



Safest People, Safest Places

Combined Fire Authority

14 March 2025

Notes of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 25 February 2025

Report of the Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee

Members Present: Cllr R Bell in the Chair

Cllrs B Kellett, A Batey, J Cairns, A Anderson, L Mavin

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the discussions and recommendations of the Audit and Finance Committee held on 25 February 2025.

Audit Completion Report – Year Ended 31 March 2024

2. Members were presented with the the Audit Completion Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 by Mazars. They expressed their thanks and appreciation for CDDFRS Finance Team’s cooperation when going through the required processes to complete the audit and sign off the accounts during this time.
3. Mazars did not identify any evidence to indicate a significant weakness in Value for Money arrangements and there were no significant matters outstanding.
4. Mazars issued an unqualified audit opinion in the 2023/24 accounts and the audit certificate will follow after work is completed on Whole of Government Accounts.

The report was **agreed** and **noted**.

Draft Auditors Annual Report – Year Ended 31 March 2024

5. J Collins from Mazars informed the Authority that this document is the public facing report which will go alongside the financial statements, which include further detail on value for money, sustainability, economy and governance.
6. J Collins assured the members that there was nothing identified that needed raising.

The report was **noted**.

Statement of Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

7. T Hope introduced the report which sought Members' approval of the Statement of Accounts for County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority, for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.
8. Members noted their thanks to T Hope and the wider finance team.
9. The committee approved the Statement of Accounts of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

The committee **approved** the Statement of Accounts of County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

Local Government Finance Settlement – Letters to Government

10. T Hope provided members with a copy of the letters sent to government regarding the Local government Finance Settlement, as agreed at the meeting on the 23 January 2025 by the Committee, Appendix A and B.
11. The letters explained the difficulties facing the Authority following the reduction in grant funding of 3.3% (£410,000) and in addition a shortfall of £214,000 in the National Insurance compensation grant.
12. To date there had been no acknowledgement to the letters.
13. Appendix C was the response from CDDFRS to the provisional settlement Consultation, which mirrored the contents of the letters to the MPs.

Members were requested to **note** the letters and response.

Recommendation

14. Members are requested to note the report.