the EY and ESFRS teams, due both to the ongoing impact of Covid-19 and also to the additional activity resulting from regulatory changes.

A set of accounts is appended as Appendix 2. The letter of representation is appended as Appendix 3.

The Authority is still awaiting PSAA's determination of EY's scale fee variations in relation to the 2019/20 audit which would increase the scale fee from £23,690 to £55,585. Provision for the full amount has been made in the 2020/21 accounts. An update has been requested from PSAA and any response will be reported at the Panel meeting.

EY submitted a fee variation in relation to the 2020/21 audit earlier this year which would take the scale fee from £23,690 to £51,243. Further variations in relation to the work required to carry out the expanded vfm assessment and other

additional activity for example in relation to pensions estimate are expected. The Authority has increased its budget for audit fees in 2020/21 by £30,000 and has also been allocated a further £12,212 from the additional £15m funding for external audit fees provided by Government. In addition the Authority has received a distribution of £4,670 from PSAA's surplus.

RECOMMENDATION

The Panel is asked to:

- (i) note the External Auditor's Audit Results Report (ISA 260);
 - (ii) note the action required should the audit opinion not be issued by the statutory deadline;
 - (iii) authorise the Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer and the Panel Chair to sign the formal letter of representation to the External Auditor; and approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts for publication.
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East Sussex Fire Authority Audit results report

Year ended 31 March 2021

17 September 2021

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The EY logo consists of the letters 'EY' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Above the 'Y' is a yellow triangle pointing to the right. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page, partially overlapping the EY logo and the tagline.

Building a better
working world

Appendix 1

17 September 2021



East Sussex Fire Authority
Service Head Quarters
Church Lane
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2DZ

Dear Scrutiny & Audit Panel Members

2021 Audit results report

We are pleased to attach our audit results report, summarising the status of our audit of the East Sussex Fire Authority for the forthcoming meeting of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. We will update Scrutiny & Audit Panel at its meeting scheduled for 28 September 2021 on further progress to that date and explain the remaining steps to the issue of our final opinion.

The audit is designed to express an opinion on the 2020-21 financial statements and address current statutory and regulatory requirements. This report contains our findings related to the areas of audit emphasis, our views on the East Sussex Fire Authority's accounting policies and judgements and material internal control findings. Each year sees further enhancements to the level of audit challenge and the quality of evidence required to achieve the robust professional scepticism that society expects. We thank the management team for supporting this process. We have also included an update on our work on value for money arrangements.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel, other members of the Authority, and senior management. It is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the contents of this report with you at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.

Yours faithfully

Helen Thompson
Associate Partner
For and on behalf of Ernst & Young LLP
Encl

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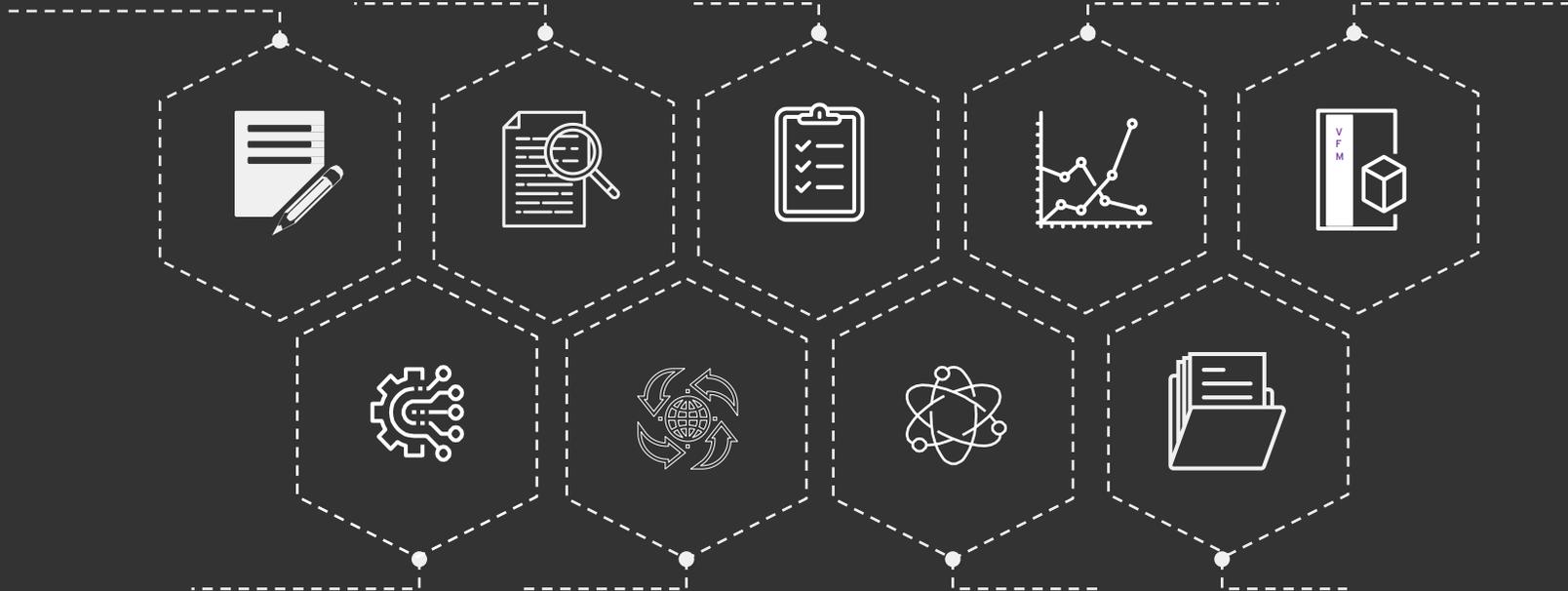
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02 Areas of Audit Focus

03 Audit Report

04 Audit Differences

05 Value for Money



06 Other Reporting Issues

07 Assessment of Control Environment

08 Independence

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Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) issued the "Statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies". It is available from the PSAA website (<https://www.psa.co.uk/audit-quality/statement-of-responsibilities/>). The Statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between appointed auditors and audited bodies. It summarises where the different responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies begin and end, and what is to be expected of the audited body in certain areas.

The "Terms of Appointment and further guidance (updated July 2021)" issued by the PSAA sets out additional requirements that auditors must comply with, over and above those set out in the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and in legislation, and covers matters of practice and procedure which are of a recurring nature.

This report is made solely to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel and management of East Sussex Fire Authority in accordance with the statement of responsibilities. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel and management of East Sussex Fire Authority those matters we are required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Scrutiny & Audit Panel and management of East Sussex Fire Authority for this report or for the opinions we have formed. It should not be provided to any third-party without our prior written consent.



01

Executive Summary

Scope update

In our audit planning report and updated audit planning report presented to the 29 April 2021 and 22 July 2021 Scrutiny & Audit Panel meetings respectively, we provided you with an overview of our audit scope and approach for the audit of the financial statements. We carried out our audit in accordance with this plan, with the following exceptions:

▸ Changes in materiality

We updated our planning materiality assessment using the draft results and have also reconsidered our risk assessment. Based on our materiality measure of gross expenditure on provision of services, we have updated our overall materiality assessment to £1.05m (Audit Planning Report – £1.14m). This results in updated performance materiality, at 75% of overall materiality, of £790k, and an updated threshold for reporting misstatements of £52k.

▸ Changes to reporting timescales

As a result of COVID-19, new regulations, the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021 No 263, have been published and came into force on 31 March 2021. This announced a change to publication date for final, audited accounts from 31 July to 30 September 2021 for all relevant authorities.

Auditing accounting estimates

A revised auditing standard has been issued in respect of the audit of accounting estimates. The revised standard requires auditors to consider inherent risks associated with the production of accounting estimates. These could relate, for example, to the complexity of the method applied, subjectivity in the choice of data or assumptions or a high degree of estimation uncertainty. As part of this, auditors now consider risk on a spectrum (from low to high inherent risk) rather than a simplified classification of whether there is a significant risk or not. At the same time, we may see the number of significant risks we report in respect of accounting estimates to increase as a result of the revised guidance in this area. We have considered the following areas as higher inherent risk estimates in our approach:

- The revaluation of land and buildings classified as Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE); and
- Pension liability and asset valuation.

▸ Additional audit procedures as a result of Covid-19

Other changes in the entity and regulatory environment as a result of Covid-19 that have not resulted in an additional risk, but result in the following impacts on our audit strategy were as follows:

- **Information Produced by the Entity (IPE):** We identified an increased risk around the completeness, accuracy, and appropriateness of information produced by the entity due to the inability of the audit team to verify original documents or re-run reports on-site from the Authority's systems. We undertook the following to address this risk:
 - Used the screen sharing function of Microsoft Teams to evidence re-running of reports used to generate the IPE we audited; and
 - Agreed IPE to scanned documents or other system screenshots.

Executive Summary

Status of the audit

Our audit work in respect of the Authority's opinion is substantially complete. The following are the main items relating to the completion of our audit procedures that were outstanding at the date of this report:

- ▶ IAS 19 assurances: We have not yet received the final assurance letter from the auditor of East Sussex Pension Fund. A further issue has also arisen across all local government audits that needs to be resolved prior to us being able to fully conclude our work. Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.
- ▶ Final review of key working papers
- ▶ Completion of the subsequent events review
- ▶ Receipt of signed management representation letter
- ▶ Signed Narrative Report and financial statements
- ▶ Whole of Government Accounts: We have yet to receive the NAO instructions on this for 2020/21.

Given that the audit process is still ongoing, we will continue to challenge the remaining evidence provided and the final disclosures in the Narrative Report and Accounts which could influence our final audit opinion, a current draft of which is included in Section 03.

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Auditor responsibilities under the new Code of Audit Practice 2020

Under the Code of Audit Practice 2020 we are still required to consider whether the Authority has put in place 'proper arrangements' to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources. The 2020 Code requires the auditor to design their work to provide them with sufficient assurance to enable them to report to the Authority a commentary against specified reporting criteria (see below) on the arrangements the Authority has in place to secure value for money through economic, efficient and effective use of its resources for the relevant period.

The specified reporting criteria are:

- Financial sustainability
How the Authority plans and manages its resources to ensure it can continue to deliver its services;
- Governance
How the Authority ensures that it makes informed decisions and properly manages its risks; and
- Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness:
How the Authority uses information about its costs and performance to improve the way it manages and delivers its services.

Executive Summary

Status of the audit - Value for Money

In the updated planning report presented to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel, on 22 July 2021, we reported that we had completed our value for money (VFM) risk assessment and not identified any risk of significant weakness against the three reporting criteria we are required to consider under the NAO's 2020 Code. We have revisited our assessment on completion of the audit of the financial statements and remain satisfied that we have not identified a risk of significant weakness. As a result, we have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03).

We plan to issue the VFM commentary as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.

Audit differences

There are no unadjusted differences as at 17 September 2021.

There have been no misstatements greater than £790k which have been corrected by management.

A small number of other amendments were made to disclosures appearing in the financial statements as a result of our work.

As our audit work in relation to the IAS19 pension liability is ongoing at the time of writing this report, further adjusted and unadjusted misstatements may be identified.

We will update the Scrutiny & Audit Panel at the meeting on 28 September 2021 if we identify any issues by the time of the meeting.

Other reporting issues

We have reviewed the information presented in the Annual Governance Statement for consistency with our knowledge of the Authority. We have no matters to report as a result of this work.

We have not yet been able to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office (NAO) on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. This is because HM Treasury are continuing to review the online 2020/21 WGA Data Collection Tool (DCT) and update the guidance that is available for preparers. Based on the last available update the DCT and guidance was not expected to be available until Autumn 2021. Therefore the 2020/21 WGA component data will not be available for auditors to review until after that. Group Audit Instructions and the timetable for 2020/21 will necessarily follow any changes HM Treasury make to the DCT and process.

We have no other matters to report.



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus

In our audit planning report, and subsequent update, we identified a number of key areas of focus for our audit of the financial report of the Authority. This report sets out our observations and status in relation to these areas, including our views on areas which might be conservative and areas where there is potential risk and exposure. Our consideration of these matters and others identified during the period is summarised within the "Areas of Audit Focus" section of this report.

Fraud Risk	Findings & Conclusions
Misstatements due to fraud or error	Based on our work completed to 17 September 2021 we have not identified any material weaknesses in controls or evidence of material management override, instances of inappropriate judgements being applied; or any other transactions during our audit which appear unusual or outside the Authority's normal course of business.
Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure	<p>Our sample testing of additions to PPE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Found costs had been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value. • Did not identify any revenue items that were incorrectly classified as capital. <p>Our review of judgements taken by management found them to be reasonable.</p>
Area of audit focus / Inherent risk	Findings & Conclusions
Valuation of Land and Buildings	We are satisfied that the valuation of property, plant and equipment is fairly stated and appropriately disclosed.
Pension Liability and Asset Valuation (Inherent risk)	<p>Our work is ongoing. We have agreed the accounting entries associated with the Authority's pension liability valuation and assessed the work of the Authority's actuary, Barnett Waddingham.</p> <p>However, we have not yet received the final assurance letter from the auditor of East Sussex Pension Fund are still outstanding.</p> <p>A further issue has also arisen across all local government audits that needs to be resolved prior to us being able to fully conclude our work. Further details are set out in Section 2 of this report.</p>
Going Concern (Area of audit focus)	<p>We have reviewed management's going concern assessment and confirm their conclusion that the Authority remains a going concern is based on reasonable and supportable assumptions.</p> <p>We have also reviewed management's going concern disclosure and confirmed it is sufficiently detailed, transparent and accurately reflects management's underlying going concern assessment.</p>



Executive Summary

Areas of audit focus (cont.)

Area of audit focus / Inherent risk	Findings & Conclusions
Accounting for Covid-19 related government grants (Inherent risk)	Based on our work we are satisfied that the accounting treatment adopted for Covid-19 related government grants accorded with the Authority's assessment of whether it was acting as agent or principal, the underlying conditions of the grant and whether those conditions had been met.

We request that you review these and other matters set out in this report to ensure:

- ▶ There are no residual further considerations or matters that could impact these issues
- ▶ You concur with the resolution of the issue
- ▶ There are no further significant issues you are aware of to be considered before the financial report is finalised

There are no matters, other than those reported by management or disclosed in this report, which we believe should be brought to the attention of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel or Management.

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Control observations

We have adopted a fully substantive approach, and so have not tested the operation of controls. We have, however, updated our understanding of the key processes and the controls which are in place to detect or prevent error. Through this work, we have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements and which is unknown to you.

Independence

Please refer to Section 8 for our update on Independence.



02 Areas of Audit Focus



Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Misstatements due to fraud or error

What is the risk?

The financial statements as a whole are not free of material misstatements whether caused by fraud or error.

As identified in ISA (UK and Ireland) 240, management is in a unique position to perpetrate fraud because of its ability to manipulate accounting records directly or indirectly and prepare fraudulent financial statements by overriding controls that otherwise appear to be operating effectively.

We identify and respond to this fraud risk on every audit engagement.

What judgements are we focused on?

Our assessment of risk led us to create a series of criteria for the testing of journals, focusing specifically on areas that could be open to management manipulation. We have also focused specifically on capitalisation of assets as a potential area of manipulation, which is recorded as a separately identified significant risk - Inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure.

Our work on estimates focussed on PPE valuation and IAS19 pension estimates which are identified as areas of higher inherent risk and are reported further in this report.

What did we do?

We identified the key fraud risks at the planning stage of the audit and considered the effectiveness of management's controls that are designed to address the risk of fraud. We updated our understanding of the risks of fraud and the controls put in place to address them and made enquiries of Internal Audit, management and those charged with governance to support our understanding.

Our approach focused on:

- ▶ Testing the appropriateness of journal entries recorded in the general ledger and other adjustments made in the preparation of the financial statements.
- ▶ Assessing accounting estimates for evidence of management bias.
- ▶ Evaluating the business rationale for significant unusual transactions.

What are our conclusions?

Our audit work completed to date has found no evidence that management had attempted to override internal controls.

We have not identified any instances of inappropriate judgements being applied.

We did not identify any other transactions during our audit which appeared unusual or outside the Authority's normal course of business.

This conclusion is based on detailed testing of accounts entries susceptible to potential manipulation.





Areas of Audit Focus

Significant risk

Risk of misstatements due to fraud or error – specifically in inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure

What is the risk?

Under ISA 240 there is a presumed risk that revenue may be misstated due to improper revenue recognition. In the public sector, this requirement is modified by Practice Note 10 issued by the Financial Reporting Council, which states that auditors should also consider the risk that material misstatements may occur by the manipulation of expenditure recognition.

From our risk assessment, we have assessed that the risk manifests itself solely through the inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure to improve the financial position of the general fund.

What judgements are we focused on?

We focused on whether expenditure was properly capitalised in its initial recognition, or whether subsequent expenditure on an asset enhances the asset or extends its useful life.

What did we do?

Our approach focused on:

- ▶ selecting a sample of PPE additions to test and confirm the item was appropriate to capitalise through agreement to evidence such as invoices and capital expenditure authorisations; and
- ▶ performing journals testing, during this testing we challenged entries that could be indicative of inappropriate capitalisation, such as journals which reclassify transactions originally recorded as revenue expenditure to capital.

What are our conclusions?

We have completed our work:

- ▶ Our sample testing of additions to property, plant and equipment found that they had been correctly classified as capital and included at the correct value.
- ▶ Our sample testing of additions to property, plant and equipment did not identify any revenue items that were incorrectly classified.
- ▶ Our data analytical procedures did not identify any journal entries that incorrectly moved expenditure into capital codes



Other areas of audit focus

We have identified other areas of the audit, that have not been classified as significant risks, but are still important when considering the risks of material misstatement to the financial statements and disclosures.

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Valuation of Land and Buildings</p> <p>The fair value of Land and Buildings in Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) represent significant balances in the Authority's accounts and are subject to valuation changes and impairment reviews. The valuation at 31 March 2021 was £42.0m.</p> <p>Management is required to make material judgemental inputs and apply estimation techniques to calculate the year-end balances recorded in the balance sheet.</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Considered the work performed by the Authority's valuers Flude Commercial, including the adequacy of the scope of the work performed, their professional capabilities and the results of their work; ▶ Sample tested key asset information used by the valuers in performing their valuation (e.g. floor plans to support valuations based on price per square metre); ▶ Considered the annual cycle of valuations to ensure that assets have been valued within a 5 year rolling programme as required by the Code for PPE. We have also considered if there are any specific changes to assets that have occurred and that these have been communicated to the valuer; ▶ Reviewed assets not subject to valuation in 2020/21 to confirm that the remaining asset base is not materially misstated; ▶ Tested to confirm that accounting entries have been correctly processed in the financial statements. 	<p>Our audit work to date has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Found nothing has come to our attention regarding the adequacy of the valuers' scope of work, their professional capabilities and the results from their work; ▶ Indicated that, based on our samples selected, that the valuers assumptions are accurate, i.e. correct floor plans and price per square metre used and considered potential impacts on useful economic lives; ▶ Confirmed assets not subject to valuation have not been materially misstated; ▶ Confirmed accounting entries have been processed correctly in the financial statements; <p>Consequently, we are satisfied that the valuation of property, plant and equipment is fairly stated and appropriately disclosed.</p>

Audit risks

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Net Pension Liability Valuation</p> <p>The Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice and IAS19 require the Authority to make extensive disclosures within its financial statements regarding its membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), administered by East Sussex County Council and the Firefighters Pension Scheme where its administration was transferred to West Yorkshire Pension Fund during the year. The Authority's pension assets and liabilities are material estimated balances and the Code requires that these liabilities be disclosed on the Authority's balance sheet. At 31 March 2021 this totalled £488.8m.</p> <p>The information disclosed is based on the IAS 19 reports issued to the Authority by the actuaries of the two Pension Schemes. Accounting for these schemes involves significant estimation and judgement and therefore management engages actuaries to undertake the calculations on their behalf. ISAs (UK and Ireland) 500 and 540 require us to undertake procedures on the use of management experts and the assumptions underlying fair value estimates. During the year, the Authority changed its actuary from Hymans Robertson to Barnett Waddingham.</p>	<p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Liaised with the auditors of East Sussex Pension Fund, to obtain assurances over the information supplied to the actuary in relation to East Sussex Fire Authority. However, this required assurance letter is still outstanding.▶ Assessed the work of the LGPS Pension Fund actuary (Barnett Waddingham) and the Firefighters pension actuary (Barnett Waddingham) including the assumptions they have used by relying on the work of PWC - Consulting Actuaries commissioned by the National Audit Office for all Local Government sector auditors, and considering any relevant reviews by the EY actuarial team.▶ Reviewed and tested the accounting entries and disclosures made within the Authority's financial statements in relation to IAS19. <p>Due to the outstanding required assurance letter from the auditor of East Sussex Pension Fund, this work is not yet complete.</p>	<p>As at 17 September 2021 our planned work in this area is still ongoing as the required assurance letter from the auditor of East Sussex Pension Fund is outstanding.</p> <p>Furthermore, an issue has arisen across all local government audits that needs to be resolved prior to us being able to fully conclude our work. This is in relation to the impact of the revised auditing standard on accounting estimates. We planned to take an audit approach to this estimate based on procedures to evaluate management's process. The new auditing standard requires auditors to test the method of measurement of accounting estimates to determine whether the model is appropriately designed, consistently applied and mathematically accurate, and that the integrity of the assumptions and the data has been maintained in applying the model. Neither we, nor PWC as consulting actuaries commissioned by the NAO for all local government sector audits, are able to access the detailed models of the actuaries in order to evidence these requirements. Therefore, we have been required to modify our planned approach and undertake alternate procedures to create an auditor's estimate, to provide a different method of gaining assurance.</p> <p>We will provide an update to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September 2021.</p>

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Going Concern</p> <p>Covid-19 has created a number of financial pressures throughout local government, increasing service demand and expenditure. The Authority has incurred additional expenditure in a number of areas of its operations and has experienced some income losses. The extent of support from MHCLG has developed over time, but does not include all financial consequences of Covid-19.</p> <p>PAPFA's Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 sets out that organisations that can only be discontinued under statutory prescription shall prepare their accounts on a going concern basis.</p> <p>However, International Auditing Standard 570 Going Concern, as applied by Practice Note 10: Audit of financial statements of public sector bodies in the United Kingdom, still requires auditors to undertake sufficient and appropriate audit procedures to consider whether there is a material uncertainty on going concern that requires reporting by management within the financial statements, and within the auditor's report. We are obliged to report on such matters within the section of our audit report 'Conclusions relating to Going Concern'.</p> <p>To do this, the auditor must review management's assessment of the going concern basis applying IAS1 Presentation of Financial Statements.</p>	<p>We have met the requirements of the revised auditing standard on going concern (ISA 570) and considered the adequacy of the Authority's going concern assessment and its disclosure in the accounts by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Challenging management's identification of events or conditions impacting going concern. ▶ Testing management's resulting assessment of going concern by evaluating supporting evidence (including consideration of the risk of management bias). ▶ Reviewing the cashflow forecast covering the foreseeable future, to ensure that it has sufficient liquidity to continue to operate as a going concern. ▶ Undertaking a 'stand back' review to consider all of the evidence obtained, whether corroborative or contradictory, when we draw our conclusions on going concern. ▶ Challenging the disclosure made in the accounts in respect of going concern and any material uncertainties. 	<p>We have reviewed management's going concern assessment and confirm that their conclusion that the Authority remains a going concern is based on reasonable and supportable assumptions.</p> <p>We have also reviewed management's going concern disclosure and confirmed it is sufficiently detailed, transparent and accurately reflects management's underlying going concern assessment.</p> <p>The current assessment is for the period up to 30 September 2022. However, this will need to be updated if the audit is not completed by 30 September 2021.</p>

Other areas of audit focus (continued)

What is the area of focus?	What did we do?	What are our conclusions?
<p>Accounting for Covid-19 related government grants</p> <p>The Authority has received government funding in relation to Covid-19 and investment support in Protection Services following the Grenfell Tower Inquiries. There is a need for the Authority to ensure that it accounts for these grants appropriately, taking into account any associated restrictions and conditions.</p>	<p>We considered the Authority's judgement on material grants received in relation to whether it is acting as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Agent, where it has determined that it is acting as an intermediary; or ▶ Principal, where the Authority has determined that it is acting on its own behalf. <p>We sought to determine whether conditions were attached to the grant funding received and whether those conditions were met or not. Considering the outcome of the above we considered the appropriateness of the accounting treatment for the grants, in particular whether the grants were correctly classified, and whether associated disclosure were also accurate.</p>	<p>Based on our work we are satisfied that the accounting treatment adopted for Covid-19 related government grants and investment support in Protection Services, and accorded with the Authority's assessment of whether it was acting as agent or principal, the underlying conditions of the grant and whether those conditions had been met.</p>



03 Audit Report



Audit Report

Draft audit report

Our opinion on the financial statements

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements and the firefighters' pension fund financial statements of East Sussex Fire Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021 under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. The financial statements comprise the Movement in Reserves Statement, Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flow Statement, Expenditure and Funding Analysis, and the related notes 1 to 37; and include the firefighters' pension fund financial statements comprising the Fund Account, the Net Assets Statement and the related notes 1 to 3.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- ▶ give a true and fair view of the financial position of East Sussex Fire Authority as at 31 March 2021 and of its expenditure and income for the year then ended; and
- ▶ have been prepared properly in accordance with the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report below. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to

our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and the Comptroller and Auditor General's AGN01, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

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

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of 12 months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Treasurer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report. However, because not all future events or conditions can be predicted, this statement is not a guarantee as to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Statement of Accounts 2020/21, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Treasurer is responsible for the other information.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in this report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our opinion on the financial statements

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

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we report by exception

We report to you if:

- ▶ in our opinion the annual governance statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information forthcoming from the audit or our knowledge of the Authority;
- ▶ we issue a report in the public interest under section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we make written recommendations to the audited body under Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we make an application to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we issue an advisory notice under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we make an application for judicial review under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014;
- ▶ we are not satisfied that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We have nothing to report in these respects.

Responsibility of the Treasurer

As explained more fully in the Statement of the Treasurer's Responsibilities set out on page 11, the Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, which includes the Authority financial statements and the firefighters pension fund financial statements, in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view and for such internal control as the members determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Treasurer 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 the Authority either intends to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our 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 our 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.



Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our opinion on the financial statements

Explanation as to what extent the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect irregularities, including fraud. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below. However, the primary responsibility for the prevention and detection of fraud rests with both those charged with governance of the entity and management.

- ▶ We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that are applicable to the Authority and determined that the most significant are:
 - Local Government Act 1972,
 - Local Government Act 2003,
 - The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended in 2018 and 2020,
 - The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, and
 - The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

In addition, the Authority has to comply with laws and regulations in the areas of anti-bribery and corruption, data protection, employment legislation, tax legislation, general power of competence, procurement and health & safety.

- ▶ We understood how East Sussex Fire Authority is complying with those frameworks by understanding the incentive, opportunities and motives for non-compliance, including inquiring of management, head of internal audit and those charged with governance, and obtaining and reading documentation relating to the procedures in place to identify, evaluate and comply with laws and regulations, and whether they are aware of

instances of non-compliance. We corroborated this through our reading of the Authority's committee minutes. Based on this understanding we designed our audit procedures to identify non-compliance with such laws and regulations. Our procedures had a focus on compliance with the accounting framework through obtaining sufficient audit evidence in line with the level of risk identified and with relevant legislation.

- ▶ We assessed the susceptibility of the Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur by understanding the potential incentives and pressures for management to manipulate the financial statements, and performed procedures to understand the areas in which this would most likely arise. Based on our risk assessment procedures, we identified, inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure and management override of controls to be our fraud risks.
- ▶ To address our fraud risk of inappropriate capitalisation of revenue expenditure we tested the Authority's capitalised expenditure to ensure the capitalisation criteria were properly met and the expenditure was genuine.
- ▶ To address our fraud risk of management override of controls, we tested specific journal entries identified by applying risk criteria to the entire population of journals. For each journal selected, we tested specific transactions back to source documentation to confirm that the journals were authorised and accounted for appropriately. In addition, we assessed whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates were indicative of a potential bias and evaluated the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

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



Audit Report

Draft audit report (cont.)

Our opinion on the financial statements

Scope of the review of arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources

We have undertaken our review in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice, having regard to the guidance on the specified reporting criteria issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General in April 2021, as to whether East Sussex Fire Authority had proper arrangements for financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Comptroller and Auditor General determined these criteria as those necessary for us to consider under the Code of Audit Practice in satisfying ourselves whether East Sussex Fire Authority put in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ended 31 March 2021.

We planned our work in accordance with the Code of Audit Practice. Based on our risk assessment, we undertook such work as we considered necessary to form a view on whether, in all significant respects, East Sussex Fire Authority had put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Authority has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Authority's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.

Delay in certification of completion of the audit

We cannot formally conclude the audit and issue an audit certificate until we have completed the work necessary to issue our assurance statement in respect of the Authority's Whole of Government Accounts consolidation pack.

We are satisfied that this work does not have a material effect on the financial statements or on our value for money conclusion.

Until we have completed these procedures we are unable to certify that we have completed the audit of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the members of East Sussex Fire Authority, as a body, in accordance with Part 5 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and for no other purpose, as set out in paragraph 43 of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies published by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Authority and the Authority's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Helen Thompson (Key Audit Partner)

Ernst & Young LLP (Local Auditor)

Southampton



04 Audit Differences





Audit Differences

In the normal course of any audit, we identify misstatements between amounts we believe should be recorded in the financial statements and the disclosures and amounts actually recorded. These differences are classified as “known” or “judgemental”. Known differences represent items that can be accurately quantified and relate to a definite set of facts or circumstances. Judgemental differences generally involve estimation and relate to facts or circumstances that are uncertain or open to interpretation.

Summary of adjusted and unadjusted differences

There are no unadjusted differences as at 17 September 2021.

There have been no misstatements greater than £790k which have been corrected by management.

A small number of other amendments were made to disclosures appearing in the financial statements as a result of our work.

As our audit work in relation to the IAS19 pension liability is ongoing at the time of writing this report, further adjusted and unadjusted misstatements may be identified. We will update the Scrutiny & Audit Panel at the meeting on 28 September 2021 if we identify any issues by the time of the meeting.



05 Value for Money



Value for money

The Authority's responsibilities for value for money (VFM)

The Authority is required to maintain an effective system of internal control that supports the achievement of their policies, aims and objectives while safeguarding and securing value for money from the public funds and other resources at their disposal.

As part of the material published with its financial statements, the Authority is required to bring together commentary on their governance framework and how this has operated during the period in a governance statement. In preparing its governance statement, the Authority tailors the content to reflect their own individual circumstances, consistent with the requirements set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. This includes a requirement to provide commentary on their arrangements for securing value for money from their use of resources.

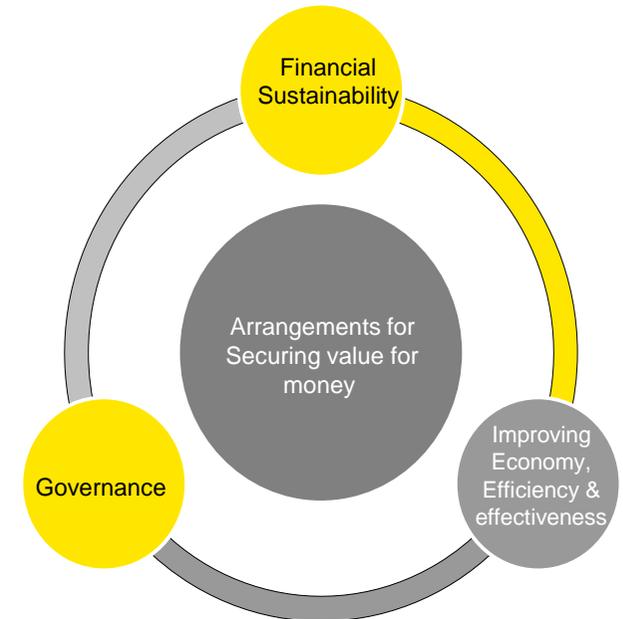
Risk assessment

We have previously reported to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel the outcome of our assessment of the risk of significant weaknesses in the Authority's VFM arrangements - that we had not identified any risks. We have revisited our risk assessment and have not identified any additional risks.

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Status of our VFM work

We have completed our planned VFM procedures and have no matters to report by exception in the auditor's report (see Section 03). We plan to issue the VFM commentary by the end of December as part of issuing the Auditor's Annual Report.





06 Other reporting issues

Other reporting issues

Consistency of other information published with the financial statements, including the Annual Governance Statement

We must give an opinion on the consistency of the financial and non-financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 with the audited financial statements.

We must also review the Annual Governance Statement for completeness of disclosures, consistency with other information from our work, and whether it complies with relevant guidance.

Financial information in the Statement of Accounts 2020/21 and published with the financial statements was consistent with the audited financial statements.

We have reviewed the Annual Governance Statement and can confirm it is consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements and we have no other matters to report.

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Whole of Government Accounts

Alongside our work on the financial statements, we also review and report to the National Audit Office on your Whole of Government Accounts return. The extent of our review, and the nature of our report, is specified by the National Audit Office.

We have not yet been able to perform the procedures required by the National Audit Office on the Whole of Government Accounts submission. This is because HM Treasury are continuing to review the online 2020/21 WGA Data Collection Tool (DCT) and update the guidance that is available for preparers. Based on the last available update the DCT and guidance was not expected to be available until Autumn 2021. Therefore the 2020/21 WGA component data will not be available for auditors to review until after that. Group Audit Instructions and the timetable for 2020/21 will necessarily follow any changes HM Treasury make to the DCT and process.

Other powers and duties

We have a duty under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to consider whether to report on any matter that comes to our attention in the course of the audit, either for the Authority to consider it or to bring it to the attention of the public (i.e. "a report in the public interest").

We did not identify any issues which required us to issue a report in the public interest.

Other reporting issues

Other matters

As required by ISA (UK&I) 260 and other ISAs specifying communication requirements, we must tell you significant findings from the audit and other matters if they are significant to your oversight of the Authority's financial reporting process. They include the following:

- ▶ Significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures;
- ▶ Any significant difficulties encountered during the audit;
- ▶ Any significant matters arising from the audit that were discussed with management;
- ▶ Written representations we have requested;
- ▶ Expected modifications to the audit report;
- ▶ Any other matters significant to overseeing the financial reporting process;
- ▶ Related parties;
- ▶ External confirmations;
- ▶ Going concern;
- ▶ Consideration of laws and regulations;

We have nothing to comment in respect of these.



07

Assessment of Control Environment



Assessment of Control Environment

Financial controls

As part of our audit of the financial statements, we obtained an understanding of internal control sufficient to plan our audit and determine the nature, timing and extent of testing performed.

Although our audit was not designed to express an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control, we are required to communicate to you.

We have not identified any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of an internal control that might result in a material misstatement in your financial statements.

We considered whether circumstances arising from COVID-19 resulted in a change to the overall control environment of effectiveness of internal controls, for example due to significant staff absence or limitations as a result of working remotely. We identified no issues which we wish to bring to your attention.



08

Independence

Relationships, services and related threats and safeguards

The FRC Ethical Standard requires that we provide details of all relationships between Ernst & Young (EY) and the Fund, and its members and senior management and its affiliates, including all services provided by us and our network to the Authority, its members and senior management and its affiliates, and other services provided to other known connected parties that we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on the our integrity or objectivity, including those that could compromise independence and the related safeguards that are in place and why they address the threats.

There are no relationships from 1 April 2020 to the date of this report, which we consider may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence and objectivity. However, the Treasurer noted one issue in his response to our enquiries. East Sussex County Council / Orbis, who provide a significant element of finance support to the Authority, retain EY as its external tax advisor. The Treasurer confirmed that East Sussex Fire Authority retain PSTax as its external tax advisor in order to avoid any independence conflict. We therefore conclude there is no threat to our independence from this matter.

Services provided by Ernst & Young

The table below sets out a summary of the fees that you have paid to us in the year ended 31 March 2021 in line with the disclosures set out in FRC Ethical Standard and in statute.

At the date of this report, there are no future services which have been contracted and no written proposal to provide non-audit services has been submitted.

	Final fee 2020/21	Planned fee 2020/21	Final Fee 2019/20
	£	£	£
Scale Fee - Code work	23,690	23,690	23,690
Planned 2019/20 recurrent fee variation reflecting the underlying level of additional risk at the Authority yet to be agreed by PSAA (See Note 1)	27,553	27,553	27,553
Revised Proposed Scale Fee yet to be agreed by PSAA	51,243	51,243	51,243
Risk based fee variations yet to be agreed by PSAA (see Note 2)	TBC	TBC	4,342
Total Fees	TBC	TBC	55,585

Note 1 - In order to meet regulatory and compliance audit requirements not present in the market at the time of our most recent bid to PSAA, we undertook additional work at a fee of £27,553 to deliver the audit in 2019/20 which we expect to reoccur in 2020/21 and subsequent years. These additional fees have been not been accepted by the Treasurer. The proposed recurrent fee variation has also not yet been approved by PSAA.

Note 2 - These 2019/20 risk based fees have been agreed with the Treasurer but have not yet been approved by PSAA. Any additional fee for 2020/21 will be communicated to the Treasurer following the completion of the audit.

Other communications

EY Transparency Report 2020

Ernst & Young (EY) has policies and procedures that instil professional values as part of firm culture and ensure that the highest standards of objectivity, independence and integrity are maintained.

Details of the key policies and processes in place within EY for maintaining objectivity and independence can be found in our annual Transparency Report which the firm is required to publish by law. The most recent version of this Report is for the year end 30 June 2020:

[EY UK Transparency Report 2020 | EY UK](#)



09

Appendices

Required communications with the Scrutiny & Audit Panel

There are certain communications that we must provide to the those charged with governance of UK entities. We have detailed these here together with a reference of when and where they were covered:

 Our Reporting to you		
Required communications	 What is reported?	  When and where
Terms of engagement	Confirmation by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel of acceptance of terms of engagement as written in the engagement letter signed by both parties.	The statement of responsibilities serves as the formal terms of engagement between the PSAA's appointed auditors and audited bodies.
Our responsibilities	Reminder of our responsibilities as set out in the engagement letter.	Audit Planning Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 29 April 2021.
Planning and audit approach	Communication of the planned scope and timing of the audit, any limitations and the significant risks identified. When communicating key audit matters this includes the most significant risks of material misstatement (whether or not due to fraud) including those that have the greatest effect on the overall audit strategy, the allocation of resources in the audit and directing the efforts of the engagement team.	Audit Planning Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 29 April 2021.
Significant findings from the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Our view about the significant qualitative aspects of accounting practices including accounting policies, accounting estimates and financial statement disclosures ▶ Significant difficulties, if any, encountered during the audit ▶ Significant matters, if any, arising from the audit that were discussed with management ▶ Written representations that we are seeking ▶ Expected modifications to the audit report ▶ Other matters if any, significant to the oversight of the financial reporting process 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Going concern	<p>Events or conditions identified that may cast significant doubt on the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether the events or conditions constitute a material uncertainty related to going concern ▶ Whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate in the preparation and presentation of the financial statements ▶ The appropriateness of related disclosures in the financial statements 	No conditions or events were identified, either individually or together to raise any doubt about East Sussex Fire Authority's ability to continue for the 12 months from the date of our report.
Misstatements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Uncorrected misstatements and their effect on our audit opinion, unless prohibited by law or regulation ▶ The effect of uncorrected misstatements related to prior periods ▶ A request that any uncorrected misstatement be corrected ▶ Material misstatements corrected by management 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Subsequent events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiry of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel where appropriate regarding whether any subsequent events have occurred that might affect the financial statements. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Fraud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Enquiries of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel to determine whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the entity ▶ Any fraud that we have identified or information we have obtained that indicates that a fraud may exist ▶ Unless all of those charged with governance are involved in managing the entity, any identified or suspected fraud involving: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Management; b. Employees who have significant roles in internal control; or c. Others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements. ▶ The nature, timing and extent of audit procedures necessary to complete the audit when fraud involving management is suspected ▶ Any other matters related to fraud, relevant to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel and Management responsibility. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Related parties	<p>Significant matters arising during the audit in connection with the entity's related parties including, when applicable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Non-disclosure by management ▶ Inappropriate authorisation and approval of transactions ▶ Disagreement over disclosures ▶ Non-compliance with laws and regulations ▶ Difficulty in identifying the party that ultimately controls the entity 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Independence	<p>Communication of all significant facts and matters that bear on EY's, and all individuals involved in the audit, objectivity and independence.</p> <p>Communication of key elements of the audit engagement partner's consideration of independence and objectivity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The principal threats ▶ Safeguards adopted and their effectiveness ▶ An overall assessment of threats and safeguards ▶ Information about the general policies and process within the firm to maintain objectivity and independence <p>Communications whenever significant judgements are made about threats to objectivity and independence and the appropriateness of safeguards put in place.</p>	<p>Audit Planning Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 29 April 2021.</p> <p>Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.</p>
External confirmations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Management's refusal for us to request confirmations ▶ Inability to obtain relevant and reliable audit evidence from other procedures. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Consideration of laws and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Subject to compliance with applicable regulations, matters involving identified or suspected non-compliance with laws and regulations, other than those which are clearly inconsequential and the implications thereof. Instances of suspected non-compliance may also include those that are brought to our attention that are expected to occur imminently or for which there is reason to believe that they may occur ▶ Enquiry of the Scrutiny & Audit Panel into possible instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that may have a material effect on the financial statements and that the Scrutiny & Audit Panel may be aware of. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.

Appendix A

		Our Reporting to you
Required communications	What is reported?	When and where
Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Significant deficiencies in internal controls identified during the audit. 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Written representations we are requesting from management and/or those charged with governance 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Material inconsistencies or misstatements of fact identified in other information which management has refused to revise 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Auditors report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key audit matters that we will include in our auditor's report ▶ Any circumstances identified that affect the form and content of our auditor's report 	Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.
Fee Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Breakdown of fee information when the audit planning report is agreed ▶ Breakdown of fee information at the completion of the audit ▶ Any non-audit work 	<p>Audit Planning Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 29 April 2021.</p> <p>Audit Results Report presented at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel meeting on 28 September 2021.</p>

Management representation letter

Management Rep Letter

[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

[Date]

Helen Thompson
Ernst & Young LLP
Grosvenor House
Grosvenor Square
Southampton
SO15 2BE

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of East Sussex Fire Authority ("the Authority") for the year ended 31 March 2021. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Authority financial position of East Sussex Fire Authority as of 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Authority, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Authority in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.
4. As members of management of the Authority, we believe that the Authority has a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls.
5. As at 17 September 2021, there are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

Management representation letter (continued)

Management Rep Letter

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Authority's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Authority (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - ▶ involving financial statements;
 - ▶ related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Authority's financial statements;
 - ▶ related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Authority's activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
 - ▶ involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
 - ▶ in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:
 - ▶ Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
 - ▶ Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - ▶ Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Authority, Scrutiny & Audit Panel and Policy & Resources Panel held through the year to the most recent meeting on the Fire Authority on 2 September 2021, Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September 2021, and Policy & Resources Panel on 22 July 2021.
4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.
5. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

Management representation letter (continued)

Management Rep Letter

6. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
7. From the date of our last management representation letter at 30 November 2020 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants), to the extent that such unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.
3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 1.ii to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than Note 6 to the financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Statement and Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Authority has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.
2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.

Management representation letter (continued)

Management Rep Letter

3. We have no plans to abandon lines of product or other plans or intentions that will result in any excess or obsolete inventory, and no inventory is stated at an amount in excess of net realisable value.
4. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts. Except as disclosed in Note 13 to the financial statements, we have no other line of credit arrangements.

I. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

J. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of property, plant and equipment and IAS 19 pension fund liability, and have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

K. Estimates

i.) Revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment; and

ii.) Pension liability and asset valuation

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic of which we are aware.

2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation, appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out these valuations on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

L. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Management representation letter (continued)

Management Rep Letter

Yours faithfully,

Director: Resources / Treasurer

Date:

I confirm that this letter has been discussed and agreed at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September 2021.

Chairman: Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Date:

APPENDIX C

Implementation of IFRS 16 Leases

In previous reports to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel, we have highlighted the issue of new accounting standards and regulatory developments. IFRS 16 introduces a number of significant changes which go beyond accounting technicalities. For example, the changes have the potential to impact on procurement processes as more information becomes available on the real cost of leases. The key accounting impact is that assets and liabilities in relation to significant lease arrangements previously accounted for as operating leases will need to be recognised on the balance sheet. IFRS 16 requires all substantial leases to be accounted for using the acquisition approach, recognising the rights acquired to use an asset.

IFRS 16 does not come into effect for the Authority until 1 April 2022. However, officers should be acting now to assess the Authority's leasing positions and secure the required information to ensure the Authority will be fully compliant with the 2022/23 Code. The following table summarises some key areas officers should be progressing.

IFRS 16 theme	Summary of key measures 
Data collection	Management should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Put in place a robust process to identify all arrangements that convey the right to control the use of an identified asset for a period of time. The adequacy of this process should be discussed with auditors. ▶ Classify all such leases into low value; short-term; peppercorn; portfolio and individual leases ▶ Identify, collect, log and check all significant data points that affect lease accounting including: the term of the lease; reasonably certain judgements on extension or termination; dates of rent reviews; variable payments; grandfathered decisions; non-lease components; and discount rate to be applied.
Policy Choices	The Authority needs to agree on certain policy choices. In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Whether to adopt a portfolio approach ▶ What low value threshold to set and agree with auditors ▶ Which asset classes, if any, are management adopting the practical expedient in relation to non-lease components ▶ What is managements policy in relation to discount rates to be used?
Code adaptations for the public sector	Finance teams should understand the Code adaptations for the public sector. The Code contains general adaptations, (e.g. the definition of a lease); transitional interpretations (e.g. no restatement of prior periods) and adaptations that apply post transition (e.g. use of short-term lease exemption).
Transitional accounting arrangements	Finance teams should understand the accounting required on first implementation of IFRS 16. The main impact is on former operating leases where the authority is lessee. However, there can be implications for some finance leases where the Authority is lessee; and potentially for sub-leases, where the Authority is a lessor, that were operating leases under the old standard.
Ongoing accounting arrangements	Finance teams need to develop models to be able to properly account for initial recognition and subsequent measurement of right of use assets and associated liabilities. This is more complex than the previous standard due to more regular remeasurements and possible modifications after certain trigger events.
Remeasurements and modifications	Finance teams need to familiarise themselves with when the 'remeasurement' or 'modification' of a lease is required and what to do under each circumstance. A modification can lead to an additional lease being recognised. It is also important to know when remeasurements require a new discount rate is to be applied to the lease.

EY | Assurance | Tax | Transactions | Consultancy

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

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ED None

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East Sussex Fire Authority

Statement of Accounts

2020/21

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In addition to the Statement of Accounts, financial information can be obtained from reports made to the Fire Authority and its Panels. Information on the Fire Authority's budget and finances can also be found on the website www.esfrs.org.

Further information on particular aspects of the East Sussex Fire Authority's finances may be obtained from:

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Church Lane
Lewes
East Sussex
BN7 2DZ
Or by email to enquiries@esfrs.org.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

Introduction

The purpose of the Statement of Accounts is to give the reader clear information about the Fire Authority's finances for the year ended 31 March 2021. The format of the Statement of Accounts is governed by The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) which is published by the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and is based upon International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

East Sussex Fire Authority was created on 1 April 1997 as a result of local government reorganisation. It has a statutory duty to provide a Fire and Rescue Service for the whole of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove, covering an area of 179,000 hectares and with a population of approximately 844,000.

The Authority is made up of 18 councillors, 12 of whom are nominated by East Sussex County Council and 6 of whom are nominated by Brighton & Hove City Council. The membership of the Authority during the 2020/21 financial year was as follows:

	East Sussex County Council	Brighton & Hove City Council	Total
Conservative	7	2	9
Green	-	2	2
Labour	1	2	3
Liberal Democrat	3	-	3
Independent	1	-	1
Total	12	6	18

The purpose and commitment of the Authority are set out below and are what is planned to be delivered through our agreed budget and Medium Term Financial Plan:

Our purpose:

We make our communities safer

Our Commitments, we will do this by:

- Delivering high performing services
- Engaging with our communities
- Having a safe and valued workforce
- Making effective use of our resources

You can find out more about the Fire Authority and the services it provides at www.esfrs.org

Statement of Accounts

The core statements in these accounts comprise:

- The Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS) – this statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce local taxation) and other reserves.
- The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) – this is fundamental to the understanding of the Authority's activities. It brings together all of the functions of the Authority and summarises all of the resources that the Authority has generated, consumed or set aside in providing services during the year.
- The Balance Sheet – this 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.
- The Cash Flow Statement – this summarises the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Authority during the reporting period.

Other statements include:

- The Expenditure and Funding Analysis – this analysis shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from annual resources (government grants, rents, council tax and business rates) by local authorities in comparison with those economic resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The Funding Analysis also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes between the Authority's directorates/services/departments. Income and expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices is presented more fully in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- The East Sussex Firefighters' Pension Fund Accounts – this summarises the transactions relating to the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account for 2020/21. This is an unfunded scheme (i.e. it is not backed by investments) into which employee and employer contributions are paid and from which pension payments are made. The account is topped up by a grant from Government if the contributions are insufficient to meet the cost of pension payments in any one year.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

Changes to accounting policies

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (the Code) is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), and has been developed by the CIPFA/LASAAC Code Board under the oversight of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board. The Code is based on approved accounting standards issued by the International Accounting Standards Board and interpretations of the International Financial Reporting Interpretations Committee, except where these are inconsistent with specific statutory requirements. The Code also draws on approved accounting standards issued by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board and the UK Accounting Standards Board where these provide additional guidance.

The 2020/21 Code has been prepared on the basis of accounting standards and interpretations in effect for accounting periods commencing on or before 1 January 2020. It supersedes the 2019/20 edition of the Code published on 1 April 2019 and applies for accounting periods commencing on or after 1 April 2020.

The 2020/21 Code highlights the following key updates/changes in accounting practice:

- Amendments to IAS 19 Employee Benefits: Plan Amendment, Curtailment or Settlement.
- Amendments to implement and emphasise the application of Amendments to IAS 1 and IAS 8: Definition of Material.
- Amendments relating to financial instruments.

Financial Report

This section of the Statement of Accounts for 2020/21 sets out:

- The construction of the original budget for 2020/21.
- The final outturn for 2020/21 .

Setting the Revenue Budget for 2020/21

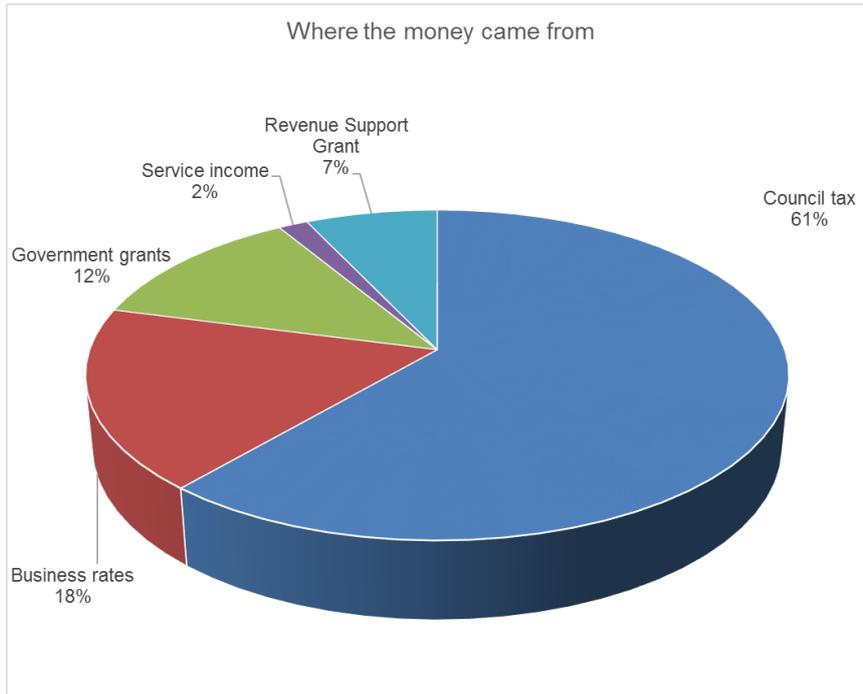
The Authority has developed its service planning processes so that they provide a sound basis both for setting its strategic objectives, plans and policies and for its medium term financial planning and budget setting. The Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) recognised that there was significant uncertainty for fire funding beyond the one year settlement agreed by central government. For 2020/21 and beyond there were potentially significant risks as a result of proposals to change the Business Rates Retention regime, the Fairer Funding Review and a Comprehensive Spending Review. In addition there was a significant risk within the fire sector with one-off grant from Government funding a significant and ongoing increase in pension costs. As a consequence of this uncertainty the MTFP for the period to 2024/25 modelled three scenarios, best case – flat cash (Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) maintained at 2020/21 cash levels), Mid case 5% annual reductions in (SFA) and Worse Case 7.5% annual reductions in SFA , resulting in need to identify additional savings of between £2.7m - £3.6m over the period. The budget and MTFP were developed to facilitate the delivery of the Authority's purpose and commitments and the priorities set out in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017-20. You can find out more about the IRMP at <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/strategies-plans-and-performance-information/community-risk-analysis/integrated-risk-management-planning/>.

In February 2020 the Authority set its revenue budget for 2020/21 at £39.737m, a 1.79% increase on the previous year. Savings of £0.396m which were expected to increase to £0.651m in 2024/25 were included. The main savings resulted from reductions in PPE and workwear, Estates Strategy revenue maintenance costs, reduction in administration costs, reductions in budgets that had previously underspent and a range of low impact savings across a range of non pay budgets. The Fire Authority also agreed to a small increase in its Council Tax of 1.99%. The additional funding from a better than expected one year settlement, along with savings and the increase in Council Tax allowed the Authority to budget for additional spending pressures beyond pay and price inflation, other unavoidable commitments and bids for investment including an additional £0.5m to operate the our mobilising centre whilst we worked towards a new partnership with Surrey and West Sussex Fire Services and setting aside £0.5m in invest initiatives that will make us more efficient.

Revenue Expenditure and Income

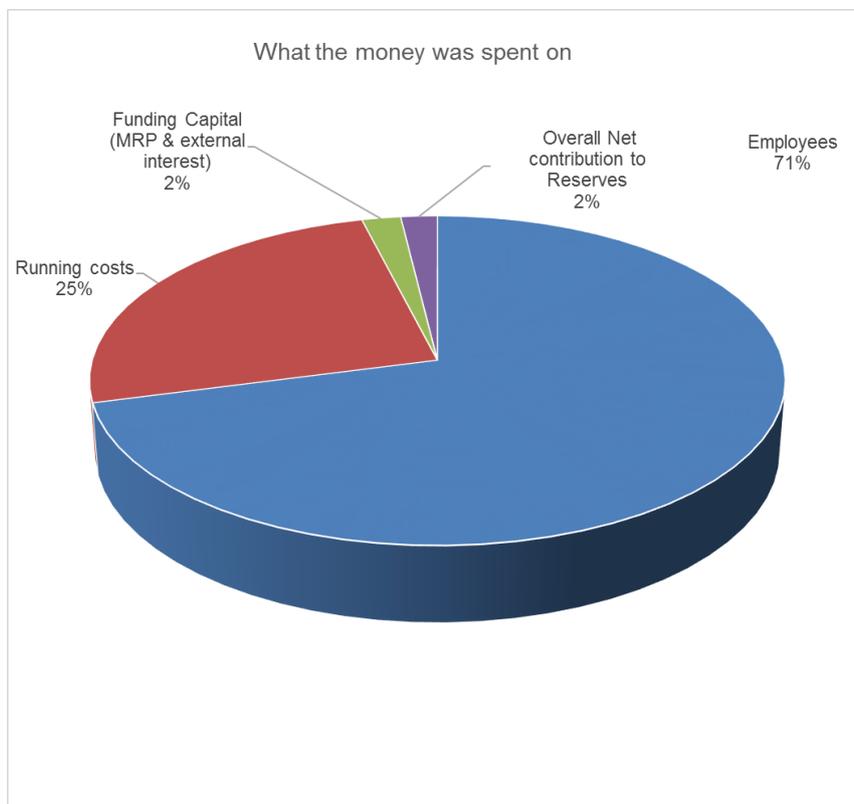
The revenue, or day to day, spending of the Authority is shown in the table below, "Analysis of the Revenue Budget" and is summarised in the following charts. The first chart shows the source of resources supporting revenue expenditure.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer



The majority of the funding (61%) comes from the Council Tax payers of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. The two other main sources are Business Rates and Government Grants (including revenue support grant of 7%) at 18% and 19% respectively. The Service generates fees and charges income representing 2%.

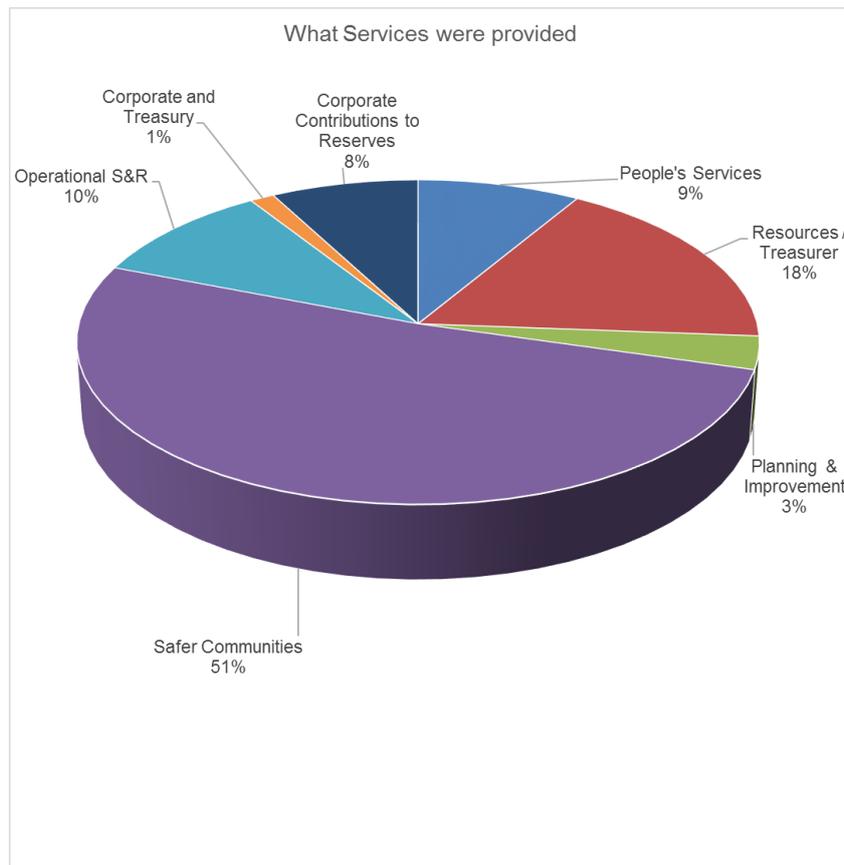
The next chart shows what this money was spent on:



Fire Authority services are heavily reliant upon staff, therefore employee costs including employer's pension contributions accounted for the majority (71%) of expenditure. Running expenses including the cost of premises, transport and supplies and services accounted for 25% of the total expenditure, the net overall transfer to reserves including corporate and within services accounted for 2% which relates primarily to the carry forward of government grants and underspend 2020/21, whilst the cost of funding capital expenditure, including the costs associated with loans taken out to invest in the Fire Authority's services, makes up 2%.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

The third and final chart shows the cost of providing the services of the Authority across our different departments:



The Authority's focus is on services to local communities and this is reflected by the fact that 51% of expenditure is on Safer Communities which includes both firefighting and rescue operations and prevention and protection work including preventing fires, reducing arson, working with the local business community, and with other local authorities and stakeholders to make all our local communities safer.

Resources/Treasurer (18%) supports service delivery providing Information Technology (I.T.), Property, Procurement, Finance, Risk and Insurance and Legal Services.

Operational Support and Resilience (10%) delivers support for the fleet including fire appliances, operational planning and policy and East Sussex Fire Control

Peoples Services (9%) delivers all operational training (with a few specialist exceptions) and commercial training based at Service Training Centre and a team of specialist training staff, Health and Safety advice as well as advising managers on legal compliance, policy formulation, training and safety performance monitoring activities and HR and Organisational Development support all employees throughout their employment with ESFRS in a wide range of areas as well as ensuring the organisation is compliant with current employment law. Peoples Services also leads on inclusion and diversity across the Service.

Corporate Contribution to Reserves (8%) – which relates to the transfer of unused grants and revenue resources to finance future capital and revenue expenditure (other net contributions are included in the services).

Planning and Improvement (3%) provides programme and performance management, business planning, community risk management and communications as well as support for the Fire Authority and its' meetings.

Corporate (1%) includes Principal Officers and their direct support, treasury management, various non service costs such as injury benefits as well as the corporate contingency.

Analysis of the Revenue Budget

The table below sets out the main components of the Revenue Budget for 2020/21 and how these compare with the actual outturn. Any differences between the Provisional Outturn and the Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund column on the Expenditure and Funding Analysis on page 26 are due to transfers to/from reserves.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

	Original Budget 2020/21	Revised Budget 2020/21	Provisional Outturn 2020/21	Provisional Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Peoples Services	3,641	3,753	3,526	(227)
Resources/Treasurer	7,506	7,617	7,221	(396)
Planning and Improvement	1,275	1,432	1,348	(84)
Total Deputy Chief Fire Officer	12,422	12,802	12,095	(707)
Safer Communities	21,017	21,274	21,094	(180)
Operational Support	4,298	4,241	4,103	(138)
Total Assistant Chief Fire Officer	25,315	25,515	25,197	(318)
CFO Staff	705	728	782	54
Treasury Management	839	839	821	(18)
Non Delegated costs	(1,058)	(1,150)	(1,076)	74
Corporate Contingency	454	22	-	(22)
Covid-19	-	-	-	-
Transfer from Reserves	(627)	(753)	(748)	5
Transfer to Reserves	1,687	3,355	3,939	584
Total Corporate	2,000	3,041	3,718	677
Total Net Expenditure	39,737	41,358	41,010	(348)
Financed By:				
RSG	(3,208)	(3,208)	(3,208)	-
Council Tax	(27,931)	(27,931)	(27,931)	-
Business Rates	(7,714)	(8,026)	(8,030)	(4)
S31 Grants	(799)	(2,108)	(2,053)	55
Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit	(85)	(85)	(174)	(89)
Total Financing	(39,737)	(41,358)	(41,396)	(38)
Total Over / (Under) Spend	-	-	(386)	(386)

Throughout the year the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the Authority received regular budget monitoring reports which tracked expenditure and income compared to the set budget, progress in delivering agreed savings and identified in year spending pressures, enabling them to be managed within the overall revenue budget. Treasury Management is usually reported to Members as part of the Corporate heading, however, as it is not part of the Net Cost of Service in the Accounting Statement Expenditure and Funding Analysis, it is shown here separately.

The Authority's original estimate of net revenue expenditure for the year was £39.737m. The budget was revised upwards during the year to reflect changes in service delivery to £41.358m. This increase of £1.6m (4%) was mainly due to additional S31 grant of £1.3m which was transferred to reserve to meet budgeted losses in 2021/22. The final outturn is, at £41.010m, an underspend of £0.348m on net expenditure which alongside better than expected income of £41.396m (additional £0.038m) resulted in an underspend of £0.386m (1% of budget) which will be transferred to the Budget Carry Forward reserve. The main reason for the change from the original budget was the receipt of additional Section 31 Grants from Government primarily related to Covid-19 and investment in protection services (Business Safety) following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Not all of the additional grants

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

received were spent during the year and this meant that there was a significant increase in transfers to reserves to allow the remaining portion of the grants to be carried forward and spent in future years. In addition £0.496m from the budget was transferred into the IT Strategy Reserve to fund additional investment in our CRM project as agreed by the Fire Authority in February 2021.

In service delivery, the net expenditure position of £386,000 underspend is the result of a combination of underspending in some areas and overspending in others.

The main variations in Net Service Expenditure were as a result of:

- A £227,000 underspend in Peoples Services is generated due to significantly reduced delivery of training, gym refurbishment and other activities which were impacted by Covid-19 and also staffing vacancies. This was partially offset by reduced income from commercial training as a result of Covid-19
- A £396,000 underspend in Resources / Treasurer is due mainly to delays in the delivery of some IT projects and negotiations with suppliers leading to lower prices than originally quoted. Savings in Estates due to delays in the planned maintenance programme, partly as a result of Covid-19, offset by overspends on facilities management and hired / contracted services.
- A £180,000 underspend in Safer Communities is mainly due to savings generated in Business Safety due to issues with recruitment in whole-time and support staff offset by fixed term contracts covering whole time staff absences and an increase in retained operational hours.
- A £138,000 underspend in Operational Support and Resilience, comprises mainly of Covid-19 related delays to delivery specialist training and savings in fuel, offset by reduced income and an overspend on vehicle repairs and maintenance.
- An overspend of £674,000 on Corporate budgets which is mainly due to the transfer of funds into ITG earmarked reserve to finance updated requirements on CRM, the transfer of unused grants to grants unapplied reserve for use on specific priorities in future years. These were offset by overspends on subscriptions, tax issue and ill health/ injury pension and LGPS secondary pension (£20,000).

Reserves and Balances

The financial statements also set out details of the Authority's reserves and balances, which are an essential tool to manage risk exposure and smooth the impact of major costs. The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require billing and precepting authorities in England and Wales to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement, and regard to LAAP Bulletin 99 - Local Authority Reserves and Balances. In May 2018 the Government published the New Fire and Rescue Services Framework which introduces a requirement for Combined Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish a Reserve Strategy on their website and outlined the detail which should be included.

The Reserves Strategy forms part of the Authority's Medium Term Financial Plan. The level of the Fire Authority General Fund Balance has increased from £1.869m to £1.960m which is slightly below the minimum risk based level of 5% of the Revenue Budget (£40.704m) approved in February 2021. An additional contribution to the General Fund balance was agreed as part of the 2021/22 budget and aimed to take it back above the minimum level. The increase in General Fund Reserve of £0.091m in 2020/21 includes the financing of the 0.75% unfunded part of the green book pay award totalling £47,000 offset by a lower drawdown requirement on SCC Exit Project due to costs being lower than anticipated,

The Authority's revenue balances have increased by £1.257m to £16.933m at 31 March 2021 (including the 2020/21 Revenue Budget underspend of (£0.386m), of which 88% £14.973m is held for specific purposes). With the addition of the Capital Reserves of £6.028m this means that total usable reserves stand at £22.961m as shown in note 20 to the accounts.

Details of the Authority's earmarked reserves can be found within note 8 to the Core Accounting Statements. Current earmarked reserves are £14.973m, the most significant being those to provide resources which may be used for capital spending in order to reduce the need for revenue cost of borrowing, the use of unused grants carried forward to meet eligible revenue costs and funding shortfalls and the delivery of efficiencies. Earmarked reserves cover projects including Mobilising Strategy, I.T. Strategy, Emergency Services Mobile Communication and Sprinkler installation. Certain reserves are held to manage the accounting processes for tangible fixed assets, minimum revenue provision and retirement benefits which do not represent usable resources for the Authority.

The level of reserves held at the end of 2020/21 is £11.947m higher than planned (£22.961m actual against £11.014m planned), including the Budget underspend 2020/21 of (£0.386m) The main reasons for this are the decreased use of earmarked reserves as projects were delayed due to Covid-19 and unused grants awarded during the financial year transferred to grants unapplied reserve. Additionally, reduced capital expenditure meant the expected £5.54m draw down from capital receipts reserve was reduced to £1.714m.

The Capital Programme

In 2020/21, the Authority spent gross £2.225m on its vehicles, buildings and other capital projects, net £2.032m including £0.193m in partner contributions and grant funding.

The Authority can fund its capital expenditure from several sources, each with its own advantages and limitations. The sources of funding for the original Capital Programme budget 2020/21 of £5.992m were contributions from Capital Receipts (£5.54m) with the balance funded from revenue contributions £0.452m. Capital bids for new projects are made in accordance with the 5 year Capital Asset Strategy and individual schemes are subject to the Authority's project management regime to ensure effective delivery.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

The Capital Programme budget for the year was revised to £2.295m (funded by Capital Receipts and Internal Borrowing) following an assessment of delivery of projects by the Service. The larger schemes budgeted for during the year were general property schemes (£0.624m) and the purchase of fleet and equipment (£1.671m). The underspend of £0.263m compared to the revised budget was mostly (£0.364m) an aggregation of slippage of spend into 2021/22 over a number of projects including replacement fire appliances and property schemes. The replacement fuel tanks and RPE project overspent by £0.135m mainly due the revised budget being incorrectly reduced.

The Prudential Code allows the Authority to determine its own affordable level of borrowing. This strategy, which includes the Authorised Borrowing Limit and prudential indicators for the Authority is approved through the annual Treasury Strategy report to the Authority.

During 2020/21, one loan totalling £75,000 matured and was repaid. No new borrowing was undertaken, so total borrowing ended the financial year at £10.698m.

At its meeting in February 2021, the Fire authority approved a Capital Programme for 2021/22 of £6.105m financed by Capital Receipts of £5.991m, £0.086m from Earmarked Reserve and £0.028m Internal Borrowing. Slipped schemes, from 2020/21 are likely to increase the 2021/22 Capital Programme by £0.364m to £6.469m, to be funded by Capital Receipts (£0.364m).

Impact of Covid 19 Pandemic

The financial impact of Covid 19 on the Authority in 2020/21 was felt in a number of ways:

- additional expenditure of £0.831m primarily additional staffing costs, provision of personal protective equipment, additional cleaning and waste disposal and IT costs. This was funded by grants provided by Government.
- Loss of income from commercial training and other activities of £0.100m partially compensated by Government grant of £0.050m
- Reductions in cost in some areas such as training, fuel and travel of approximately £0.3m
- Delays in delivery of the capital programme as Covid-19 restrictions affected both estates and fleet projects

Reductions in income from Council Tax and Business Rates collected in 2020/21 which will impact through the distribution of the Collection Fund deficits which the Government has allowed to be accounted for over the three financial years from 2021/22. Since the budget was set, Government has clarified the compensation is likely to be lower than anticipated resulting in the net deficit now being £0.262m (budgeted at £0.111m). This position is likely to change again following receipt of final information from the Districts and Boroughs.

In addition the Government has provided £0.474m of additional grant in 2021/22 to compensate for the impact of increased Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants.

Despite the exceptional circumstances the Service has managed the impact of Covid 19 on its operations through its well-rehearsed business continuity plans. This has included establishing an Emergency Management Team and a Covid Working Group, to coordinate the response arrangements, who work closely with the Sussex Resilience Forum at a local level and the NFCC nationally. The impact on response services has been limited with incident levels and demand at or below normal levels and generally low levels of sickness enabling good availability of appliances and crew. Protection and prevention activity has, however been more restricted as a result of the pandemic, but the Service successfully migrated to on-line and telephone based activity in these areas. Support has been provided to other public services, including for example the provision of additional ambulance drivers to SECamb, but this has not affected our service delivery and most non-operational staff have been able to work from home using the Service's mobile IT and video-conferencing facilities enabling as much business as usual activity as possible to continue. The focus of activity has now begun to shift to the recovery phase of the incident, again in close collaboration with local and national partners. Recovery will have a key focus on learning lessons, debriefing and understanding the longer term impacts of the pandemic as well as, crucially, the well-being of our staff which has been a priority at all times during the incident.

The Service's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was assessed by HMICFRS and their report can be found at:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/covid-19-inspection-east-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/>

Non-Financial performance

The Authority monitors its performance on a regular basis against a range of key performance indicators. This is reported to the Authority's Scrutiny and Audit Panel on a quarterly basis and includes attendance at incidents, employee absence and reporting of Health and Safety incidents. Significant performance level changes are reported on an exception basis. There is also a Year End Performance Report that was considered by Scrutiny and Audit Panel on 22 July 2021.

All performance reports can be downloaded at <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/strategies-plans-and-performance-information/>

Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 came into force on the 1st April 2017. These regulations place a legislative requirement on relevant public sector employers to collate and publish, on an annual basis, a range of data on the amount and cost of facility time within their organisation. The Authority's publications can be found on its website here: <https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/asset-registers-lists/>

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

Impact of Benefit Pension Schemes

In line with the accounting standard IAS19, the Authority's net liability for future pension payments, as shown in the Balance Sheet, has increased from £395.965m at the start of the year to £488.781m at 31 March 2021. Note 35 to the accounting statements provides more detailed information. The resultant impact on the CIES is a charge of £5.002m to reflect the present value of the defined benefit obligation and an Actuarial loss on pension assets and liabilities of £87.814m. The explanation from the Actuary for the Actuarial loss is the impact of the change in derivation of future assumed RPI and CPI inflation and the change in market conditions. The liabilities assessed due over the long-term of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme do not affect the present operational service costs of the Authority, where the actual costs of providing pensions is determined by the government and legislation that sets the employer and employee pension contributions rates for the 1992, 2006 and 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes.

Treasury Management, Borrowing and Investment

The Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21, agreed in February 2020 was set against a continued background of market uncertainty and a prudent approach was taken with all investments.

The emphasis continued to be on security (protection of the capital sum invested) and liquidity (keeping money readily available for expenditure when needed) with some flexibilities being increased to reflect the evolution of the money markets. The Strategy and limits were consistent with the approved capital programme and revenue budget. It is impossible in practical terms to eliminate all credit risk but the Authority seeks to be as prudent as possible.

The amount of interest received on short term balances was £0.107m at an average rate of 0.41% (compared to the Bank of England base rate which was 0.10%). During the year, and in accordance with its Treasury Strategy, the Authority continued to invest in the highest quality rated banks and using fixed term and notice accounts alongside continued use of overnight access cash money market funds. Funds were also loaned on a fixed term basis to another UK local authority during the year.

The Authority's current strategy is to maintain external borrowing at the level of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This reflects the policy of avoiding new borrowing by running down spare cash balances. Officers continue to review the need to borrow taking into consideration the potential increases in borrowing costs, the need to finance new capital expenditure, refinancing maturing debt, and the cost of carry that might incur a revenue loss between borrowing costs and investment returns.

2021/22 and beyond

The Authority's original budget for 2021/22 was set at £40.704m, an increase of 2.4% over the previous year, and in light of the financial challenge facing the Authority in the future, Members agreed to raise Council Tax by 1.99% taking a Band D property to £97.43. Despite the financial challenges ahead, the Authority continues to provide the communities of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove with a round the clock service for £1.87 per week (for the average household). The Authority did consider the option of a council tax freeze but taking into account the potential impact on services, and the results of recent public consultation, it decided a small increase in council tax was appropriate. The Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) for the five years to 2025/26 sets out how the Authority plans to achieve financial sustainability through a balanced budget over the medium term. Both the budget and the MTFP were set in the context of significant uncertainty for fire funding beyond the one year funding settlement from Government for 2021/22. Significant risks resulting from proposals to change the Business Rates Retention Regime, the Fairer Funding Review and a Comprehensive Spending Review all planned for implementation in 2021/22 but delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. Other potential financial risks facing the Authority included:

- the Service's ability to identify and deliver the savings required to balance the budget over the medium term through the Efficiency Strategy and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP);
- Continued reliance on one-off Government grant to fund pensions costs and investment in protection activity post Grenfell
- uncertainty over the financial impact of the remedy to the successful legal challenge to pension reforms implemented in 2015
- The potential for national pay awards to exceed the 0% provision in the budget;
- Increased reliance on borrowing to fund future capital investment from 2022/23 onwards
- Lack of clarity about the financial impact of the national Emergency Service's Mobile Communication Programme
- The ongoing financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- The impact of the UK leaving the EU particularly on the cost and availability of goods and services

The MTFP models two scenarios:-Best case – flat cash (i.e. Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) maintained at 2021/22 cash levels) and Worse Case – 5.0% annual decrease in SFA which indicate the need to make further savings of between £0.3m and £2.5m in order to balance the Authority's budget by 2025/26. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out a full inspection during 2019/20 and concluded that the Service is good at using its resources efficiently, has realistic and robust financial plans in place and is good at making its services affordable now and in future.

During 2020/21 HMICFRS reviewed how each fire service had managed its response to the Covid-19 pandemic and concluded that the Service adapted its response, prevention and protection activity during the pandemic effectively. It maintained its statutory functions and provided additional support to the community during the first phase of the pandemic. Staff who weren't able to perform their usual roles due to the impact of the pandemic were efficiently reallocated to appropriate roles in support of the community. This meant the people of East Sussex were well supported throughout the pandemic. Resources were well managed and the service's financial position was largely unaffected, especially as reserves didn't have to be used to cover extra costs. The service monitored staff absences and had plans in place if resilience had become an issue.

Narrative Report by the Treasurer

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/frs-assessment/frs-2018/east-sussex/>

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/covid-19-inspection-east-sussex-fire-and-rescue-service/>

Officers will continue to explore the potential to deliver further efficiencies, including through income generation, to assist in meeting the identified funding gap by 2025/26. The following areas of focus were identified for exploration during 2021/22 for potential delivery from 2022/23 onwards

- Community Safety – alternative delivery models
- Primary Authority – further development of income opportunities
- IT Outsource contract review / option to extend
- CRM / Firewatch / Process Digitisation
- Review of Senior / Middle Management
- Administration Review
- Fleet & Equipment Strategy
- ITF Shared Transport function
- P21 / Tripartite Mobilising Service– operational / joint working efficiencies
- Capital Asset Strategy sustainability

The Authority will also be working to implement its Integrated Risk Management Plan 2020-2025 (IRMP) which aims to ensure that we put our resources in the right place, at the right time to deal with emergencies and help prevent them in the first place through engagement and regulation. To achieve this we have assessed our community risks, using a range of sophisticated analytical tools to identify where incidents such as fires or flooding might happen, when they might occur and how serious they could be. This allows us to target our resources, including firefighters and fire engines, most effectively, bringing about a better balance of prevention, protection and response, as well as delivering efficiencies of 0.775m by 2025/26. You can find out more about the IRMP at

<https://www.esfrs.org/about-us/publication-of-information/strategies-plans-and-performance-information/community-risk-analysis/integrated-risk-management-planning/>

The Fire Authority's Stewardship, Responsibilities and Financial Management Policies

The Authority deals with considerable sums of public money. The Authority's Financial Regulations provide the framework within which financial control is operated. To conduct its business efficiently, the Authority needs to ensure that it has sound financial management and procedures in place to which they are strictly adhered. Strict compliance with these policies ensures that the Authority's policy objectives are pursued in a prudent and efficient way. These Financial Regulations provide clarity about the accountabilities of individuals: Members; the Chief Fire Officer; the Monitoring Officer; the Treasurer; and other senior officers.

These Financial Regulations link with other internal regulatory documents forming part of the Authority's Constitution, including Standing Orders, the Scheme of Delegation, Codes of Conduct and other corporate strategies. This Statement of Accounts is part of that stewardship process, part of the process for being publicly accountable for public money.

The Annual Governance Statement which is included in this Statement of Accounts covers more than just financial matters and is set out in full on pages 15 to 20.

Our financial framework relies upon the quality of the financial systems of the Fire Authority. There is a commitment continually to improve these systems and to ensure that budget management and other financial processes are efficient and effective and support and enable the Authority's wider transformation programme.

The Audit Opinion

The Audit Opinion and Certificate is available on pages 12 to 14 of these accounts.

Duncan Savage

Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

28 September 2021

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.
- manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets.
- approve the Statement of Accounts.

The Treasurer's Responsibilities

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Fire 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).

In preparing this 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 local authority Code.

The Treasurer has also:

- 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 Statement of Accounts presents a true and fair view of the financial position of the East Sussex Fire Authority and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Duncan Savage

Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer
28 September 2021

TO FOLLOW

TO FOLLOW

TO FOLLOW

Annual Governance Statement for the Year ended March 2021

1. Scope of Responsibility

East Sussex Fire Authority (the Authority) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Authority to prepare an annual governance statement, which must accompany the statement of accounts. The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Authority has approved a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the seven principles of good governance as identified in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) 2016 Framework – “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”. This statement explains how the Authority has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and the activities through which it accounts to, engages with its communities. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic priorities and to consider whether those priorities have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

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

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

The governance framework has been in place at the Authority for the year ended 31 March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts.

3. The Governance Framework

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides a summary of the extent to which the Authority meets the seven principles of good governance as identified in the “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government” Framework 2016.

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

The Authority's Purpose and Commitments are at the centre of everything that we do and are published on our website. The Authority has a strong culture based on our shared values of pride, accountability, integrity and respect. The Authority achieves this by adopting, monitoring and keeping under review:

- A Code of Conduct for Members, built upon the Nolan Principles of Public Life;
- An Officer Code of Conduct;
- A Register of Members' Interests;
- A register of Officer Declarations of Conflicts of Interest and declarations of Gifts and Hospitality accepted;
- Comprehensive induction programmes for both Officers and Members built on the standards of behaviour expected, supported by appropriate training;
- A Competency Framework and Appraisal Scheme used for improving organisational performance through focusing and reviewing each individual's ability and potential;
- Member Panels with clear responsibilities for governance, audit and standards;
- Effective Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption policies allowing for reporting and actioning any incidents; and
- A whistleblowing policy providing protection to individuals raising concerns.

The Authority ensures that appropriate legal, financial and other professional advice is always considered as part of the decision-making process and observes both specific requirements of legislation and general responsibility by Law.

The roles of the Authority's statutory officers are outlined in the Constitution, there are clear arrangements for the discharge of the statutory functions of the Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Treasurer. The Authority also ensures compliance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Statement on the Role of the Chief Finance Officer.

The Authority is transparent about how decisions are taken and recorded. The Authority does this by:

- Ensuring that decisions are made in public and recorded. Those decisions and relevant information are publicly available (except where that information is exempt under the provisions of the Local Government Act or determined as being confidential by Government);
- Having rules and procedures which govern how decisions are made.

The Authority has a published Whistleblowing Policy and provides protection to individuals raising concerns. This policy is periodically reviewed in line with guidance.

The Authority ensures that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints. The website contains guidance for submitting complaints against the authority by the public and processes are in place to progress any complaints that are made.

Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

The Authority responds to the views of stakeholders and the community in the following ways:

- Publishing a Corporate Plan that sets out our purpose and commitments to the community and the outcomes we intend to achieve;
- An established business planning process, including the development of a published medium term finance plan;
- Regular, published reporting of performance against the Authority's key performance indicators
- The Authority has approved and implemented a comprehensive Communications & Consultation Strategy setting out a range of methods of engaging with the community and stakeholders, include those groups which are harder to reach;
- The Authority recognises that people are different and gives everyone the same or an equal opportunity to information, advice and support in ways that are suited to the needs or circumstances of the individual;
- The Authority has a clear guidance and defined approach which promotes good governance in our partnership working and collaboration;
- Providing the public with the opportunity to ask questions, submit petitions or make representations to the Authority;
- Publishing the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) providing information in relation to how the Authority delivers its services;
- Providing a modern, effective IT strategy and solution that meets the needs and aspirations of the organisation and the communities that we serve.

The Authority understands the key role that it has to play in supporting collaboration and partnership working within East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove and the role that our partners play in assisting the Authority to deliver on its objectives.

The Authority ensures good governance in respect of partnerships and collaboration by:

- Having an approved and published Collaboration Framework containing clear collaboration priorities
- Reviewing and evaluating partnerships on a regular basis;
- Auditing partnership and collaboration frameworks and policies through internal audit; and
- Ensuring that partnerships and collaborations offer value and contribute to the Authority's strategic objectives.

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

The Authority publishes on our website our Corporate Plan which reports on what has been achieved during the past year and what we intend to achieve to meet our purpose and commitments for the forthcoming year. The document outlines our purpose and values and is used as the basis for all corporate and service planning.

In delivering its purpose and commitments, the Authority reports regularly on activities, performance and the financial position. Timely, objective and understandable information relating to the Authority's activities, achievements, performance and financial position is provided through the publishing of:

- An Integrated Risk Management Plan, covering a period of three or five years;
- A Medium Term Financial Plan;
- A clear framework for financial governance based on Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations;

- Established budgeting systems, clear budget management guidance and regular reporting of financial performance against budget forecasts to Officers and Members;
- Externally audited accounts;
- Detailed performance information.

The Authority considers the governance implications of its actions and has undertaken an external review of its corporate governance. The Authority has established and updated its Local Code of Corporate Governance to be consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework – “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government”.

The Authority is committed to delivering high quality services to the public in an efficient and effective way. The Authority does this by:

- Delivering services to meet local needs through the Strategic Plan incorporating the Integrated Risk Management Plan, and putting in place policies and procedures to ensure that they operate effectively in practice;
- Developing effective relationships and partnerships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors;
- Actively pursuing and implementing collaboration opportunities with the Police, Ambulance, other Fire Services and other local authorities;
- Responding positively to the findings and recommendations of external auditors, reviewers and statutory inspectors and putting in place arrangements for the implementation of agreed actions;
- Comparing information about services with those provided by similar organisations, assessing why levels of efficiency, effectiveness and quality are different and considering alternative means of service provision, processes and procurement to maximise opportunities and improve value for money where appropriate.

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

To achieve this, the Authority has:

- A detailed Medium Term Financial Plan which includes actions to ensure financial sustainability;
- A performance management and assurance framework to ensure plans are met and remedial action taken;
- Processes in place to ensure that data quality is high, so as to enable objective and rigorous decision making;
- Monthly Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meeting together with regular Assistant Director meetings where issues are raised and actions agreed;
- A risk management process to identify where interventions may be required;
- A sound understanding of risk in our community and service demand (current and future) which informs resource allocation decisions.

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

The Authority ensures that the necessary roles and responsibilities for effective Governance are identified and allocated through its Constitution so that it is clear who is accountable for decisions that are made. The Authority does this by:

- Electing a Chairperson, establishing Panels and nominating Member Leads with defined responsibilities;
- A clear scheme of delegated responsibilities to Senior officers;
- Undertaking a regular review of the Constitution;
- Having effective and comprehensive arrangements for the scrutiny of services;
- Making the Chief Fire Officer responsible and accountable for all aspects of operational management;
- Ensuring that at all times arrangements are in place for the proper administration of its financial affairs (Section 112 Officer);
- Ensuring that at all times arrangements are in place for ensuring actions are taken in accordance with Statute and Regulation (Monitoring Officer);
- Developing protocols that ensure effective communications between Members and Officers.

The Authority aims to identify the development needs of Members and Senior Officers in relation to their strategic roles and ensure that they are supported by appropriate training. The Authority ensures that those charged with governance have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well. The Authority does this by:

- Operating robust and transparent recruitment and selection processes;
- Cascading regular information to Members and staff;
- Regular Member Seminars providing a forum for sharing information, consultation, training and demonstration of operational procedures;
- Providing resources that support Member and Officer development;
- Promoting schemes supporting ongoing professional development;
- Undertaking the annual appraisal of the Chief Fire Officer and setting objectives that contribute to the Authority’s purpose and commitments, strategy and plans and that incorporate key development needs.

The Authority is fully compliant with the principles outlined in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. The Treasurer to the Authority is professionally qualified and suitably experienced. The Treasurer plays a central role in providing a strategic insight to the direction and control of Authority business decisions affecting financial resources. They ensure compliance with financial standards and gives due consideration to the economic, efficient and effective use of resources. The Treasurer works closely with the Chief Fire Officer in ensuring the finance function provided is fit for purpose and that the management of the Authority's resources is robust.

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

The Constitution sets out how the Authority operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Areas of potential change are identified and the Constitution is amended accordingly.

The Authority has commissioned a full independent review of its constitution to ensure that it is both current and robust. The review is ongoing and once complete will be presented to the Combined Fire Authority for consideration and formal adoption.

The Authority has risk management framework, which takes account of both strategic and operational risks and ensures they are appropriately managed and controlled. This approach aids the achievement of its strategic priorities, supports its decision making processes, protects the Authority's reputations and other assets and is compliant with statutory and regulatory obligations. The Authority ensures that the risk management approach:

- Enables a culture of risk awareness;
- Formally identifies and manages risks;
- Involves elected members in the risk management process;
- Maps risks to financial and other key internal controls;
- Documents and records details of risks and is developing a risk management information system;
- Monitors the progress in mitigating significant risks, and reports this to Members;
- Reviews and, if required, updates its risk management process at least annually;
- Considers risk within all projects.

The Authority utilises the findings and suggestions of Internal Audit, External Audit, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and other review agencies, statutory bodies and inspectorates to assist in the management of risk and performance.

The Scrutiny & Audit Panel provides independent assurance of the risk management framework and the internal control environment. It provides an independent review of the Authority's governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting and annual governance processes. It oversees internal audit and external audit, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance arrangements are in place.

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

To achieve this, the Authority:

- Publishes relevant information relating to salaries, business interests and performance data on its website;
- Has a Procurement team who provide advice and issue clear guidelines for procuring goods and services;
- Has a Scrutiny & Audit Panel operating in accordance with guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA);
- Publishes information to the Authority and its Panels as part of established accountability mechanisms;
- Acts upon the findings or recommendations of Internal and External Audit Reports;
- Prepares an Annual Governance Statement;
- Prepares an Annual Statement of Assurance;
- Prepares a Corporate Plan.

The Authority is committed to the publication of transparent performance information. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Budget reports;
- Operational performance reports;
- A Medium Term Financial Plan;
- A Corporate Plan;
- Statement of Accounts;
- Annual Governance Statement;
- Annual Statement of Assurance;
- Information as required under the Local Government Transparency Code.

4. Review of Effectiveness

The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review of effectiveness is informed by:

- the work of Members through the Fire Authority and its Panels, including Policy & Resources and Scrutiny & Audit;
- the work of Senior Officers who have primary responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment;
- the work of the Monitoring Officer and the Treasurer;
- the risk management arrangements including the maintenance and regular review of corporate risks by the Senior Leadership Team and Scrutiny & Audit Panel;
- the work of Internal Audit including individual reports and their overall annual report and opinion;
- the Authority's External Auditors in their Annual Audit Letter and Auditor's Annual Report;
- the judgements of other review agencies, statutory bodies and inspectorates including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services.

5. Assurance & Significant Governance Issues

No assurance can ever be absolute; however, this statement seeks to provide a reasonable assurance that there are no significant weaknesses in the Authority's governance arrangements. The Authority is fully committed to the principles of corporate governance. The Assurance, Performance and Governance Group monitors the progress on the governance issues contained within the Annual Governance Statement. Those issues that were ongoing at 31 March 2021 will be included in the 2021/22 action plan.

On the basis of the review of the sources of assurance set out in this statement, we are satisfied that the Authority has in place governance arrangements and a satisfactory system of internal control, both of which are fit for purpose and operating effectively. As part of this review we have not identified any gaps in assurance over key risks or significant governance issues. The Authority has, however, identified a range of improvements to its corporate governance arrangements. Action Plans are in place to address the necessary improvements and these will be monitored during the year.

Both governance and internal control arrangements are kept under review to ensure that they continue to operate effectively, meet changing legislative needs, and reflect best practice and our vision of achieving safer and more sustainable communities.

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

(i) **The Covid 19 Pandemic**

Monitor the effectiveness of the recovery from the Covid 19 Pandemic ensuring that the organisation adopts a safe and proportionate return to business as usual. Ensure that lessons are learnt through a comprehensive debriefing process. (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

(ii) **Improved Internal Audit and Health and Safety Action Tracking**

Work to improve the tracking of agreed actions in response to Internal Audit Reports and Health & Safety Investigations to ensure that lessons are learnt and improvements in risk management and control are implemented effectively. (Assistant Director Resources and Treasurer & Assistant Director People Services)

(iii) **Incident reporting for Insurance purposes**

Work to improve the reporting of incidents that may result in insurance claims in line with the requirements of the ESFRS Insurers. (Assistant Director Resources and Treasurer)

(iv) **Implement the findings of the HMICFRS Inspection**

Implement the findings resulting from the HMICFRS Inspection of both East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service and additionally those recommendations made to all FRS at a national level. A HMICFRS action plan is in place and monitored at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. (Deputy Chief Fire Officer) (Continuing action)

(v) **Monitor issues relating to the Firefighter Pension Schemes**

Work on the national fall out of the McCloud/Sargent case ensuring that the necessary resources and support are given to dealing with these. (Assistant Director People Services) (Continuing action)

(vi) **Improved Performance Monitoring**

Improve the Authority's performance monitoring against the Corporate Plan/IRMP. This will include the introduction of a new Business Intelligence System and a revised approach to monitoring key performance indicators. (Assistant Director Planning and Improvement) (Continuing action)

(vii) **Implement the new Member Induction and Development programme**

Implement the new Member Induction and Development programme after the election to East Sussex County Council and the appointment of new Fire Authority Members. (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

(viii) Review of Constitution including the Scheme of Delegation

Review the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation (including financial delegations) to meet the changing needs of the organisation. This work is being undertaken by Legal Officers at Brighton & Hove City Council. A review of financial delegations is being undertaken to include budget limits and Contract Standing Orders. (Deputy Monitoring Officer) (Continuing action)

(ix) Hackitt Review & Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Continued involvement and provision of response to the Hackitt Review and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and implement any subsequent changes in legislation. A London Fire Brigade secondment will undertake a peer review of plan and progress. Fully engaged with updates regarding Building and Fire Safety Bill. Building Risk Review Project set up and on course to deliver the ambitious programme by December 2021. (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) (Continuing action)

(x) Health & Safety Management System

Implement the revised Health and Safety Management Framework (Assistant Director People Services) (Continuing action)

(xi) Fire Standards

Oversee the consultation and implementation of the National Fire Standards through the Assurance, Performance and Governance Group. (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

Councillor John Barnes, Chairman, Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Dawn Whittaker, Chief Fire Officer

29 April 2021

Movement in Reserves Statement

The Movement in Reserves Statement shows the movement from the start to the end of the year on the different reserves held by the Authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure and mitigate the risk and impact of unplanned events) and other 'unusable' reserves. It shows how the in year movements of the reserves are broken down between gains and losses incurred in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices and the statutory adjustments required to return to the amounts chargeable to council tax for the year. The Net Increase/Decrease line shows the statutory General Fund balance movements in the year following those adjustments and before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Authority.

2019/20	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2019 carried forward	2,417	9,477	13,758	-	25,652	(400,966)	(375,314)
Movement in Reserves during 2019/20							
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(13,203)	-	-	-	(13,203)	55,511	42,308
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 7)	12,705	(1,959)	-	38	10,784	(10,784)	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	(498)	(1,959)	-	38	(2,419)	44,727	42,308
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves (Note 8)	(50)	-	50	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	(548)	(1,959)	50	38	(2,419)	44,727	42,308
Balance at 31 March 2020	1,869	7,518	13,808	38	23,233	(356,239)	(333,006)

Movement in Reserves Statement

2020/21	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Earmarked Reserves	Capital Grants Unapplied	Total Usable Reserves	Unusable Reserves	Total Reserves
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2020 carried forward	1,869	7,518	13,808	38	23,233	(356,239)	(333,006)
Movement in Reserves during 2020/21							
Total Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(8,466)	-	-	-	(8,466)	(87,475)	(95,941)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations (Note 7)	9,722	(1,490)	-	(38)	8,194	(8,194)	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves	1,256	(1,490)	-	(38)	(272)	(95,669)	(95,941)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves (Note 8)	(1,165)	-	1,165	-	-	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Year	91	(1,490)	1,165	(38)	(272)	(95,669)	(95,941)
Balance at 31 March 2021	1,960	6,028	14,973	-	22,961	(451,908)	(428,947)

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

The Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement shows the Fire Authority's actual financial performance for the year in accordance with proper accounting practices. It summarises the resources that have been generated and consumed in providing the functions for which the Authority is responsible, and demonstrates how the cost has been financed from general government grants and income from local taxpayers.

2019/20			2020/21			
Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure		Gross Expenditure	Gross Income	Net Expenditure
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000
2,692	(90)	2,602	Training & Assurance	2,206	(80)	2,126
10,976	(676)	10,300	Resources/Treasurer	12,203	(681)	11,522
1,677	-	1,677	Planning & Improvement	1,430	(2)	1,428
1,290	(20)	1,270	Human Resources & Organisational Development	1,388	(60)	1,328
20,685	(177)	20,508	Safer Communities	17,301	(597)	16,704
7,174	(1,105)	6,069	Operational Support & Resilience	6,154	(427)	5,727
1,594	(12)	1,582	Corporate	2,165	(17)	2,148
46,088	(2,080)	44,008	Cost of Services	42,847	(1,864)	40,983
		(28)	Other operating expenditure (Note 9)			352
		10,846	Financing and investment (income) and expenditure (Note 10)			9,368
		(41,623)	Taxation and non-specific grant income (Note 11)			(42,237)
		13,203	Deficit on Provision of Services			8,466
		1,603	Surplus on revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment assets (Note 21)			(339)
		(57,114)	Actuarial (gains) / losses on pension liabilities (Note 35)			87,814
		(55,511)	Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure			87,475
		(42,308)	Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure			95,941

Balance Sheet

The Fire Authority 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 their use. The second category of reserves is those that the authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses 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 2020		Notes	31 March 2021
£000			£00
49,954	Property, Plant & Equipment	12	48,976
49,954	Long Term Assets		48,976
24,011	Short Term Investments	13	18,253
375	Assets Held for Sale	17	375
1,081	Payments in Advance	15	1,253
36	Inventories	14	33
3,454	Short Term Debtors	15	4,697
562	Cash and Cash Equivalents	16	3,693
29,519	Current Assets		28,304
(4,809)	Short Term Creditors	18	(6,307)
(75)	Short Term Borrowing	13	(400)
(757)	Provisions	19	(296)
(5,641)	Current Liabilities		(7,003)
(395,965)	Liabilities related to defined benefit pension schemes	35	(488,781)
(10,698)	Long Term Borrowing	13	(10,298)
(150)	Provisions	19	(120)
(25)	Capital Grants Receipts in Advance	30	(25)
(406,838)	Long Term Liabilities		(499,224)
(333,006)	Net Assets		(428,947)
23,233	Usable Reserves	20	22,961
(356,239)	Unusable Reserves	21	(451,908)
(333,006)	Total Reserves		(428,947)

I certify that this Statement of Accounts provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the Fire Authority as at 31 March 2021 and its Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the year then ended.

Duncan Savage

Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer

The Statement of Accounts was approved by the Scrutiny and Audit Panel on 28 September 2021.

Cash Flow Statement

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Fire 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 taxation and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Authority.

2019/20		2020/21
£000		£000
13,203	Net deficit on the provision of services	8,466
(14,352)	Adjustments to net deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements (Note 22)	(8,128)
201	Adjustments for items included in the net deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities (Note 22)	(5,409)
(948)	Net cash flows from Operating Activities	(5,071)
4,692	Investing Activities (Note 23)	1,865
-	Financing Activities (Note 24)	75
3,744	Net (increase) or decrease in cash and cash equivalents	(3,131)
4,306	Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	562
562	Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period (Note 16)	3,693

Expenditure and Funding Analysis

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

The EFA is a note to the financial statements, however, it is positioned here as it provides an analysis of the deficit on the provision of services shown in the CIES between the net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund Balance as shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement (MiRS) and the adjustments made to the General Fund Balance in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices also shown in the MiRS.

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	2019/20				2020/21		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund	Adjustments between the Funding and Accounting Basis	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	
£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	
2,540	62	2,602	Training & Assurance	2,284	(158)	2,126	
8,462	1,838	10,300	Resources/Treasurer	9,745	1,777	11,522	
1,490	187	1,677	Planning & Improvement	1,348	80	1,428	
1,108	162	1,270	Human Resources & Organisational Development	1,242	86	1,328	
21,342	(834)	20,508	Safer Communities	20,715	(4,011)	16,704	
4,402	1,667	6,069	Operational Support & Resilience	4,312	1,415	5,727	
1,595	(13)	1,582	Corporate	2,276	(128)	2,148	
40,939	3,069	44,008	Net Cost of Services	41,922	(939)	40,983	
(40,441)	9,636	(30,805)	Other Income and Expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(43,178)	10,661	(32,517)	
498	12,705	13,203	(Surplus) or Deficit	(1,256)	9,722	8,466	
		16,175	Opening General Fund Balance (including Earmarked Reserves)			15,677	
		(498)	(Less)/Plus Surplus or Deficit on General Fund Balance In Year			1,256	
		15,677	Closing General Fund Balance (including Earmarked Reserves)			16,933	

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Authorisation of Statement of Accounts

Authorisation of Statement of Accounts – These draft accounts were authorised for issue by Duncan Savage, Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer on 14 July 2021. The Statement of Accounts was approved on 28 September 2021 and published with an audit opinion.

1. Accounting Policies

i. General

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provide legally binding guidance on local authority accounting. The Statement of Accounts summarises the Authority's transactions for the 2020/21 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2021. The Authority is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices primarily comprise the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21 and the Service Reporting Code of Practice 2020/21, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), statutory guidance issued under section 12 of the 2003 Act, and Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. The accounting convention adopted for the Authority's Accounting Statements is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

The Authority regularly reviews its accounting policies to ensure that they remain the most appropriate, giving due weight to the impact that a change in accounting policy would have on comparability between periods. In accordance with the Code, the Authority has disclosed the expected impact of new accounting standards that have been issued but not yet adopted.

ii. Going Concern

These accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis assuming that that the Authority will continue in operational existence for 12 months from the date the accounts are approved.

The provisions in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice of Local Authority Accounting 2020/21 and the Financial Reporting Council's Practice Note 10 in respect of going concern reporting requirements reflect the economic and statutory environment in which local authorities operate. These provisions confirm that, as authorities cannot be created or dissolved without statutory prescription, they must prepare their financial statements on a going concern basis of accounting. Local authorities carry out functions essential to the local community and are themselves revenue-raising bodies (with limits on their revenue-raising powers arising only at the discretion of central government). If an authority were in financial difficulty, the prospects are thus that alternative arrangements might be made by central government either for the continuation of the services it provides or for assistance with the recovery of a deficit over more than one financial year and indeed, correspondence from MHCLG during Covid-19 is supportive of this approach. As a result of this, it would not therefore be appropriate for local authority financial statements to be provided on anything other than a going concern basis. Accounts drawn up under the Code therefore assume that a local authority's services will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

As part of its budget setting for 2021/22 and the updating of its Medium Term Finance Plan (MTFP) the Authority has carried out a detailed assessment of the likely impact of Covid-19 on its financial position and performance during 2021/22 and beyond. This has included an assessment of the impact on the following:

- Reductions in income
- Increased expenditure
- Cashflow and liquidity
- General fund balances and reserves

The Authority has also considered known and expected government funding and determined that it has sufficient liquidity from its ability to access short term investments and sufficient general fund balances and reserves to continue to deliver services. As a result, the Authority is satisfied that it can prepare its accounts on a going concern basis.

The Authority recognises that the financial position has become more challenging since the emergence of the Covid 19 Pandemic in March 2020.

The MTFP was set in February 2021 along with a balanced budget for 2021/22. The Authority is currently forecasting a small revenue overspend of £0.126m or 0.3% of its agreed revenue budget. At this stage, and assuming there is no significant impact from any additional waves of the pandemic we expect in-year costs of Covid 19 to be financed by a combination of the balance of Government Grants already received (£0.170m) and a further bid against the Income loss compensation scheme (for the period April to June 2021). Any costs beyond this will need to be managed within the revenue budget or through use of reserves and balances. There may also be some ongoing savings on areas such as fuel and travel and subsistence.

There remains significant uncertainty about future funding for local government, including the fire sector, and Covid 19 has only made this situation worse. The Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December 2020 was for one year only. A Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR21) which will determine funding for the next three financial years is expected to take place during 2021/22 but the outcomes are not expected until later in the autumn. This makes financial planning extremely difficult. The Authority has revised its MTFP and modelled a number of scenarios which would require it to make additional savings of up to £1.5m in 2022/23 rising to £2.5m by 2025/26. This includes a forecast of the impact of Covid-19 on the Collection Fund for business rates and council tax and the council tax base, net of expected Government compensation grant. The Authority will continue lobbying at both local and national level for a sustainable funding settlement.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

At the same time work is ongoing in the Service to review to explore options for delivering efficiency savings and / or generating income, with the aim of setting a balanced budget in 2022/23. Clearly savings of the scale modelled will not be covered by efficiencies and income generation alone and the Authority may have to revisit its recently agreed Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) for 2020-25 and consider reductions in its services.

As at 31 March 2021 the Authority had the following reserves to call on in delivering its services. In the event of a serious financial situation it would have to consider 'un-earmark' certain reserves to meet its commitments.

• General Fund	£1.960m
• Earmarked (including grants unapplied)	£14.973m
• Capital Receipts	£6.028m
• Total Usable Reserves	£22.961m

The Authority had investments of £22.3m at the end of June 2021 of which £6.050m is available next day, a further £12m is in notice accounts of 95 days, £2m in a notice account of 35 days and £2.250m is in a fixed term deposit with another local authority maturing in October 2021. In light of the Covid outbreak the Authority has been closely monitoring its cashflow and investments to ensure it has sufficient liquidity to meet its commitments. It has not made any longer term investments especially where there is a potential risk to the principal sum given current market uncertainty. The Authority has prepared a high level cash flow forecast to the end of September 2023. The Authority remains confident in its ability to maintain sufficient cash for its services throughout the medium term. The Authority is of course also able to borrow short term for cash management if ever needed.

In addition, the Authority has the ability to reduce or postpone planned investments in its IT, estate and fleet should it need to further protect levels of cash and useable reserves.

In common with other fire authorities, the Authority has a significant deficit on its balance sheet primarily as a result of its net liability for the unfunded Firefighter Pension Scheme. There are statutory arrangements in place to fund this deficit and therefore it does not affect the Authority's continued operation on a going concern basis.

Considering all of the above, the Authority considers it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

iii. Accruals of Income and Expenditure

The accounts of the Authority are prepared on an accruals basis. Activity is accounted for in the year that it takes place, not simply when cash payments are made or received. In particular:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the Authority transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Authority.
- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the Authority can measure reliably the percentage of completion of the transaction and it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Authority.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption; they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for respectively as income and expenditure 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 revenue 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. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue for the income that might not be collected.

iv. Revenue recognition

The Authority accounts for revenue recognition in accordance with IFRS 15 Revenue Recognition from Contracts with Customers and IPSAS 23 Revenue from Non-Exchange Transactions (Taxes and Transfers). No adjustments have been required to revenue on the transition to the new standard from 1 April 2018.

v. Debtors and Creditors

We record all material transactions on the basis of income and expenditure. In order to achieve this we account for actual or estimated debtors and creditors at the end of the year, except in two cases:

- Charges for utilities (gas, electricity and telephones) are not accrued, so long as the Authority has paid for a full twelve months during each financial year;
- Accruals are generally not raised where amounts are immaterial, although managers' discretion may be used. This exception has no material effect on the financial statements.

Lump sum payments relating to redundancy cases are accounted for in the period when the related decision was taken.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

vi. Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits held by the Authority as part of its normal cash management including all deposit accounts with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash Equivalents are generally defined as short-term, highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to cash. They are held for short term cash flow requirements rather than for investment gain and have an insignificant risk of a change in their value.

The Authority defines cash equivalents as any investment that could be recalled the same day without penalty and include call accounts, money market funds and instant deposits. However the Authority uses these products for both short term cash flow requirements and investment gain purposes. For short term cash flow requirements only, the Authority will determine an appropriate account as its cash equivalent. 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.

Short Term Investments - Short Term Investments are those investments that are not classified as a cash equivalent as they are held for investment gain purposes. The Authority's annual Treasury Management Strategy sets out the type of investments that meet its security, liquidity and yield criteria.

vii. 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.

viii. 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.

ix. Charges to Revenue and Non-Current Assets

Services, support services and trading accounts are debited with the following amounts to record the cost of holding fixed assets during the year:

- Depreciation is provided for on all assets used by the relevant service with a determinable finite life (except for investment properties, assets under construction and community assets), by allocating the value of the asset in the Balance Sheet over the periods expected to benefit from their use.
- Revaluation and impairment losses on tangible Property, Plant and Equipment assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the Revaluation Reserve against which they can be written off.
- Amortisation of intangible fixed assets attributable to the service.

The Authority is not required to raise council tax to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisations. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement (equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Authority in accordance with statutory guidance). Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisations are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund Balance (Minimum Revenue Provision), by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

x. Employee Benefits

Employee benefits are accounted for in accordance with the Code's interpretation of IAS 19 – Employee Benefits. This standard covers both benefits payable during and after employment.

Benefits Payable During Employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Authority. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements earned by employees but not taken before the year-end which employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in

Notes to the Accounting Statements

which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement so that holiday benefits are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

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. These costs are charged on an accruals basis to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Authority is demonstrably committed to the termination of the employment of an officer or group of officers or making an offer to encourage voluntary redundancy.

Where termination benefits involve the enhancement of pensions, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or pensioner in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, appropriations are required to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for pension enhancement termination benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end.

Post Employment Benefits

The Authority contributes to two different pension schemes that meet the needs of different groups of employees. The schemes are:

- The Firefighters Pension Scheme
- The Local Government Pension Scheme.

Both schemes provided defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Authority.

Firefighters' Pensions Scheme

Details of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme can be found on page 75.

Local Government Pensions Scheme

Most other employees can join the Local Government Pension Scheme. East Sussex County Council administers the pension fund for all local authorities and other admitted bodies within the geographical area of East Sussex.

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

As per IAS 19/IAS 26, the liabilities of the pension scheme attributable to the Fire Authority are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc., and projections of earnings for current employees.

In assessing liabilities for retirement benefits at 31 March 2020, the actuary assumed a discount rate of 2.3% nominal which is based on the rate of return at the accounting date on a high-quality corporate bond of equivalent currency and term to scheme liabilities. In assessing liabilities for retirement benefits at 31 March 2021, the actuary has advised that a rate of 2.0% nominal is appropriate.

The assets of the pension fund attributable to the Authority are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

- quoted securities – current bid price;
- unquoted securities – professional estimate of fair value;
- unitised securities – current bid price;
- property – market value.

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into seven components:

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
- past service cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs
- interest cost – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid – debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
- expected return on assets – the annual investment return on the fund assets attributable to the Authority, based on an average of the expected long-term return – credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Notes to the Accounting Statements

- gains or losses on settlements and curtailments – the result of actions to relieve the Authority of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees – debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of Non Distributed Costs
- actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – debited to the Pensions Reserve
- contributions paid to the pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are appropriations to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

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.

xi. Events After the Balance Sheet Date

The accounts have taken into consideration any material event after the Balance Sheet date, which are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the Statement of Accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period for which the Authority shall adjust the amounts recognised in its financial statements or recognise items that were not previously recognised (adjusting events);
- Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the at the end of the reporting period – the Statement of Accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the Statement of Accounts.

xii. Financial Instruments

Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For borrowings that the Authority has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and interest charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Where loans are replaced through restructuring, there are distinct accounting treatments, as follows:

- *Modification* – Gains and losses on the repurchase or early settlement of borrowing are credited and debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year of repurchase/settlement. However, where repurchase has taken place as part of a restructuring of the loan portfolio that involves the modification or exchange of existing instruments, the premium or discount is respectively deducted from or added to the amortised cost of the new or modified loan and the write-down to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is spread over the life of the loan by an adjustment to the effective interest rate.
- *Substantially Different* – Where premiums and discounts have been charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, regulations allow the impact on the General Fund Balance to be spread over future years. The Authority has a policy of spreading the gain or loss over the term that was remaining on the loan against which the premium was payable or discount receivable when it was repaid. The reconciliation of amounts charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the net charge required against the General Fund Balance is managed by a transfer to or from the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.
- *Early repayment of loans* – The accounting treatment for premiums and discounts arising on the early repayment of loans is largely dictated by the general principle that financial instruments are derecognised when the contracts that establish them come to an end. The amounts payable or receivable are cleared to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement upon extinguishment. In line with regulations and statutory guidance, the impact of premiums is spread over future financial years. These provisions are effected in the Movement in Reserves Statement on the General Fund Balance, after debits and

Notes to the Accounting Statements

credits have been made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The adjustments made in the Movement in Reserves Statement are managed via the Financial Instruments Adjustment Account.

Financial Assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics. There are three main classes of financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Authority's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost, except for those whose contractual payments are not solely payment of principal and interest (i.e. where the cash flows do not take the form of a basic debt instrument), these are classified as fair value through profit or loss. The Authority does not hold any assets at fair value through other comprehensive income.

Financial Assets Measured at Amortised Cost:

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Authority, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest) and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the de-recognition of an asset are credited or debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit of Loss

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured and carried at fair value. Fair value gains and losses are recognised as they arrive in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services.

The fair value measurements of the financial assets are based on the following techniques:

- instruments with quoted market prices – the market price
- other instruments with fixed and determinable payments – discounted cash flow analysis.

The inputs to the measurement techniques are categorised in accordance with the following three levels:

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

For pooled investment funds (i.e. money market fund, collective investment scheme as defined in section 235 (1) of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, investment scheme approved by the Treasury under section 11(1) of the Trustee Investments Act 1961 (local authority schemes)) regulations allow a statutory override (for a period of 5 years from 1/4/18) any unrealised gains or losses can be transferred via the Movement in Reserves Statement to a Financial Instrument Revaluation Reserve in the Balance Sheet.

Any gains and losses that arise on de-recognition of the asset are debited or credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Expected Credit Losses

The Authority recognises expected credit losses (impairments) on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost or FVOCI either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. Impairment losses are calculated to reflect the expectation that the future cash flows might not take place because the borrower could default on their obligations. Credit risk plays a crucial part in assessing losses. Where risk has increased significantly since an instrument was initially recognised, losses are assessed on a lifetime basis. Where risk has not increased significantly or remains low, losses are assessed on the basis of 12-month expected losses. The expected credit loss model applies to financial assets measured at amortised cost and FVOCI, trade receivables, lease debtors, third party loans and financial guarantees.

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Impairment losses are debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the CIES. For assets carried at amortised cost, the credit entry is made against the carrying amount in the Balance Sheet. For assets carried at FVOCI, the credit entry is recognised in Other Comprehensive Income against the Financial Instruments Revaluation Reserve.

Impairment losses are not applicable to FVPL assets as the future contractual cash flows are of lesser significance and instead current market prices are considered to be an appropriate reflection of credit risk, with all movements in fair value, including those relating to credit risk, impacting on the carrying amount and being posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services as they arise.

Impairment losses on loans supporting capital purposes, lease debtors and share capital are not a proper charge to the County Fund balance and any gains or losses can be reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the Capital Adjustment Account.

xiii. Government Grant and Contributions

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.

Government grants and third party contributions and donations to the Authority are not credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied or there is reasonable assurance that they will be met. Conditions are stipulations that specify that the future economic benefits or service potential embodied in the asset acquired using the grant or contribution are required to be consumed by the recipient as specified, or future economic benefits or service potential must be returned to the transferor.

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

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income and 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.

xiv. Inventories and Long Term Contracts

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the latest invoice price.

Long term contracts are accounted for on the basis of charging the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services with the value of works and services received under the contract during the financial year.

xv. Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases. Where a lease covers both land and buildings, the land and buildings elements are considered separately for classification.

Arrangements that do not have the legal status of a lease but convey a right to use an asset in return for payment are accounted for under this policy where fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of specific assets.

The Authority as Lessee

Finance Leases – Property, Plant and Equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Authority are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability. Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the Property, Plant or Equipment – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- a finance charge (debited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Property, Plant and Equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Authority at the end of the lease period).

The Authority is not required to raise council tax to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund Balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating Leases – Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense of the services benefitting from use of the leased Property, Plant or Equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease; even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

The Authority as Lessor

Finance Leases – Where the Authority grants a finance lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the relevant asset is written out of the Balance Sheet as a disposal. At the commencement of the lease, 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. A gain, representing the Authority's net investment in the lease, is credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal), matched by a lease (long-term debtor) asset in the Balance Sheet.

Lease rentals receivable are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property – applied to write down the lease debtor (together with any premiums received), and
- finance income (credited to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

The gain credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on disposal is not permitted by statute to increase the General Fund Balance and is required to be treated as a capital receipt. Where a premium has been received, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the amount due in relation to the lease asset is to be settled by the payment of rentals in future financial years, this is posted out of the General Fund Balance to the Deferred Capital Receipts Reserve in the Movement in Reserves Statement. When the future rentals are received, the element for the capital receipt for the disposal of the asset is used to write down the lease debtor. At this point, the deferred capital receipts are transferred to the Capital Receipts Reserve.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are therefore appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Operating Leases – Where the Authority grants an operating lease over a property or an item of plant or equipment, the asset is retained in the Balance Sheet. Rental income is credited to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Credits are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a premium paid at the commencement of the lease). Initial direct costs incurred in negotiating and arranging the lease are added to the carrying amount of the relevant asset and charged as an expense over the lease term on the same basis as rental income.

xvi. Overheads and Support Services

The costs of overheads and support services are charged in accordance with the Authority's arrangements for accountability and financial performance.

xvii. Property, Plant and Equipment

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

Recognition

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

Notes to the Accounting Statements

We record as capital expenditure all transactions that involve the purchase of new Property, Plant and Equipment or expenditure that adds to their value. The purchase of furniture and equipment is treated as capital if it is associated with capital building works. Otherwise individual items of vehicles and equipment are treated as capital if the value is over £20,000. If the value is less than this sum we charge it to revenue.

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, including the initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located.

The Authority does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred whilst assets are under construction.

The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value, unless the acquisition does not have commercial substance (i.e. it will not lead to a variation in the cash flows of the Authority). In the latter case, where an asset is acquired via an exchange, the cost of the acquisition is the carrying amount of the asset given up by the Authority.

Donated assets are measured initially at fair value. The difference between fair value and any consideration paid is credited to the Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, unless the donation has been made conditionally. Until conditions are satisfied, the gain is held in the Donated Assets Account. Where gains are credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

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

- operational land, buildings and plant - fair value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value – EUV). Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate
- infrastructure, community assets and assets under construction – depreciated historical cost
- surplus assets – at fair value in highest and best use, the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date.

Where there is no market-based evidence of fair value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of fair value.

Where non-property assets that have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for fair value.

Assets included in the Balance Sheet at fair value are revalued sufficiently regularly to ensure that their carrying amount is not materially different from their fair value at the year-end, but as a minimum every three years. Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the Revaluation Reserve to recognise unrealised gains. Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Revaluation Reserve contains revaluation gains recognised since 1 April 2007 only, the date of its formal implementation. Gains arising before that date have been consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

Impairment

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

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

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the Revaluation Reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

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

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Componentisation

Componentisation applies to Plant and Equipment assets from 1st April 2010 in relation to enhancement expenditure, acquisition expenditure and revaluations carried out as per the three year rolling programme. Where an item of Property, Plant and Equipment asset has major components whose cost is significant in relation to the total cost of the item, the components are depreciated separately.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for on all Property, Plant and Equipment assets and calculated on a straight-line basis over the expected life of the asset, on the difference between the book value and any estimated residual value. Depreciation is charged on all classes of assets, with the exception of land, community land assets, investment land, land awaiting disposal and assets under construction.

The Authority does not have a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which accounts for the provision for housing accommodation, so all net assets employed by the Authority relate to the General Fund.

The life expectancies of the assets and the depreciation are calculated on the following bases:

Operational land	Not depreciated as an infinite life expectancy
Operational buildings	Individually assessed by valuers
Vehicles	Individually assessed on acquisition (usually up to 15 years)
IT equipment	Individually assessed on acquisition (usually up to 5 years)
Other plant, furniture and equipment	Individually assessed on acquisition (usually up to 20 years)
Assets under construction	Not depreciated
Buildings awaiting disposal	Individually assessed by valuers
Land awaiting disposal	Not depreciated as an infinite life expectancy

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

Disposals and Non-current Assets Held for Sale

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continuing use, it is reclassified as an Asset Held for Sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously losses recognised in the Surplus or Deficit on Provision of Services. Depreciation is not charged on Assets Held for Sale.

If assets no longer meet the criteria to be classified as Assets Held for Sale, they are reclassified back to non-current assets and valued at the lower of their carrying amount before they were classified as held for sale; adjusted for depreciation, amortisation or revaluations that would have been recognised had they not been classified as Held for Sale, and their recoverable amount at the date of the decision not to sell.

Assets that are to be abandoned or scrapped are not reclassified as Assets Held for Sale.

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.

Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the Revaluation Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against council tax, as the cost of fixed assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the Capital Adjustment Account from the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

xviii. Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a legal or constructive obligation that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation. For instance, the Authority may be involved in a court case that could eventually result in the making of a settlement or the payment of compensation.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year that the Authority becomes aware of the obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the balance sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties.

When payments are eventually made, they are charged to the provision carried in the Balance Sheet. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year – where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Authority settles the obligation.

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.

Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority. Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

xix. Reserves

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

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Authority – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

xx. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute

Expenditure incurred during the year that may be capitalised under statutory provisions but that does not result in the creation of a non-current asset has been charged as expenditure to the relevant service in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in the year. Where the Authority has determined to meet the cost of this expenditure from existing capital resources or by borrowing, the cost of revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute is immediately charged to the revenue account for the appropriate service, and a transfer in the Movement in Reserves Statement from the General Fund Balance to the Capital Adjustment Account then reverses out the amounts charged so that there is no impact on the level of council tax. In some cases, this is because we capitalise expenditure on schemes such as increasing access for the disabled: such expenditure is initially added to the asset value and then revalued to negate its effect. There are other circumstances where we account for capital expenditure as revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute rather than assets. This includes expenditure on assets not owned by the Authority, capital grants and on feasibility studies for schemes that may or may not take place.

In addition, the Government may direct the Authority to treat as capital expenditure items which would normally count as revenue. These would not result in an asset or an increase to the value of existing assets and are therefore treated as revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute.

xxi. Value Added Tax (VAT)

VAT paid by the Authority is only shown in the accounts as an amount recoverable from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. VAT charged by the Authority to its customers is payable to Customs and Revenue, and is therefore shown only as a reduction of the net amount payable.

xxii. Interest Charges

We show the accrued interest associated with a loan as part of the carrying value of the loan. Loans are included on the Balance Sheet at amortised cost based on the Effective Interest Rate (EIR) method.

Where no EIR calculation has been undertaken, the accrued interest will be charged to the Income and Expenditure Accounts and added to the value of the loan. This will increase the carrying value of the loan until such time the interest is paid.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

xxiii. Redemption of Debt

There is a legal requirement for the Authority to make an annual provision from revenue to contribute towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement of at least 4% of its total debt outstanding at the start of the year or an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Authority in accordance with statutory guidance. This is not a cost to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement but is charged to the General Fund through the Movement in Reserve Statement.

xxiv. Council Tax and Business Rates

Business rates and council tax are collected on behalf of the Authority on an agency basis by the six billing authorities in East Sussex: Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council, Wealden District Council and Brighton & Hove City Council. The Authority as a precepting authority is required to show business rates and council tax income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement on an accruals basis.

The difference between the income included in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the amount required by legislation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Movement in Reserves Statement. The Authority is also required to recognise its share of arrears, bad debt allowances, overpayments, prepayments, cash and business rates appeal provision in its Balance Sheet.

xxv. Fair Value Measurement

The Authority measures some of its non-financial assets, surplus assets and assets held for sale at fair value at each reporting date. Fair value is the price that would be received to sell an asset or paid to transfer a liability in an orderly transaction between market participants at the measurement date. The fair value measurement assumes that the transaction to sell the asset or transfer the liability takes place either:

- a. in the principal market for the asset or liability, or
- b. in the absence of a principal market, in the most advantageous market for the asset or liability.

The Authority uses External Valuers to measure the fair value of an asset or liability using the assumptions that market participants would use when pricing the asset or liability, assuming that market participants act in their economic best interest.

When measuring the fair value of a non-financial asset, the Authority external Valuers takes into account a market participant's ability to generate economic benefits by using the asset in its highest and best use or by selling it to another market participant that would use the asset in its highest and best use. The Valuers uses valuation techniques that are appropriate in the circumstances and for which sufficient data is available, maximising the use of relevant observable inputs and minimising the use of unobservable inputs.

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

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

Notes to the Accounting Statements

2. Accounting Standards that have been issued but have not yet been adopted

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22 (the Code) will introduce several changes in accounting policies which will be required from 1 April 2021. The Code requires the disclosure of information relating to the expected impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has 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:

- Definition of a Business: Amendments to IFRS 3 Business Combinations
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39 and IFRS 7
- Interest Rate Benchmark Reform – Phase 2: Amendments to IFRS 9, IAS 39, IFRS 7, IFRS 4 and IFRS 16.

The Code does not anticipate that the above amendments will have a material impact on the information provided in local authority financial statements i.e. there is unlikely to be a change to the reported information in the reported net cost of services or the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services. The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2021 and there is therefore no impact on the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

3. Critical Judgements in Applying Accounting Policies

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts are:

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

4. Assumptions made about the future and other major sources of estimation uncertainty

The financial statements contain estimates and assumptions about the future or events that are otherwise uncertain, which affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses. 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. This means that the Authority is required to make estimates and assumptions. Estimates and underlying assumptions are regularly reviewed. Any change to estimates is recognised in the period if the change affects only that period, or into future periods if it also affects future periods.

The items in the Fire Authority's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2021 for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Item and area of uncertainty	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions	Actions undertaken to reduce the area of uncertainty
<p>Useful lives of property, plant and equipment assets</p> <p>The Authority estimates the useful lives of property, plant and equipment based on the period over which the assets are expected to be available for use.</p> <p>However It is possible that future results of operations could be materially affected by changes in the estimates brought about by changes in factors mentioned above.</p> <p>The amounts and timing of recorded expenses for any period would be affected by changes in these factors and circumstances. A reduction in the estimated useful lives of the property, plant and equipment would increase the recorded expenses and decrease the non-current assets.</p>	<p>It is estimated that the annual depreciation charge would increase by £632,000 for every 1 year that useful lives had to be reduced.</p> <p>This amount is not considered to be material in relation to the recorded expenses and non current assets totals in the Statement of Accounts.</p>	<p>The estimated useful lives of property, plant and equipment are reviewed annually and are updated if expectations differ from previous estimates due to physical wear and tear, technical or commercial obsolescence and legal or other limits on the use of the relevant assets.</p> <p>The estimation of the useful lives of property, plant, and equipment are based on external technical evaluation and experience with similar assets.</p> <p>Valuations are undertaken by RICS Registered Valuers and prepared in accordance with RICS Valuation Standards.</p>

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Item and area of uncertainty	Effect if actual results differ from assumptions	Actions undertaken to reduce the area of uncertainty
<p>Impairment/revaluation loss of property, plant and equipment assets</p> <p>The Authority has significant investments in property, plant and equipment. The Authority operates a policy of revaluing its Property, Plant, and Equipment on a rolling three year basis, with the aim of revaluing all of its assets within this period. Indexation may be applied to those assets not valued in the year if the carrying value is calculated as materially different to the fair value at the Balance Sheet date.</p> <p>Changes in the circumstances or expectations of future performance of an individual asset may be an indicator that the asset is impaired, thus requiring the book value to be written down to its recoverable amount.</p> <p>Evaluating whether an asset is impaired requires a high degree of judgement and may depend to a large extent on the selection of key assumptions about the future used.</p>	<p>It is estimated that the revaluation losses would decrease by £59,000 for every 1% increase in the valuations carried out during 2020/21.</p> <p>This amount is not considered to be material in relation to the recorded expenses and non current assets totals in the Statement of Accounts.</p>	<p>Assets are assessed annually for impairment when facts and circumstances suggest that the carrying amount of the asset may exceed its recoverable amount.</p> <p>Valuations are undertaken by RICS Registered Valuers and prepared in accordance with RICS Valuation Standards.</p> <p>Impairments are reversed if the conditions for impairment are no longer present.</p> <p>The Authority engages an external valuer to undertake the valuation of property annually. Valuations were undertaken at the 31 March 2021.</p>
<p>Pension Liability</p> <p>The Authority recognises and discloses its retirement benefit obligation in accordance with the measurement and presentational requirement of IAS 19 'Employee Benefits'.</p> <p>When estimating the present value of defined pension benefit obligations that represent a gross long-term liability in the balance sheet, and, indirectly, the period's net pension expense in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the actuaries make a number of critical assumptions affecting these estimates.</p> <p>Most notably, assumptions include a number of judgements and estimations in respect of the expected rate of return on assets, the real discount rate, the rate of increase in salaries, life expectancy, the annual rate of compensation increase and inflation assumptions have a direct and potentially material impact on the amounts presented.</p> <p>The estimate provided by the Fund's actuary of the potential impact of the McCloud/Sargeant ruling is difficult to quantify at this stage and the estimate depends on several key assumptions.</p>	<p>It is estimated that:</p> <p>A £10,190,000 increase in the pension liability would result if the real discount rate was to be decreased by 0.1%.</p> <p>A £27,162,000 increase in the pension liability would result if member life expectancy was increased by 1 year.</p> <p>A £1,001,000 increase in the pension liability would result if the salary increase rate was increased by 0.1%.</p> <p>A £9,093,000 increase in the pension liability would result if the pension increase rate was increased by 0.1%.</p>	<p>The retirement benefit obligation is assessed annually by the schemes actuary in accordance with IAS 19 'Employee Benefits' and is updated if events have not coincided with the actuarial assumptions made for the last valuation or if the assumptions have changed.</p> <p>The assumptions are set based on advice from the schemes actuaries and experience. The key assumptions used are set out in Note 36.</p> <p>The actuarial methods and advice provided on assumptions used are carried out in accordance with the Pensions Technical Actuarial Standards.</p>

5. Material items of income and expense

There are no material items of income or expense that are not already disclosed on the face of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, which by their nature and amount of material items should be set out in a note.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

6. Events after the Balance Sheet date

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue on xx September 2021. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes. Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing at 31 March 2021, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

7. Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations

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.

2020/21	Usable Reserves		
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied
	£000	£000	£000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources:			
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the CIES are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements:			
Pensions costs transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve	(5,002)	-	-
Council tax and NDR (transfers to or from Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	(1,921)	-	-
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Account)	(30)	-	-
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(3,386)	-	-
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	(10,339)	-	-
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources			
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	186	(186)	-
Administrative costs of non-current asset disposals (funded by a contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	431	-	-
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances	-	-	-
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	617	(186)	-
Adjustments to Capital Resources			
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	1,676	-
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	-	1,676	-
Total Adjustments	(9,722)	1,490	-

Notes to the Accounting Statements

2019/20	Usable Reserves		
	General Fund Balance	Capital Receipts Reserve	Capital Grants Unapplied
	£000	£000	£000
Adjustments to the Revenue Resources:			
Amounts by which income and expenditure included in the CIES are different from revenue for the year calculated in accordance with statutory requirements			
Pensions costs transferred to (or from) the Pensions Reserve	(10,801)	-	-
Council tax and NDR (transfers to or from Collection Fund Adjustment Account)	117	-	-
Holiday Pay (transferred to the Accumulated Absences Account)	(10)	-	-
Reversal of entries included in the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in relation to capital expenditure (these items are charged to the Capital Adjustment Account)	(2,672)	-	-
Total Adjustments to Revenue Resources	(13,366)	-	-
Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources			
Transfer of non-current asset sale proceeds from revenue to the Capital Receipts Reserve	28	(28)	-
Administrative costs of non-current asset disposals (funded by a contribution from the Capital Receipts Reserve)	-	-	-
Statutory provision for the repayment of debt (transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account)	431	-	-
Capital expenditure financed from revenue balances	202	-	-
Total Adjustments between Revenue and Capital Resources	661	(28)	-
Adjustments to Capital Resources			
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance capital expenditure	-	1,987	-
Application of capital grants to finance capital expenditure	-	-	-
Total Adjustments to Capital Resources	-	1,987	-
Total Adjustments	(12,705)	1,959	-

Notes to the Accounting Statements

8. Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2020/21.

	Balance at 31 March 2019 £000	Transfers Out 2019/20 £000	Transfers In 2019/20 £000	Balance at 31 March 2020 £000	Transfers Out 2020/21 £000	Transfers In 2020/21 £000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £000
Capital Programme	4,762	(3,553)	500	1,709	-	500	2,209
Other Earmarked	8,996	(2,441)	5,544	12,099	(5,401)	2,289	8,987
Grants Unapplied	-	-	-	-	-	3,777	3,777
Total	13,758	(5,994)	6,044	13,808	(5,401)	6,566	14,973

Capital Programme	To provide resources which may be used for capital spending in order to reduce the need for and consequent revenue cost of borrowing.
Other Earmarked	Includes Improvement & Efficiency, IT Strategy, Insurance Fund, Sprinklers, Mobilising Strategy, Business Rates Retention Pilot, Business Rate Pool, Pensions Administration and People Strategy.
Grants Unapplied	Grants that have already been recognised within the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement but where the associated expenditure has not yet been incurred.

9. Other Operating Expenditure

	31 March 2020 £000	31 March 2021 £000
(Gains)/losses on the disposal of non-current assets	(28)	352
Total	(28)	352

The majority of the loss of disposal figure at 31 March 2021 related to the disposal of an ARP vehicle which had a net book value of £0.518m written out of the asset register and sales proceeds of £0.120m.

10. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

	31 March 2020 £000	31 March 2021 £000
Interest payable and similar charges	496	496
Impairment on financial instruments (under IFRS 9)	-	5
Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions assets	10,587	8,974
Interest receivable and similar income	(237)	(107)
Total	10,846	9,368

11. Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income

	31 March 2020 £000	31 March 2021 £000
Council tax income	27,297	27,615
Non domestic rates	10,691	6,510
Revenue support grant	-	3,208
Other revenue grants	3,462	4,749
Capital grants and contributions	173	155
Total	41,623	42,237

Notes to the Accounting Statements

12. Property, Plant, and Equipment

Movements in 2020/21:	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or Valuation					
At 1 April 2020	42,600	17,898	-	-	60,498
Additions	721	1,504	-	-	2,225
Revaluation increases recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	129	-	-	-	129
Revaluation decreases recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(364)	-	-	-	(364)
Revaluation increases (reversal of previous losses) recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	-	(1)	-	-	(1)
Revaluation decreases recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	(265)	-	-	-	(265)
Transfers within PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition – disposals	-	(1,253)	-	-	(1,253)
At 31 March 2021	42,821	18,148	-	-	60,969
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment					
At 1 April 2020	-	(10,544)	-	-	(10,544)
Depreciation charge	(1,444)	(1,330)	-	-	(2,774)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	574	-	-	-	574
Revaluation losses recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	17	-	-	-	17
Revaluation increases (reversal of previous losses) recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	18	2	-	-	20
Transfers within PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition – disposals	-	714	-	-	714
At 31 March 2021	(835)	(11,158)	-	-	(11,993)
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2021	41,986	6,990	-	-	48,976
At 31 March 2020	42,600	7,354	-	-	49,954

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Comparative Movements in 2019/20:	Other Land and Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Surplus Assets	Assets Under Construction	Total Property, Plant and Equipment
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or Valuation					
At 1 April 2019	45,097	16,588	400	-	62,085
Additions	686	2,070	-	-	2,756
Revaluation increases recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	112	-	-	-	112
Revaluation decreases recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(3,116)	-	-	-	(3,116)
Revaluation increases (reversal of previous losses) recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	7	-	-	-	7
Revaluation decreases recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	(186)	-	-	-	(186)
Transfers within PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	(400)	-	(400)
Derecognition – disposals	-	(760)	-	-	(760)
At 31 March 2020	42,600	17,898	-	-	60,498
Accumulated Depreciation and Impairment					
At 1 April 2019	-	(10,062)	-	-	(10,062)
Depreciation charge	(1,493)	(1,242)	-	-	(2,735)
Depreciation written out to the Revaluation Reserve	1,400	-	-	-	1,400
Revaluation losses recognised in the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	53	-	-	-	53
Revaluation increases (reversal of previous losses) recognised in the deficit on the Provision of Services	40	1	-	-	41
Transfers within PPE	-	-	-	-	-
Assets reclassified (to)/from Held for Sale	-	-	-	-	-
Derecognition – disposals	-	759	-	-	759
At 31 March 2020	-	(10,544)	-	-	(10,544)
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2020	42,600	7,354	-	-	49,954
At 31 March 2019	45,097	6,526	400	-	52,023

Heritage Assets

During 2020/21 the Authority has become aware of the ownership of two Heritage Assets (an 1885 Bexhill Fire Brigade Merryweather Steam Pump and an early 19th century hand pump) and is currently seeking specialist valuations in order to ascertain whether these assets should be brought onto the Balance Sheet. The current estimate for the value of the Merryweather Steam Pump is in the region of £0.055m.

The Authority had no Intangible, Infrastructure or Community Assets at 31 March 2021.

Depreciation is calculated on a straight-line basis over the expected life of the asset, on the difference between the book value and any estimated residual value. Depreciation is charged on all classes of assets, with the exception of land, community land assets, investment land, land awaiting disposal and assets under construction.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Capital Commitments

Over the five year period, 2021/22 to 2025/26, the Authority is planning gross capital expenditure of £23.658m (based on the agreed Capital Asset Strategy and subsequently agreed variations). This is planned to be funded using capital receipts (£6.588m), reserves (£4.709m), planned revenue contributions (£1.894m), community infrastructure levy (£0.289m), MRP/internal borrowing (£0.028m) and with the need to borrow starting 2022/23 totalling £10.150m.

The approved capital programme shows that in 2021/22 the Authority plans to spend £6.469m (adjusted for actual spend in 2020/21), funded by capital receipts (£6.355m) and planned revenue contributions (£0.086m). Having adjusted for the actual outturn in 2020/21, slippage on projects and for provisions where there is no contractual commitment, the net commitment profiles for schemes in progress at 31 March 2021 are £2.014m in 2021/22 and £1.246m in 2022/23.

The Fire Authority had no assets under construction as at 31 March 2021 (none at 31 March 2020).

Valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

The Authority operates a policy of revaluing its Property, Plant and Equipment on a rolling 3-year basis, with the aim of revaluing all of its assets within this period. Indexation may be applied to those assets not valued in the year if the carrying value is calculated as materially different to the fair value at the Balance Sheet date. The Authority also reviews the asset register each year, and, if necessary adjusts the value of assets if significant impairment has been identified.

Freehold and leasehold properties regarded by the authority as operational, together with investment assets and assets awaiting disposal, are valued on the basis of open market value for the existing use or where this cannot be assessed because there was no market value, the depreciated replacement cost. This is in line with the Statement of Asset Valuation Practice and Guidance Notes of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Buildings are depreciated in line with the estimated life expectancies of the assets.

Furniture, equipment, plant and machinery values were initially calculated either as an assessed proportion of the valuation of the buildings or, in the case of properties valued at open market value, as an assessed rate per square metre. Together with intangible assets, they are updated in line with capital expenditure, and depreciated in line with the estimated lives of the assets.

The following statement shows the progress of the Authority's rolling programme for the revaluation of land and buildings. The valuations are carried out by an external firm of valuers – Flude Commercial (a member of Chartered Surveyors and Town Planners), on behalf of the Authority. The valuation dates are the gross cost as at 31 March in each year. In addition, an annual indexation will be applied to the remaining portfolio (based on those assets that were valued by the valuer in the year) if the values are deemed to be materially different to their carrying value.

	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant, Furniture & Equipment	Surplus Assets	Total PPE
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Valued at historical cost	-	18,120	-	18,120
Valued at fair value at 31 March 2021	17,309	15	-	17,324
Valued at fair value at 31 March 2020	12,821	13	-	12,834
Valued at fair value at 31 March 2019	12,691	-	-	12,691
Total	42,821	18,148	-	60,969

Fair value hierarchy of financial assets and financial liabilities that are not measured at fair value

There were no properties classed as surplus as at 31 March 2021 or in the previous year.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

13. Financial Instruments

Categories of Financial Instruments

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

Financial Assets	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Fair value through profit or loss		
Short Term Investments and Cash & Cash Equivalents	8,348	6,218
Total	8,348	6,218
Amortised Cost		
Short Term Investments and Cash & Cash Equivalents	16,225	15,728
Short Term Debtors	824	2,650
Total	17,049	18,378
Total Financial Assets	25,397	24,596
Non Financial Assets	2,630	2,047
Total	28,027	26,643

Financial Liabilities	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Amortised Cost		
Long Term Borrowings	(10,698)	(10,298)
Short Term Borrowings	(75)	(400)
Short Term Creditors	(1,868)	(2,415)
Total	(12,641)	(13,113)
Total Financial Liabilities	(12,641)	(13,113)
Non Financial Liabilities	(1,745)	(3,278)
Total	(14,386)	(16,391)

Financial Instruments Designated at Fair Value through Profit or Loss

The balance of financial assets at 31 March 2021 was £6.2m, a decrease of £2.1m from the closing balance at 31 March 2020. Financial assets include £6.2m (carrying amount £6.2m) low volatility money market funds (LVNAV).

There were no financial liabilities designated at fair value through profit or loss.

Investments in Equity Instruments Designated at Fair Value through Other Comprehensive Income

No financial assets or liabilities were classed as fair value through other comprehensive income.

Reclassifications

No financial assets or liabilities were re-classified during the year.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Income, Expense, Gains and Losses

	2019/20		2020/21	
	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £000	Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services £000	Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure £000
Net gains/losses on:				
Financial assets measured at fair value through profit or loss – fair value	-	-	-	-
Total net (gains) / losses	-	-	-	-
Interest revenue:				
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	(237)	-	(107)	-
Interest expense:				
Financial assets measured at amortised cost	496	-	496	-

Fair Value

Basis for recurring fair value measurements:

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

Fair Value of Financial Assets

Some of the authority's financial assets are measured at fair value on a recurring basis and are described in the following table, including the valuation techniques used to measure them.

Recurring fair value measurements	Input level in fair value hierarchy	Valuation technique used to measure fair value	As at 31/3/20 £000	As at 31/3/21 £000
Fair Value through Profit or Loss				
Other financial instruments	Level 1	Unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical shares	8,348	6,218

Transfers between Levels of the Fair Value Hierarchy

There were no transfers between levels 1 and 2 during the year.

Changes in the Valuation Technique

There has been no change in the valuation technique used during the year for the financial instruments.

Reconciliation of Fair Value Measurements for Financial Assets Carried at Fair Value Categorised within Level 3 of the Fair Value Hierarchy for Financial Assets

There were no instruments, measured at fair value, that were at level 3 in the hierarchy.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Fair Values of Financial Assets and Financial Liabilities that are not measured at fair value but for which fair value disclosures are required

Except for the financial assets carried at fair value, all other financial liabilities and financial assets represented by amortised cost and long-term debtors and creditors are carried on the balance sheet at amortised cost. 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 payable, PWLB prevailing market rates (have been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures).
- For non-PWLB loans payable, PWLB prevailing market rates have 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:

Financial Liabilities	31 March 2020		31 March 2021	
	Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000	Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost	(10,773)	(13,475)	(10,698)	(13,938)
Short Term Creditors	(1,868)	(1,868)	(2,415)	(2,415)
Total	(12,641)	(15,343)	(13,113)	(16,353)

The fair value of borrowings is higher than the carrying amount because the portfolio of loans includes a number of fixed rate loans where the interest rate payable is higher than the prevailing rates at the Balance Sheet date. This shows a notional future loss, based on economic conditions at 31 March 2021, arising from a commitment to pay interest to lenders above current market rates.

Financial Assets	31 March 2020		31 March 2021	
	Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000	Carrying amount £000	Fair value £000
Financial assets held at amortised cost	16,011	16,011	14,253	14,253
Short Term Debtors	824	824	2,650	2,650
Short term investments	214	214	1,475	1,475
Total	17,049	17,049	18,378	18,378

Short term debtors and creditors are carried at cost as this is a fair approximation of their value.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Fair value hierarchy of financial assets and financial liabilities that are not measured at fair value

	31 March 2021			
	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Financial liabilities				
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost	-	(13,938)	-	(13,938)
Short Term Creditors	-	(2,415)	-	(2,415)
Total	-	(16,353)	-	(16,353)
Financial assets				
Financial assets held at amortised cost	-	15,728	-	15,728
Short Term Debtors	-	2,650	-	2,650
Total	-	18,378	-	18,378

	31 March 2020			
	Quoted prices in active markets for identical assets (Level 1)	Other significant observable Inputs (Level 2)	Significant unobservable inputs (Level 3)	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Financial liabilities				
Financial liabilities held at amortised cost	-	(13,475)	-	(13,475)
Short Term Creditors	-	(1,868)	-	(1,868)
Total	-	(15,343)	-	(15,343)
Financial assets				
Financial assets held at amortised cost	-	16,225	-	16,225
Short Term Debtors	-	824	-	824
Total	-	17,049	-	17,049

The fair values for financial liabilities and financial assets that are not measured at fair value included in levels 2 and 3 above have been arrived at using a discounted cash flow analysis with the most significant inputs being the discount rate.

The fair value for financial liabilities and financial assets that are not measured at fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that will take place over the remaining term of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

Financial Liabilities

- For loans from the PWLB payable, new borrowing (certainty rate) discount rates have been applied to provide the fair value;
- 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;

Financial Assets

- No early repayment is recognised;
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

14. Inventories

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Balance outstanding at start of year	55	36
Purchases	253	186
Recognised as an expense in the year	(272)	(189)
Balance outstanding at year-end	36	33

Stocks include diesel fuel and equipment.

15. Debtors

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Current Debtors		
Government HMRC	246	308
Accounts Receivable debtors	64	199
Collection Fund debtors	2,385	1,738
Other debtors	759	2,452
Total	3,454	4,697

The increase in Other debtors as at 31 March 2021 is primarily due to number of grant accruals for grants that relate to 2020/21 but will not be received until during 2021/22.

There were no long term debtors as at 31 March 2021 or in the previous year.

Allowance for Bad Debts - Management specifically review all debts, and evaluate the adequacy of the allowance of bad debts of receivables. The Authority carries out an assessment of the recoverability of receivables and makes allowance for bad debts accordingly. However, most categories of the Authority's debtors are not subject to substantial fluctuation and past experience are used within material limits to judge the percentages of each type of debt that will not eventually be recovered.

As at 31 March 2021 the assessment of receivables did not necessitate the creation of a bad debt provision for general debtors.

The Council Tax and NNDR arrears impairment allowance has increased to £1.699m (£1.368m in 2019/20).

Payments in advance increased by £0.172m to £1.253m in 2020/21 (from £1.081m in 2019/20).

16. Cash and Cash Equivalents

The balance of Cash and Cash Equivalents is made up of the following elements:

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021	Movement
	£000	£000	£000
Cash in hand	5	5	-
Bank current accounts	1,347	3,992	2,645
Cash overdrawn	(790)	(304)	486
Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	562	3,693	3,131

The increase of £2.6m in the Bank current account balances as at 31 March 2021 is primarily due to the Money Market Fund that gets designated as part of the Cash and Cash Equivalents balance at the year end (£2.2m closing balance as at 31 March 2021 compared to £0.3m as at 31 March 2020).

Notes to the Accounting Statements

17. Assets held for Sale

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Balance outstanding at start of year	-	375
<i>Assets newly classified as held for sale:</i>		
Property, Plant and Equipment	400	-
Revaluations	(25)	-
Accumulated Depreciation	-	-
<i>Assets declassified as held of sale:</i>		
Assets sold	-	-
Balance outstanding at year end	375	375

18. Creditors and Income in Advance

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Government HMRC creditors	740	544
Accounts payable	201	487
Collection Fund	891	2,612
Other creditors	1,781	2,050
Income in Advance	1,196	614
Total	4,809	6,307

The decrease of £0.582m in Income in advance was primarily due to a number of section 31 grants received during 2019/20 that were relating to 2020/21.

19. Provisions

Provisions are amounts set aside in the accounts for liabilities or losses which are certain or very likely to occur and for which a reliable estimate of the amount of the obligation can be made. The provision has been established for material liabilities of uncertain timing.

The Authority had a short term provision of £0.296m as at 31 March 2021, from which £0.268m relates to NNDR appeals (£0.757m at 31 March 2020) and £0.028m relates to an audit variation fee from the 2019/20 audit. There was also a long term provision for £0.120m for outstanding payments as a result of the Norman v Cheshire case in relation to pensionable allowances (£0.150m as at 31 March 2020).

20. Usable Reserves

Movements in the Authority's usable reserves are detailed in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Usable Capital Receipts Reserve	7,518	6,028
Capital Grants & Contributions Unapplied	38	-
Earmarked Reserves	13,808	11,196
Earmarked Reserves – Revenue Grants unapplied	-	3,777
General Fund balances	1,869	1,960
Total Usable Reserves	23,233	22,961

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Capital Receipts Reserve

The Capital Receipts Reserve holds the gains recognised on the disposal of non-current assets until they are utilised to finance capital expenditure.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	9,477	7,518
Amounts receivable during the year	28	186
Amounts applied to finance new capital investment	(1,987)	(1,676)
Net Transfer to/(from) the Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,959)	(1,490)
Balance at 31 March	7,518	6,028

21. Unusable Reserves

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Revaluation Reserve	16,826	16,605
Capital Adjustment Account	22,730	22,049
Pensions Reserve	(395,965)	(488,781)
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	236	(1,685)
Accumulated Absences Account	(66)	(96)
Total Unusable Reserves	(356,239)	(451,908)

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.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	19,038	16,826
Upward revaluation of assets	528	577
Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the Surplus/Deficit on the Provision of Services	(2,083)	(218)
Reversal of previous years revaluation losses	(48)	(20)
Surplus or deficit on revaluation of non-current assets not posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	(1,603)	339
Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	(609)	(560)
Accumulated gains on assets sold or scrapped	-	-
Amount written off to the Capital Adjustment Account	(609)	(560)
Balance at 31 March	16,826	16,605

Notes to the Accounting Statements

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 gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Authority. The Account also contains revaluation gains accumulated on Property, Plant, and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

	2019/20	2020/21	
	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 1 April	22,211		22,730
Reversal of items relating to capital expenditure debited or credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement:			
Charges for depreciation and impairment of non-current assets	(2,735)	(2,774)	
Revaluation losses on Property, Plant and Equipment	(157)	(249)	
Revaluation loss reversals on Property, Plant and Equipment	47	20	
Revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute	-	-	
Amounts of non-current assets written off on disposal or sale as part of the gain/loss on disposal to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement	(1)	(538)	
	(2,846)		(3,541)
Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	609	560	
Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	(2,237)		(2,981)
Capital financing applied in the year			
Use of the Capital Receipts Reserve to finance new capital expenditure	1,987	1,676	
Capital grants and contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	136	155	
Application of grants to capital financing from the Capital Grants Unapplied Account	-	38	
Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	431	431	
Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund	202	-	
	2,756		2,300
Donated assets	-	-	
Balance at 31 March	22,730		22,049

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The Authority accounts for post employment benefits in the 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 benefits earned to be financed as the Authority makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pay 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.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Balance at 1 April

Actuarial gains/losses on pensions assets and liabilities
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits credited to the Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year

Balance at 31 March

2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
(442,278)	(395,965)
57,114	(87,814)
(21,396)	(16,614)
10,595	11,612
(395,965)	(488,781)

Collection Fund Adjustment Account

The Collection Fund Adjustment Account manages the differences arising from the recognition of council tax and business rates income in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as it falls due from council tax and business rate payers compared with the statutory arrangements for paying across amounts to the General Fund from the Collection Fund. Council tax and business rates income is collected on behalf of the Fire Authority on an agency basis by the five billing authorities in East Sussex: Eastbourne Borough Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council, Wealden District Council and also Brighton & Hove City Council.

From 1 April 2009, the Fire Authority as a precepting authority is required to show Council Tax income in its Income and Expenditure Account on an accruals basis. The difference between the income included in the Income and Expenditure account and the amount required by legislation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance.

The significant movement during 2020/21 reflects the impact of Covid-19 on the collection of business rates and council tax.

Balance at 1 April

Amount by which council tax income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from council tax income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements

Amount by which business rates income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement is different from business rates income calculated for the year in accordance with statutory requirements

Balance at 31 March

2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
119	236
(89)	(294)
206	(1,627)
236	(1,685)

Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund Balance from accruing for compensated absences 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.

Balance at 1 April

Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year

Amounts accrued at the end of the current year

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

Balance at 31 March

2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
(56)	(66)
56	66
(66)	(96)
(10)	(30)
(66)	(96)

There was an expected increase in the accumulated absences balance as at the end of 31 March 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19 resulting in annual leave not being taken.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

22. Cash Flow Statement - Operating Activities

Adjustments to net surplus or deficit on the provision of services for non-cash movements:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Depreciation	(2,735)	(2,774)
Impairment and downward valuations	(110)	(229)
(Increase) in creditors	(421)	(1,498)
Decrease in interest creditors	244	-
Increase / (decrease) in debtors	(83)	1,434
Decrease in interest debtors	(4)	(9)
Decrease in stock	(19)	(3)
Impairment movements on Investments	-	1
Pension Liability	(10,801)	(5,002)
Contributions to / from provisions	(421)	491
Donated Assets	-	-
Carrying amount of PPE sold	(2)	(539)
Total Adjustment	(14,352)	(8,128)

Adjustments for items included in the net deficit on the provision of services that are investing and financing activities:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Capital Grants and Contributions credited to deficit on provision of services	173	155
Net adjustment from the sale of short and long term investments	-	(5,750)
Proceeds from the Sale of PPE	28	186
Total Adjustment	201	(5,409)

The cash flows for operating activities include the following items:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Interest received	(241)	(116)
Interest paid	740	497

23. Cash Flow Statement – Investing Activities

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	2,757	2,225
Purchase of short-term and long-term investments	2,000	-
Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment	-	-
Other receipts from investing activities	(65)	(360)
Net cash flows from investing activities	4,692	1,865

Notes to the Accounting Statements

24. Cash Flow Statement – Financing Activities

The cash flows for financing activities, excluding interest paid and received, include the following items:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Repayment of Short-Term and Long-Term Borrowing	-	75
Net cash flows from financing activities	-	75

Reconciliation of liabilities arising from Financing Activities

	1 April 2020	Financing cash Flows	Non cash changes	31 March 2021
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Long Term borrowing	10,698	-	(400)	10,298
Short term borrowing	75	(75)	400	400
Total liabilities from financing activities	10,773	(75)	-	10,698

	1 April 2019	Financing cash Flows	Non cash changes	31 March 2020
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Long Term borrowing	10,773	-	(75)	10,698
Short term borrowing	-	-	75	75
Total liabilities from financing activities	10,773	-	-	10,773

Notes to the Accounting Statements

25. Notes to the Expenditure and Funding Analysis

East Sussex Fire Authority departments and responsibilities –

The Fire Authority is made up of 18 councillors, 12 who are nominated by East Sussex County Council and 6 who are nominated by Brighton & Hove City Council. They have legal responsibility to provide a Fire and Rescue Service for the whole of East Sussex and the City of Brighton & Hove. The Chief Fire Officer reports to the Fire Authority which has ultimate responsibility for such things as deciding how many fire stations are needed, how many firefighters, how many fire appliances and how much money needs to be raised from local taxes to pay for the service.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is managed by its board or Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprising three Principal Officers and five assistant directors. The role of the Chief Fire Officer is to deliver the strategic aims and objectives on behalf of the Fire Authority and is supported by SLT who deliver services to local communities, and the necessary support functions, through the following directorates:

- Service Delivery – comprising:
 - o Safer Communities
 - o Operational Support and Resilience
- Service Planning and Assurance – comprising:
 - o Resources / Treasurer
 - o Planning and Improvement
 - o People Services

The team meet at least once a month to discuss strategic and policy issues and to monitor and determine service and financial plans into the future.

The Expenditure and Funding Analysis demonstrates how the funding available to the Authority for the year 2020/21 has been used to provide services and this note provides a reconciliation of the main adjustments to net expenditure chargeable to the General Fund balances to arrive at the amounts in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The relevant transfers between reserves are explained in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

Adjustments between Funding and Accounting Basis

2020/21				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Training & Assurance	-	(158)	-	(158)
Resources/Treasurer	1,679	92	6	1,777
Planning & Improvement	-	75	5	80
Human Resources & Organisational Development	-	76	10	86
Safer Communities	-	(4,021)	10	(4,011)
Operational Support & Resilience	1,324	94	(3)	1,415
Corporate	-	(130)	2	(128)
Net Cost of Services	3,003	(3,972)	30	(939)
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(234)	8,974	1,921	10,661
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,769	5,002	1,951	9,722

Notes to the Accounting Statements

2019/20				
Adjustments from General Fund to arrive at the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement amounts	Adjustments for Capital Purposes	Net change for the Pensions Adjustments	Other Differences	Total Adjustments
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Training & Assurance	1	59	2	62
Resources/Treasurer	1,609	226	3	1,838
Planning & Improvement	-	184	3	187
Human Resources & Organisational Development	-	162	1	163
Safer Communities	-	(841)	7	(834)
Operational Support & Resilience	1,236	438	(7)	1,667
Corporate	-	(14)	-	(14)
Net Cost of Services	2,846	214	9	3,069
Other income and expenditure from the Expenditure and Funding Analysis	(834)	10,587	(117)	9,636
Difference between General Fund surplus or deficit and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,012	10,801	(108)	12,705

Adjustments for Capital Purposes

This column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

Other operating expenditure – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.

Financing and investment income and expenditure – the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. Minimum Revenue Provision and other revenue contributions are deducted from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.

Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income and Expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Net Change for the Pensions Adjustments

Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 *Employee Benefits* pension related expenditure and income. For **services** this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs. For **Financing and investment income and expenditure** – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Other Differences

Other differences between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute. For **Financing and investment income and expenditure** the other differences column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts. The charge under **Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure** represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations for council tax and NDR that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the Collection Fund.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

A. Service income received on a segmental basis is analysed below:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Income from Services		
Training & Assurance	(90)	(80)
Resources/Treasurer	(676)	(681)
Planning & Improvement	-	(2)
Human Resources & Organisational Development	(20)	(60)
Safer Communities	(177)	(597)
Operational Support & Resilience	(1,105)	(427)
Corporate	(12)	(17)
Total income analysed on a segmental basis	(2,080)	(1,864)

B. Expenditure and Income is analysed by nature below:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Expenditure		
Employee benefits expenses	31,976	32,350
Other services expenses	21,036	15,684
Support service recharges	818	785
Depreciation, amortisation, impairment	2,846	3,008
Interest payments	496	496
(Gain)/loss on the disposal of assets	(28)	352
Total expenditure	57,144	52,675
Income		
Fees, charges and other service income	(2,080)	(1,864)
Interest and investment income	(237)	(107)
Income from council tax and non-domestic rates	(37,988)	(34,125)
Government grants and contributions	(3,636)	(8,113)
Total income	(43,941)	(44,209)
Deficit on the Provision of Services	13,203	8,466

Notes to the Accounting Statements

26. Members' Allowances

The Authority paid the following amounts to members of the Authority during the year.

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Allowances	78	79
Expenses	1	-
Total	79	79

Further details of allowances can be found on the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service website www.esfrs.org.

27. Officers' Remuneration

The following table provides information about the remuneration of those senior managers who influence the decisions of the Fire Authority as a whole (i.e. those officers who are members of the Corporate Management Team).

Senior Employees Remuneration

2020/21	Salary, Fees and Allowances £	Bonuses £	Expenses Allowances (incl. Benefit in Kind) £	Compensation of Loss of Employment £	Employers Pension Contribution £	Total £
Mrs Dawn Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive)	150,768	-	-	-	43,421	194,189
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	123,518	-	-	-	35,573	159,091
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Note 1)	82,604	-	-	-	23,790	106,394
Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer	80,524	-	-	-	15,018	95,542
Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Note 2)	89,678	-	-	-	25,827	115,505
Assistant Director Operational Support and Resilience (Note 3)	73,177	-	-	-	27,295	100,472
Acting Assistant Director Operational Support and Resilience (Note 4)	66,021	-	-	-	19,014	85,035
Acting Assistant Director - Safer Communities (Note 5)	65,237	-	-	-	18,788	84,025
Assistant Director People Services	66,141	-	-	-	19,049	85,190
Assistant Director Planning and Improvement	64,133	-	-	-	11,961	76,094

Notes:

1. Terminated employment on 16/11/2020
2. Acting ACFO from 25/11/2020
3. Seconded out from 01/09/2020
4. Acting AD OSR from 26/10/2020
5. Acting AD SC from 21/09/2020

Notes to the Accounting Statements

2019/20	Salary, Fees and Allowances £	Bonuses £	Expenses Allowances (incl. Benefit in Kind) £	Compensation of Loss of Employment £	Employers Pension Contribution £	Total £
Mrs Dawn Whittaker (Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive) (Note1)	201,299	-	-	-	42,261	243,560
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Note 2)	170,609	-	-	-	42,300	212,909
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Note 3)	162,315	-	-	-	31,774	194,089
Assistant Director Resources/Treasurer	78,238	-	-	-	14,151	92,389
Assistant Director Operational Support and Resilience	69,543	-	-	-	25,939	95,482
Assistant Director Safer Communities	71,685	-	-	-	20,645	92,330
Assistant Director People Services (Note 4)	73,132	-	-	-	13,310	86,442
Assistant Director Planning and Improvement	62,417	-	-	-	11,079	73,496

Notes:

- Salary, fees and allowances includes one off Compensation of £30,000 net of tax which resulted in a total additional payment of £54,204 (non-pensionable) following a review of Principal Officer terms and conditions
- Salary, fees and allowances includes one off Compensation of £30,000 net of tax which resulted in a total additional payment of £51,724 (non-pensionable) following a review of Principal Officer terms and conditions
- Salary, fees and allowances includes one off Compensation of £30,000 net of tax which resulted in a total additional payment of £51,724 (non-pensionable) following a review of Principal Officer terms and conditions
- Salary, fees and allowances includes one off Compensation of £5,000 net of tax which resulted in a total additional payment of £8,621 (non-pensionable) in respect of additional duties carried out whilst temporarily covering the role of Assistant Director HR & OD

The Authority's employees (excluding those shown above) receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year in bands of £5,000, excluding employer's pension contributions were:

Remuneration band	2019/20	2020/21
	Number of employees	Number of employees
£50,000 to £54,999	40	25
£55,000 to £59,999	12	13
£60,000 to £64,999	13	6
£65,000 to £69,999	3	3
£70,000 to £74,999	-	-
£75,000 to £79,999	-	-

Notes to the Accounting Statements

28. Exit Packages

Reporting of the Authority and other compensation schemes - Exit Packages

2020/21 Exit package cost band	Compulsory redundancies		Other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages	
	Number of employees	£000	Number of employees	£000	Number of employees	£000
less than £20,000	-	-	4	34	4	34
£20,000 to £39,999	-	-	1	27	1	27
£40,000 to £59,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£60,000 to £79,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£80,000 to £99,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£100,000 to £149,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,000 to £199,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£200,000 to £249,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	5	61	5	61

2019/20 Exit package cost band	Compulsory redundancies		Other departures agreed		Total number of exit packages	
	Number of employees	£000	Number of employees	£000	Number of employees	£000
less than £20,000	1	16	1	5	2	21
£20,000 to £39,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£40,000 to £59,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£60,000 to £79,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£80,000 to £99,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£100,000 to £149,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£150,000 to £199,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
£200,000 to £249,999	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	16	1	5	2	21

29. External Audit Costs

The Authority has incurred the following costs during the year in relation to the audit of the Statement of Accounts provided by the Authority's external auditors, Ernst & Young LLP.

	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Fees payable with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor for the year	23	23
National rebate received from Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA)	(3)	-
Additional charge relating to prior year audit work	-	32
Total	20	55

Notes to the Accounting Statements

30. Grant Income

The Authority credited the following grants, contributions, and donations to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Credited to Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income		
National Non Domestic Rates	10,691	6,510
Revenue Support Grant	-	3,208
Fire Pension Grant	1,735	1,735
Business Rates Relief section 31 Grants	1,556	2,052
Covid 19 Grant	136	865
Capital Grants & Contributions recognised	173	155
Other Revenue Grants	35	97
Total	14,326	14,622
Credited to Services		
New Dimensions	27	27
Firelink	247	257
Surge Protection Grant Funding	-	510
Infrastructure Fund	-	68
Sales Fees and Charges Support Grants	-	30
Pensions Admin Grant	-	47
Other grants	10	30
Total	284	969

The Authority received a Revenue grant in 2016/17 for £0.025m from the Environment Agency that had conditions attached to it and is currently being held as a receipt in advance until the conditions attached to it have been satisfied and the grant can be recognised.

31. Related Parties

The Fire Authority is obliged to disclose material transactions with related parties, a term that includes central government, the Pension Fund, some partnerships, as well as any financial relationships with Members and Senior Officers other than payments of salaries, expenses, etc. We disclose these transactions to indicate the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently, or to have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the Authority.

Central Government

Central government has effective control over the general operations of the Authority – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the Authority operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the Authority has with other parties. Grants received from government departments are set out in Note 30. Grant receipts in advance at 31 March 2021 are shown in Note 30.

East Sussex County Council

East Sussex County Council provides financial services to the Authority. The arrangement has been in operation since 1997. The services provided include accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, pension administration, treasury management, accountancy and internal audit. The cost of these services was £0.232m for 2020/21 (£0.292m for 2019/20).

Brighton & Hove City Council

Brighton & Hove City Council provide legal services and the Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority, and have done so since 1997. The cost of these services was £0.110m for 2020/21 (£0.166m for 2019/20).

Members and Senior Officers

Members of the Fire Authority have direct control over the Authority's financial and operating policies. None of the Members or Senior Officers had any interests in any related party transactions during the year. The Register of Members' Interests is held at Fire HQ, Lewes, and is open to public inspection. The total of members' allowances paid in 2020/21 is shown in Note 26.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

32. Capital Expenditure and Capital Financing

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

	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	10,773	10,773
Capital Investment		
Property, Plant and Equipment	2,756	2,225
Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute	-	-
Sources of Finance		
Capital receipts	(1,987)	(1,676)
Government grants & other contributions	(136)	(193)
Sums set aside from revenue		
Direct Revenue contributions	(202)	-
Minimum Revenue Provision	(431)	(431)
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	10,773	10,698

The Capital Financing Requirement represents the Authority's net need to borrow to finance its capital investment, made up of all loan investment in previous years, less amounts set aside each year for the redemption of debt.

	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Explanation of movements in year		
Decrease in underlying need to borrowing (unsupported by government financial assistance)	-	75
Decrease in Capital Financing Requirement	-	75

33. Leases

Authority as Lessee

Finance Leases - The Authority does not have any finance leases where it acts as a lessee.

Operating Leases - The Authority has lease cars for certain staff and also leases the office space at the Sussex Police HQ site in Lewes. The authority paid £0.152m on leases in 2020/21 (£0.152m in 2019/20).

The future minimum lease payments payable in future years are:

	31 March 2020 £000	31 March 2021 £000
Not later than one year	151	150
Later than one year and not later than five years	444	391
Later than five years	684	586
Total	1,279	1,127

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Authority as Lessor

Finance Leases - The Authority does not have any finance leases where it acts as a lessor.

Operating Leases – The Authority leases out Property, Plant and Equipment under operating leases in relation to space on its aerial masts and space at Fire Stations and received £0.040m in 2020/21 (£0.038m in 2019/20).

The future minimum lease payments receivable in future years are:

	31 March 2020	31 March 2021
	£000	£000
Not later than one year	31	33
Later than one year and not later than five years	125	132
Later than five years	145	119
Total	301	284

34. Impairment and Revaluation Losses

During 2020/21, revaluation losses recognised in the Cost of Services totalled £0.249m (£0.157m in 2019/20).

35. Defined Benefits Pension Schemes

Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Authority offers retirement benefits. Although these will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Authority has a commitment to make the payments, and this needs to be disclosed at the time that employees earn their future entitlement.

The Accounting Policies note explains that the Authority participates in four schemes, the 1992 Firefighter's Pension Scheme, the 2006 Firefighter's Pension Scheme, the 2015 Firefighter's Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Firefighters' Pension Schemes are administered nationally, and the Income and Expenditure Account contains actual contributions made to the schemes. Details of the East Sussex Firefighters Pension Fund can be found on pages 75 to 77. The Local Government Scheme is administered through the East Sussex Pension Fund, and in addition, the Authority has liabilities for discretionary payments for added years, and other benefits both for local government employees and for Firefighters. These are charged as an expense to the accounts of the Authority, rather than those of the Pension Fund.

Transactions Relating to Post-employment Benefits - We recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the Net Cost of Services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge we are required to make against council tax is based on the contributions made in the year, so the real cost of retirement benefits is reversed out through the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement and the contributions made in the year are included. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year:

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighters Pension Schemes	
2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
2,909	2,053	7,900	5,587
387	226	10,200	8,748
3,296	2,279	18,100	14,335
4,791	(8,291)	-	-
(1,849)	(862)	(13,200)	(4,210)
(8,045)	17,436	(38,300)	89,114
(1,711)	(598)	1,200	(4,775)
(3,518)	9,964	(32,200)	94,464
4,913	(8,673)	41,400	(84,143)
1,395	1,291	9,200	10,321

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Cost of Services:

Service Cost Comprising:

- current service cost

Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

Net interest expense

Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services

Other Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

Re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising:

- Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)
- Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in demographic assumptions
- Actuarial gains and losses arising on changes in financial assumptions
- Other (if applicable)

Total Post-employment Benefits charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

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 Actual amount charged against the General Fund Balance for pensions in the year:

Employers' contributions payable to the scheme

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

The amount included in the Balance Sheet arising from the authority's obligation in respect of its defined benefit plans is as follows:

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000
Present value of the defined benefit obligations:					
Local Government Pension Scheme	(51,547)	(53,427)	(62,036)	(54,209)	(71,841)
Firefighters Pension Schemes	(384,300)	(412,400)	(426,900)	(385,500)	(469,643)
Fair value of assets in the Local Government Pension Scheme	41,162	42,796	46,658	43,744	52,703
Deficit in the scheme:					
Local Government Pension Scheme	(10,385)	(10,631)	(15,378)	(10,465)	(19,138)
Firefighters Pension Schemes	(384,300)	(412,400)	(426,900)	(385,500)	(469,643)
Total	(394,685)	(423,031)	(442,278)	(395,965)	(488,781)

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Authority has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The total liability of £541.5m (£439.7m in 2019/20) has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Authority as recorded in the Balance Sheet, resulting in a negative overall balance of £488.8m (£396.0m in 2019/20).

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Assets and Liabilities in Relation to Post-employment Benefits

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

Opening balance at 1 April:

Current Service Cost	2,909	2,004	7,900	5,587
Interest Cost	1,518	1,229	10,200	8,748
Contributions by scheme participants	425	398	1,900	1,959
Re-measurement (gains) and losses:				
• Actuarial gains/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	(1,849)	(862)	(13,200)	(4,210)
• Actuarial gains/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	(8,045)	17,436	(38,300)	89,114
• Other	(1,711)	(598)	1,200	(4,775)
Benefits paid	(1,074)	(1,975)	(11,200)	(11,966)
Unfunded Benefits paid	-	-	(300)	(314)
Other	-	-	400	-
Closing balance at 31 March:	54,209	71,841	385,500	469,643

Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighters Pension Schemes	
2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
£000	£000	£000	£000
62,036	54,209	426,900	385,500
2,909	2,004	7,900	5,587
1,518	1,229	10,200	8,748
425	398	1,900	1,959
(1,849)	(862)	(13,200)	(4,210)
(8,045)	17,436	(38,300)	89,114
(1,711)	(598)	1,200	(4,775)
(1,074)	(1,975)	(11,200)	(11,966)
-	-	(300)	(314)
-	-	400	-
54,209	71,841	385,500	469,643

Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets:

Opening fair value of scheme asset at 1 April:

Interest Income	1,131	1,003	-	-
Re-measurement gain/(loss):				
• The return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	(4,791)	8,291	-	-
• Other	-	-	-	-
The effect of changes in foreign exchange rates	-	-	-	-
Contributions from employer	1,395	1,291	9,200	10,321
Contributions from employees into the scheme	425	398	1,900	1,959
Benefits paid	(1,074)	(1,975)	(11,200)	(11,966)
Other	-	(49)	100	(314)
Closing fair value of scheme assets at 31 March:	43,744	52,703	-	-

Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighters Pension Schemes	
2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
£000	£000	£000	£000
46,658	43,744	-	-
1,131	1,003	-	-
(4,791)	8,291	-	-
-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-
1,395	1,291	9,200	10,321
425	398	1,900	1,959
(1,074)	(1,975)	(11,200)	(11,966)
-	(49)	100	(314)
43,744	52,703	-	-

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. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets.

The total return on LGPS fund assets for the year to 31 March 2021 was £9.3m (2019/20: a decrease of £3.7m).

Local Government Pension Scheme assets comprised:

Cash and cash equivalents:	809	2	738	1
Indexed Linked Government Securities:	-	-	1,634	3
Corporate bonds:	386	1	5,587	11
Private equity:	2,884	7	4,322	8
Property:	4,015	9	3,953	8
Net current assets:	-	-	211	1
Others:				
• Absolute return portfolio	-	-	12,227	23
• Equities	14,848	33	23,346	44
• Bonds	7,519	17	-	-
• Infrastructure	794	2	158	-
• Other	12,489	29	527	1
Sub-total Others	35,650	81	36,258	68
Total assets	43,744	100	52,703	100

Fair value of scheme assets 2019/20	%	Fair value of scheme assets 2020/21	%
£000		£000	
809	2	738	1
-	-	1,634	3
386	1	5,587	11
2,884	7	4,322	8
4,015	9	3,953	8
-	-	211	1
-	-	12,227	23
14,848	33	23,346	44
7,519	17	-	-
794	2	158	-
12,489	29	527	1
35,650	81	36,258	68
43,744	100	52,703	100

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been assessed on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method, an estimate of the pensions that will be payable in future years dependent on assumptions about mortality rates, salary levels, etc. The Fire Authority Fund liabilities have been assessed by Barnett Waddingham, an independent firm of actuaries, based on the calculations in the latest full valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme as at 31 March 2019, and at 31 March 2020 for the Firefighters Pensions Schemes, and then rolled forward to the Balance Sheet date allowing for the different assumptions required by accounting standards.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	Local Government Pension Scheme		Firefighters Pension Schemes	
	2019/20	2020/21	2019/20	2020/21
Mortality assumptions:				
Longevity for current pensioners:				
• Men	21.6	21.1	26.4	25.0
• Women	23.9	23.7	28.5	27.5
Longevity for future pensioners:				
• Men	22.5	21.9	27.5	26.0
• Women	25.3	25.0	29.7	28.7
Rate of increase in salaries	1.8%	2.85%	2.8%	3.85%
Rate of increase in pensions	1.8%	2.85%	1.9%	2.85%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	2.3%	2.0%	2.3%	2.0%
Take-up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum	50%/75%	50%/75%	90%	50%

Average future life expectancies for the Local Government Pension Scheme is at age 65

Average future life expectancies for the Firefighters Pension Scheme is at age 60

Take-up option for LGPS is 50% for pre-April 2008 service and 75% for post-April 2008 service

Future pensioners assumes retiring in 20 years

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the table above. The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme i.e., on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumptions used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period;

Change in assumptions at 31 March 2021:

Local Government Pension Scheme

0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate

1 year increase in member life expectancy

0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate

0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate

Firefighters Pension Schemes

0.1% decrease in Real Discount Rate

1 year increase in member life expectancy

0.1% increase in the Salary Increase Rate

0.1% increase in the Pension Increase Rate

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme	
Increase in present value of total obligation	Increase in projected service cost
£000	£000
1,639	83
3,161	136
133	-
1,490	83
8,551	310
24,001	463
868	52
7,603	259

Impact on the Authority's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. As at the last valuation dated 31 March 2019 the actuary reported a funding level of 107%. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. The next triennial valuation of the Local Government Pension Scheme is due to be completed 31 March 2022.

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Authority has in the long run to pay post employment (retirement) benefits. The total liability of £488.8m (£19.1m Local Government Pension Scheme and £469.7m Firefighters Pension Schemes) has a

Notes to the Accounting Statements

substantial impact on the net worth of the Authority as recorded in the Balance Sheet. However, statutory arrangements for funding the deficit mean that the financial position of the Authority remains healthy:

- the deficit on the local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees (i.e. before payments fall due), as assessed by the scheme actuary; and
- finance is only required to be raised to cover discretionary benefits when the pensions are actually paid.
- the Firefighters Pension schemes are unfunded national schemes with Employers' contributions determined by the Secretary of State on the advice of the Government Actuary who will have regard to the total cost of the Scheme benefits.

In 2021/22 the Authority anticipates paying £1.116m contributions to the Local Government Pension scheme, £4.142m towards the Firefighters Pension schemes.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for the Firefighters Pension Scheme is 18.3 years (21.9 years for injury pensions).

McCloud/Sargeant ruling

Two employment tribunal cases were brought against the Government in relation to possible discrimination in the implementation of transitional protection following the introduction of the reformed 2015 public service pension schemes from 1 April 2015. In December 2018 the Court of Appeal upheld a ruling that similar transitional protections in the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension Schemes were unlawful on the grounds of age discrimination. The Government has confirmed the final remedy in response to the case (4 February 2021).

Firefighter's Pension Scheme - The actuary has made an allowance in line with the Government's final remedy. Given the uncertainty in how members' benefits will accrue over the remedy period, the actuary has made assumptions in order to determine which scheme the member will choose to accrue benefits in.

Local Government Pension Scheme – an estimated McCloud judgement allowance has been added to the formal valuation results so the impact is continued to be included within the balance sheet at 31 March 2021 (as per the 2020 accounting approach).

Court of Justice of the European Union ruling in O'Brien Case

On 7 November 2018, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) ruled in favour of Mr O'Brien in a case concerning discrimination against part-time judges in the calculation of pensions. The ruling concluded that service prior to 7 April 2000 (the deadline for the Part-Time Workers Directive (PTWD) being transposed into UK law) must be taken into account under the PTWD for the purpose of calculating retirement pension.

In response to the judgement the Government has stated that those who have previously claimed under the PTWD would be entitled to a further remedy in respect of service prior to 7 April 2000. No allowance has been made in the IAS19 disclosure at 31 March 2021 as the remedy is yet to be agreed and there is insufficient data to make a reasonable estimate as to the cost of its impact.

Goodwin Case

Following a case involving the Teachers' Pension Scheme, known as the Goodwin case, differences between survivor benefits payable to member with same-sex or opposite-sex survivors have been identified within a number of public sector pension schemes and the Government has confirmed that a remedy will be required in all affected public sector pension schemes. The actuary has not made allowance for the potential impact of this decision as they do not have enough information to make an accurate estimate of the potential impact on the defined benefit liabilities. However, they expect the impact to be minimal on both the fire and local government schemes.

Covid 19

The Authority's actuary has made a specific adjustment to its future improvement mortality assumptions to reflect the impact of Covid-19 on pension scheme liabilities. It has adopted the Continuous Mortality Investigation Bureau (CMI) 2020 model with a 2020 weight parameter of 25% for March 2021 accounting valuation. This will decrease life expectancies compared to those previously assumed and as a result reduce defined benefit liabilities.

36. Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability is a possible present conditional obligation arising from past events and whose existence will be confirmed only by the occurrence of future uncertain events not wholly within the Fire Authority's control.

McCloud / Sargeant Case

Two employment tribunal cases were brought against the Government in relation to possible discrimination in the implementation of transitional protection following the introduction of the reformed 2015 public service pension schemes from 1 April 2015. In December 2018 the Court of Appeal upheld a ruling that similar transitional protections in the Judges' and Firefighters' Pension Schemes were unlawful on the grounds of age discrimination. The Government has now confirmed the final remedy in response to the case. It is likely that the Authority will incur additional costs in the future as a result of this case and the agreed remedy for example through increased employer's contributions to the scheme or through the costs incurred to administer the remedy. At this stage it is not possible to quantify what those costs might be.

37. Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

Key Risks

The Authority's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks, the key risks are:

- Credit risk – the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Authority;
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that the Authority might not have funds available to meet its commitments to make payments;
- Re-financing risk – the possibility that the Authority might be required to renew a financial instrument on maturity at disadvantageous interest rates or terms;
- Market risk - the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Authority as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates movements.

Overall Procedures for Managing Risk

The Fire Authority's overall risk management procedures focus on the unpredictability of financial markets, and implementing strategies and policies to minimise these risks. The procedures for risk management are set out through a legal framework set out in the *Local Government Act 2003* and the associated regulations. These require the Authority to comply with the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in the Public Services and investment guidance issued through the Act. Overall, these procedures require the Authority to manage risk in the following ways:

- by formally adopting the requirements of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice;
- by the adoption of a Treasury Policy Statement and treasury management clauses within its financial regulations/standing orders/constitution;
- by approving annually in advance prudential and treasury indicators for the following three years limiting:
 - The Authority's overall borrowing;
 - Its maximum and minimum exposures to fixed and variable rates;
 - Its maximum and minimum exposures to the maturity structure of its debt;
 - Its maximum annual exposures to investments maturing beyond a year.
- by approving an investment strategy for the forthcoming year setting out its criteria for both investing and selecting investment counterparties in compliance with the Government Guidance;

These are required to be reported and approved at or before the Authority's annual Council Tax setting budget or before the start of the year to which they relate. These items are reported with the annual Treasury Management Strategy, which outlines the detailed approach to managing risk in relation to the Authority's financial instrument exposure. Actual performance is also reported annually to Members, as is a mid-year update.

The annual treasury management strategy which incorporates the prudential indicators was approved by the Authority on 13th February 2020 and is available on the Authority's website. The key issues within the strategy were:

- The Authorised Limit for 2020/21 was set at £14.79 million. This is the maximum limit of external borrowings or other long term liabilities;
- The Operational Boundary was expected to be £10.40 million. This is the expected level of debt and other long term liabilities during the year;
- The maximum amounts of fixed and variable rate interest rate exposure were set at 100% based on the Authority's net debt;
- The maximum and minimum exposures to the maturity structure of debt are shown under the Refinancing and Maturity Risk section of this note.

These policies are implemented by a central treasury team. The Authority maintains written principles for overall risk management, as well as written policies (Treasury Management Practices – TMPs) covering specific areas, such as interest rate risk, credit risk, and the investment of surplus cash. These TMPs are a requirement of the Code of Practice and are reviewed periodically.

1. Credit risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Authority's customers. This risk is minimized through the Treasury Management Strategy, which is available on the authority's website.

Credit Risk Management Practices

The Authority's credit risk management practices are set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, with particular regard to determining whether the credit risk of financial instruments has increased significantly since initial recognition.

The Treasury Management Strategy requires that deposits are not made with financial institutions unless they meet identified minimum credit criteria, in accordance with the Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's Credit Ratings Services. The Treasury Management Strategy also considers maximum amounts and time limits with a financial institution located in each category.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

Whilst the recent credit crisis in international markets has raised the overall possibility of default, the Authority maintains strict credit criteria for investment counterparties. The credit criteria in respect of financial assets held by the authority at 31 March 2021 are detailed below:

Officers regularly review the investment portfolio, counterparty risk and construction, and use market data, information on government support for banks and the credit ratings of that government support. Latest market information is arrived at by reading the financial press and through city contacts as well as access to the key brokers involved in the London money markets. The Authority in addition to other tools uses the creditworthiness service provided by Link Asset Services. This service employs a sophisticated modelling approach utilising credit ratings from the three main credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's. The credit ratings of counterparties are supplemented with the following overlays:

- credit watches and credit outlooks from credit rating agencies;
- Credit Default Swap spreads to give early warning of likely changes in credit ratings;
- sovereign ratings to select counterparties from only the most creditworthy countries.

The Link Asset Services credit worthiness service uses a wider array of information than just primary ratings and by using a risk weighted scoring system, does not give undue preponderance to just one agency's ratings.

Customers for goods and services are assessed, taking into account their financial position, past experience and other factors, with individual credit limits being set in accordance with internal parameters.

The Authority's maximum exposure to credit risk in relation to its investments in banks and building societies of £4.0m cannot be assessed generally as the risk of any institution failing to make interest payments or repay the principal sum will be specific to each individual institution. Recent experience has shown that it is rare for such entities to be unable to meet their commitments. A risk of irrecoverability applies to all of the Authority's deposits, but there was no evidence at the 31 March 2021 that this was likely to crystallise.

Amounts Arising from Expected Credit Losses (ECL)

The changes in loss allowance during the year are as follows:

	12 Month ECL	Lifetime ECL	Lifetime ECL – Simplified Approach	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Opening balance 1 April 2020	3	-	1	4
Change in credit loss	(1)	-	6	5
Closing balance 31 March 2021	2	-	7	9

12 Month ECL includes treasury investments, and Lifetime ECL (simplified approach) includes both system and non trade debtors.

Collateral – During the reporting period the Authority held no collateral as security

2. Liquidity risk

The Authority manages its liquidity position through the risk management procedures above (the setting and approval of prudential indicators and the approval of the treasury and investment strategy reports), as well as through a comprehensive cash flow management system as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice. This seeks to ensure that cash is available when it is needed.

The Authority has ready access to borrowings from the Money Markets to cover any day to day cash flow need, and whilst the PWLB provides access to longer term funds, it also acts as a lender of last resort to Authorities (although it will not provide funding to an Authority whose actions are unlawful). The Authority is also required to provide a balanced budget through the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which ensures sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure. There is therefore no significant risk that it will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments under financial instruments.

The maturity analysis of financial assets (excluding sums due from customers) is as follows:

	2019/20	2020/21
	£000	£000
Less than one year (current assets)	25,332	24,397
Between one and two years	-	-
Between two and three years	-	-
More than three years	-	-
	25,332	24,397

3. Refinancing and Maturity Risk

The Authority maintains a significant debt and investment portfolio. Whilst the cash flow procedures above are considered against the refinancing risk procedures, longer term risk to the Authority relates to managing the exposure to replacing financial instruments as they mature. This risk relates to both the maturing of longer term financial liabilities and longer term financial assets.

The approved prudential indicator limits for the maturity structure of debt and the limits placed on investments placed for greater than one year in duration are the key parameters used to address this risk. The Authority approved treasury and investment strategies address the main risks and the central treasury team address the operational risks within the approved parameters. This includes:

- monitoring the maturity profile of financial liabilities and amending the profile through either new borrowing or the rescheduling of the existing debt; and
- monitoring the maturity profile of investments to ensure sufficient liquidity is available for the Authority's day to day cash flow needs, and the spread of longer term investments provide stability of maturities and returns in relation to the longer term cash flow needs.

The maturity analysis of financial liabilities, including the minimum and maximum limits for fixed interest rates maturing in each period, is as follows:

	Approved Minimum Limit	Approved Maximum Limit	2019/20	2020/21
	%	%	£000	£000
Less than one year (current liabilities)	0%	25%	1,943	2,815
Between one and two years	0%	40%	400	481
Between two and five years	0%	60%	1,283	1,322
Between five and ten years	0%	80%	2,765	2,695
More than ten years	0%	80%	6,250	5,800
			12,641	13,113

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

4. Market risk

Interest rate risk – The Authority is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Authority, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the General Fund Balance. Movements in the fair value of fixed rate investments that have a quoted market price will be reflected in the Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

The Authority has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk. The Annual Treasury Management Strategy draws together the Authority's prudential and treasury indicators and its expected treasury operations, including an expectation of interest rate movements. From this Strategy a treasury indicator is set which provides maximum limits for fixed and variable interest rate exposure. The central treasury team will monitor market and forecast interest rates within the year to adjust exposures appropriately. For instance during periods of falling interest rates, and where economic circumstances make it favourable, fixed rate investments may be taken for longer periods to secure better long term returns, similarly the drawing of longer term fixed rates borrowing would be postponed.

Notes to the Accounting Statements

If all interest rates had been 1% higher (with all other variables held constant) the financial effect in 2020/21 would be:

	<u>£000</u>
Increase in interest payable on variable rate borrowings (none held)	-
Increase in interest receivable on variable rate investments	<u>62</u>
Impact on Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	<u>62</u>

The approximate impact of a 1% fall in interest rates would be as above, but with the movements being reversed. This figure of £0.062 million (£0.083 million at 31 March 2020) represents the immediate impact on the Authority's investments that are on variable rate, but ignores the impact of overnight and short-term fixed rate investments.

Price risk - The Authority does not invest in equity shares or marketable bonds.

Foreign exchange risk - The Authority has no financial assets or liabilities denominated in foreign currencies. It therefore has no exposure to loss arising from movements in exchange rates.

Firefighters' Pension Fund Accounts

Introduction

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme open to operational firefighters is unfunded, that is there are no investment assets to offset liabilities. From 1 April 2006, employee contributions and employer's contributions are paid into a pension fund account from which pension payments are made. The account is topped up by Government grant if the contributions are insufficient to meet the cost of pension payments. The underlying principle of these arrangements is that employer and employee contributions together will meet the full costs of pension liabilities being accrued in respect of currently serving employees, while central Government will meet the costs of retirement pensions in payment, net of these contributions. The account forms part of the assets and liabilities of the Fire Authority.

The initial amount received from the Government during the year is based on an early estimate of likely outcome based on pensionable pay of members in the scheme and an estimate for members joining and leaving, and an estimate of likely lump sum retirement benefits payable to firefighters due to retire during the year. Any outstanding balance based on the final outturn position will be paid over to the Fire Authority after the year end accounts are finalised.

The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account is not a bank account, and the fund does not require active fund administration and management. The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account is accounted for separately and in such a way to record the applicable transactions as they arise from employee and employer contributions from payroll, the payments of lump sums at retirement, accounting for ill-health charges to accord to a Government formula, and the accounting to eliminate that element within pensions paid relating to retirement on grounds of injury. Since such an injury element of pensions paid cost is not borne by the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account and hence by the Government, this is a cost to the Fire Authority.

The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account has been prepared on an accruals basis. Accruals are not significant since substantially all the transactions are derived either from payroll, or from actual payments into and out of the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account. There are no significant estimation techniques adopted.

The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account does not take account of liabilities to pay pensions and other benefits in the future.

Firefighters' Pension Fund Accounts

Fund Account

2019/20 £000		2020/21 £000
	Contributions Receivable:	
(4,262)	Contributions in relation to pensionable pay	(4,353)
(4,168)	Top up grant received	(3,776)
(97)	Ill Health charges	(148)
(1,952)	Firefighters contribution	(1,959)
(10,479)		(10,236)
(441)	Transfers in from other authorities	(202)
	Benefits Payable:	
9,803	Pensions	10,169
2,021	Commutations and Lump Sum Retirement Benefits	1,903
95	Lump Sum Death Benefits	96
-	Other payments	52
11,919		12,220
	Payments to and on account of leavers:	
7	Transfers out to other authorities	-
7		-
1,006	Net amount Payable for year	1,782
(1,006)	Top up grant payable by the government	(1,782)
-		-

Net Assets Statement

31 March 2020 £000		31 March 2021 £000
	Current Assets:	
-	Contributions due from fire authority	-
-	Recoverable overpayments of pensions	-
1,006	Top-up grant receivable from the government	1,782
-	Cash and Cash Equivalents	-
	Current Liabilities:	
(1,006)	Cash overdrawn	(1,782)
-	Unpaid pensions benefits	-
-	Amount of grant payable to the government	-
-		-

Firefighters' Pension Fund Accounts

1. Employer Contributions

The Fire Authority bore pension contributions as the employer, totalling £4.353m (£4.262m 2019/20) representing 37.3% of pensionable pay for firefighters under the 1992 scheme, 27.4% for firefighters under the 2006 scheme and 28.8% for firefighters under the 2015 scheme.

In addition to normal employer's contributions, ill-health charges of £0.148m (£0.097m in 2019/20) and injury portions of pensions totalling £0.314m (£0.305m in 2019/20) were paid by the Fire Authority.

2. Top Up Grant

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded scheme with any deficit/surplus on the account funded via a government grant or paid back to government.

The grant is paid once a year and consists of two elements;

- 80% of the estimated pension deficit for the current year (100% of any estimated surplus would be required to be repaid)
- The amount required to fully fund the previous year's pension scheme deficit or payment required to recover any surplus.

The top up grant receivable from the Government is accounted for through the Firefighters pension fund account under the Firefighters Pension Regulations 2006. It does not impact on the Authority's comprehensive income and expenditure statement.

3. IAS 19 Employee Benefits

Details of the Actuarial Valuation are included within Note 35 to the Fire Authority statements.

Accruals

Provision made at the year-end to bring into account outstanding debtors, creditors, etc., in order to show income and expenditure as it is earned or incurred.

Actuarial Gains and Losses

The change in pension liabilities since the previous year, caused either by events differing from the previous forecast, or a change in actuarial assumptions.

Actuarial Valuation

A review of the Pension Fund normally carried out at 3-year intervals, which assesses the contributions required from employing bodies in order to maintain the Fund's ability to pay benefits in future years to pensioners, contributors and their dependants.

Admitted Bodies

Bodies whose staff can become members of the Pension Fund by virtue of an admission agreement made between the Pension Fund and the relevant body (contrasting with Scheduled Bodies – see below).

Amortisation

A charge to services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account, assessed as the amounts by which the value of intangible assets are consumed during the year, calculated from the estimated life expectancy and any residual value.

Bad Debt Provision

Amount of money set aside to meet cost of monies owed to the Authority that are not expected to be repaid.

Balances

A working balance maintained as a cushion against unexpected expenditure during the year. It is the amount of money left over at the end of the year after allowing for all expenditure and income that has taken place. These are also known as financial reserves.

Business Rates Retention

Under the new Business Rates Retention scheme, Authorities will retain a share of all and any additional business rates they get above a determined baseline. This potentially provides a direct local incentive to encourage growth within local boundaries.

Capital / Capital Expenditure / Capital Receipts

Capital expenditure pays for the acquisition of assets or the enhancement (rather than maintenance) of existing assets. It is financed mainly from borrowing, and charged to revenue over a number of years. We plan for capital expenditure over several years in the published capital programme. The term 'capital receipts' covers income from the sale of assets, together with grants and contributions received specifically for financing the capital programme. Capital receipts can only be used for capital purposes, and not to support the revenue budget.

Cash Equivalents

These are investments, which amount to short term deposits.

Community Assets

These are assets, which the Authority intends to hold in perpetuity and have no determinable finite useful life.

Corporate and Democratic Core (CDC)

Corporate and Democratic Core (CDC) is defined as the two service divisions Democratic Representation and Management (DRM) and Corporate Management (CM).

Contingent Assets and Liabilities

A statement of a possible gain or loss to the Authority, which is contingent upon the outcome of an event, which is not known for certain when the accounts are drawn up.

Corporate Management (CM)

Corporate management concerns those activities and costs that provide the infrastructure that allows services to be provided, whether by the Authority or not, and the information that is required for public accountability. Activities that relate to the provision of services, even indirectly, are overheads on those services. There are no subdivisions recommended for CM.

Creditors

Amounts owed by the Authority but not paid at the date of the Balance Sheet.

Curtailments

This heading covers the additional cost arising from the early payment of pension benefits when an employee is made redundant. The full estimated discounted cost is charged immediately to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, under the heading of 'non-distributed costs', but this is offset by a transfer from the Pensions Reserve.

Debtors

Amounts owed to the Authority but unpaid at the date of the Balance Sheet.

Defined Benefit and Contribution Pension Schemes

Pension schemes generally fall into one of these two categories. Defined Benefit schemes are those such as the Local Government Pension Scheme, where the benefits to employees are based on their final salaries, and where employers' contributions have to be adjusted to match estimates of future liabilities. Defined Contribution schemes are those where the employer's liability is restricted to the amount that they contribute.

Democratic Representation and Management (DRM)

This includes all aspects of members' activities in that capacity, including corporate, programme and service policy making and more general activities relating to governance and the representation of local interests. To give authorities maximum flexibility in reflecting their own constitutional arrangements, there are no recommended subdivisions of service.

Depreciation

A charge to services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Account, assessed as the amounts by which the value of property, plant and equipment are consumed during the year, calculated from the estimated life expectancy and any residual value.

Fair value

Fair value is the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's-length transaction. The concept of fair value is used in many accounting standards including the IFRS covering acquisition, valuation of assets, and financial instruments, but it is not limited to these.

General Fund

The main revenue fund of the Authority into which is paid income from the council tax precept, grants and charges for services and from which is met the cost of providing services.

Going Concern

The key accounting concept of a going concern assumes that an organisation, its functions and services will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Where this is not the case, particular care will be needed in the valuation of assets. An inability to apply the going concern concept can have a fundamental impact on the financial statements.

Heritage Assets

Heritage assets are assets that are held by the authorities principally for their contribution to knowledge or culture.

Impairment

Impairment to assets may be physical in nature, such as damage by fire, or caused by a general or specific reduction in prices during the financial year.

Intangible Assets

This term includes such items as development expenditure or goodwill, but for local authorities it actually only covers licences for the use of computer software.

IFRS and IAS

International Financial Reporting Standards and International Accounting Standards

Leasing

A method of obtaining the use of assets: a rental charge is paid for a specified period, but under operating lease conditions the asset remains the property of the lessor and the Authority has no rights to purchase. Finance leases transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership.

Minimum Revenue Provision

An amount, prescribed by Government, to be set aside from revenue for the redemption of debt.

Net Book Value (NBV)

The amount at which fixed assets are included in the Balance Sheet. The NBV is the historical cost or current value less any accumulated depreciation.

Net Worth

The total of all assets less the total of all liabilities. It helps to determine the value of an entity and is also known as Total Net Assets or Total Equity.

Non-Distributed Costs

These are costs which the Authority has to bear, but which do not support any statutory services. This includes three elements of the pension cost (Past Service Cost, Settlements, and Curtailments) which are defined elsewhere, and the costs of properties, which have been declared surplus and are awaiting disposal.

Non-Domestic Rates

A charge on commercial and industrial buildings fixed by the Government and reallocated to local authorities.

Post Balance Sheet Events

A statement of the financial implications of an event taking place after the Balance Sheet date, which has a material effect on the Authority's financial position at the balance sheet date.

Prior Period Adjustments

Material adjustments that are applicable to prior years and which arise from changes in accounting policy or the correction of material errors. They do not include normal recurring corrections or adjustments of accounting estimates made in prior years.

Private Equity

Investments into new and developing companies and enterprises, which are not publicly traded on a recognised stock exchange.

Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)

Property, plant and equipment covers all assets with physical substance (tangible assets) that are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes, and expected to be used during more than one period. PP&E is a summation of all the Authority's purchases of property, plant, and pieces of equipment to that point in time, less any depreciation.

Provisions

Provisions are made for liabilities and losses which have already been incurred at the date of the balance sheet, and for which the amount or dates on which they will arise can be reliably measured.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLB)

A Government agency, which provides the main source of borrowing for local authorities.

Related Parties

This term covers individuals or bodies with which the Authority has a close economic relationship. It includes Members and Senior Officers, Government departments that provide funding, and other bodies that are involved in partnerships with the Authority.

Reserves

Internal reserves set aside to finance future expenditure for purposes falling outside the definition of provisions.

Revenue

Recurring expenditure principally on pay, running costs of buildings, equipment, and capital financing costs.

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute

Expenditure which may properly be charged to capital but which does not result in a tangible asset.

Unusable Reserves

This include unrealised gains and losses, particularly in relation to the revaluation of property, plant and equipment (e.g. the Revaluation Reserve) adjustment accounts that absorb the difference between the outcome of applying proper accounting practices and the requirements of statutory arrangements for funding expenditure (e.g. the Capital Adjustment Account and the Pensions Reserve).

Usable Reserves

This includes the revenue and capital resources available to meet future expenditure (e.g. General Balances, Earmarked Reserves, and the Capital Receipts Reserve).

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[To be prepared on the entity's letterhead]

[Date]

Helen Thompson
Ernst & Young LLP
Grosvenor House
Grosvenor Square
Southampton
SO15 2BE

This letter of representations is provided in connection with your audit of the financial statements of East Sussex Fire Authority (“the Authority”) for the year ended 31 March 2021. We recognise that obtaining representations from us concerning the information contained in this letter is a significant procedure in enabling you to form an opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Authority financial position of East Sussex Fire Authority as of 31 March 2021 and of its income and expenditure for the year then ended in accordance with CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.

We understand that the purpose of your audit of our financial statements is to express an opinion thereon and that your audit was conducted in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK), which involves an examination of the accounting system, internal control and related data to the extent you considered necessary in the circumstances, and is not designed to identify - nor necessarily be expected to disclose - all fraud, shortages, errors and other irregularities, should any exist.

Accordingly, we make the following representations, which are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, having made such inquiries as we considered necessary for the purpose of appropriately informing ourselves:

A. Financial Statements and Financial Records

1. We have fulfilled our responsibilities, under the relevant statutory authorities, for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
2. We acknowledge, as members of management of the Authority, our responsibility for the fair presentation of the financial statements. We believe the financial statements referred to above give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance (or results of operations) and cash flows of the Authority in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, and are free of material misstatements, including omissions. We have approved the financial statements.
3. The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are appropriately described in the financial statements.

4. As members of management of the Authority, we believe that the Authority has a system of internal controls adequate to enable the preparation of accurate financial statements in accordance with the CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21, that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. We have disclosed to you any significant changes in our processes, controls, policies and procedures that we have made to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our system of internal controls.
5. As at 17 September 2021, there are no unadjusted audit differences identified during the current audit and pertaining to the latest period presented.

B. Non-compliance with law and regulations, including fraud

1. We acknowledge that we are responsible to determine that the Authority's activities are conducted in accordance with laws and regulations and that we are responsible to identify and address any non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including fraud.
2. We acknowledge that we are responsible for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal controls to prevent and detect fraud.
3. We have disclosed to you the results of our assessment of the risk that the financial statements may be materially misstated as a result of fraud.
4. We have no knowledge of any identified or suspected non-compliance with laws or regulations, including fraud that may have affected the Authority (regardless of the source or form and including without limitation, any allegations by "whistleblowers"), including non-compliance matters:
 - involving financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the Authority's financial statements;
 - related to laws and regulations that have an indirect effect on amounts and disclosures in the financial statements, but compliance with which may be fundamental to the operations of the Authority's activities, its ability to continue to operate, or to avoid material penalties;
 - involving management, or employees who have significant roles in internal controls, or others; or
 - in relation to any allegations of fraud, suspected fraud or other non-compliance with laws and regulations communicated by employees, former employees, analysts, regulators or others.

C. Information Provided and Completeness of Information and Transactions

1. We have provided you with:
 - Access to all information of which we are aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;

- Additional information that you have requested from us for the purpose of the audit; and
 - Unrestricted access to persons within the entity from whom you determined it necessary to obtain audit evidence.
2. All material transactions have been recorded in the accounting records and all material transactions, events and conditions are reflected in the financial statements, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 3. We have made available to you all minutes of the meetings of the Authority, Scrutiny & Audit Panel and Policy & Resources Panel held through the year to the most recent meeting on the Fire Authority on 2 September 2021, Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September 2021, and Policy & Resources Panel on 22 July 2021.
 4. We confirm the completeness of information provided regarding the identification of related parties. We have disclosed to you the identity of the Authority's related parties and all related party relationships and transactions of which we are aware, including sales, purchases, loans, transfers of assets, liabilities and services, leasing arrangements, guarantees, non-monetary transactions and transactions for no consideration for the period ended, as well as related balances due to or from such parties at the year end. These transactions have been appropriately accounted for and disclosed in the financial statements.
 5. We believe that the methods, significant assumptions and the data we used in making accounting estimates and related disclosures are appropriate and consistently applied to achieve recognition, measurement and disclosure that is in accordance with CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21
 6. We have disclosed to you, and the Authority has complied with, all aspects of contractual agreements that could have a material effect on the financial statements in the event of non-compliance, including all covenants, conditions or other requirements of all outstanding debt.
 7. From the date of our last management representation letter at 30 November 2020 through the date of this letter we have disclosed to you any unauthorized access to our information technology systems that either occurred or to the best of our knowledge is reasonably likely to have occurred based on our investigation, including of reports submitted to us by third parties (including regulatory agencies, law enforcement agencies and security consultants) , to the extent that such unauthorized access to our information technology systems is reasonably likely to have a material impact to the financial statements, in each case or in the aggregate.

D. Liabilities and Contingencies

1. All liabilities and contingencies, including those associated with guarantees, whether written or oral, have been disclosed to you and are appropriately reflected in the financial statements.
2. We have informed you of all outstanding and possible litigation and claims, whether or not they have been discussed with legal counsel.

3. We have recorded and/or disclosed, as appropriate, all liabilities related to litigation and claims, both actual and contingent, and have disclosed in the financial statements all guarantees that we have given to third parties.

E. Going Concern

1. Note 1.ii to the financial statements discloses all the matters of which we are aware that are relevant to the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, including significant conditions and events, our plans for future action, and the feasibility of those plans.

F. Subsequent Events

1. Other than Note 6 to the financial statements, there have been no events, including events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, subsequent to period end which require adjustment of or disclosure in the financial statements or notes thereto.

G. Other information

1. We acknowledge our responsibility for the preparation of the other information. The other information comprises the Narrative Statement and Annual Governance Statement.
2. We confirm that the content contained within the other information is consistent with the financial statements.

H. Ownership of Assets

1. Except for assets capitalised under finance leases, the Authority has satisfactory title to all assets appearing in the balance sheet, and there are no liens or encumbrances on the Authority's assets, nor has any asset been pledged as collateral. All assets to which the Authority has satisfactory title appear in the balance sheet.
2. All agreements and options to buy back assets previously sold have been properly recorded and adequately disclosed in the financial statements.
3. We have no plans to abandon lines of product or other plans or intentions that will result in any excess or obsolete inventory, and no inventory is stated at an amount in excess of net realisable value.
4. There are no formal or informal compensating balance arrangements with any of our cash and investment accounts. Except as disclosed in Note 13 to the financial statements, we have no other line of credit arrangements.

I. Reserves

1. We have properly recorded or disclosed in the financial statements the useable and unusable reserves.

J. Use of the Work of a Specialist

1. We agree with the findings of the specialists that we engaged to evaluate the valuation of property, plant and equipment and IAS 19 pension fund liability, and

have adequately considered the qualifications of the specialists in determining the amounts and disclosures included in the financial statements and the underlying accounting records. We did not give or cause any instructions to be given to the specialists with respect to the values or amounts derived in an attempt to bias their work, and we are not otherwise aware of any matters that have had an effect on the independence or objectivity of the specialists.

K. Estimates

i.) Revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment; and

ii.) Pension liability and asset valuation

1. We confirm that the significant judgments made in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation have taken into account all relevant information and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic of which we are aware.
2. We believe that the selection or application of the methods, assumptions and data used by us have been consistently and appropriately applied or used in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation.
3. We confirm that the significant assumptions used in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation, appropriately reflect our intent and ability to carry out these valuations on behalf of the entity.
4. We confirm that the disclosures made in the financial statements with respect to the accounting estimates, including those describing estimation uncertainty and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, are complete and are reasonable in the context of CIPFA LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2020/21.
5. We confirm that appropriate specialized skills or expertise has been applied in performing the revaluation of land and buildings classified as property, plant and equipment, and the pension liability and asset valuation.
6. We confirm that no adjustments are required to the accounting estimates and disclosures in the financial statements, including due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

L. Retirement benefits

1. On the basis of the process established by us and having made appropriate enquiries, we are satisfied that the actuarial assumptions underlying the scheme liabilities are consistent with our knowledge of the business. All significant retirement benefits and all settlements and curtailments have been identified and properly accounted for.

Yours faithfully,

Duncan Savage

Assistant Director Resources / Treasurer

Date:

I confirm that this letter has been discussed and agreed at the Scrutiny & Audit Panel on 28 September 2021.

Councillor Wendy Maples

Chair: Scrutiny & Audit Panel

Date: