Item 2
29th August 2024

WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

For the Year Ended 31 March 2024

(Pre-Audit Inspection Copy)

WEST OF SCOTLAND ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2024

Contents **Page**

- Management Commentary 2
- Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts 5
- Movement in Reserves Statement 7
- Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement 8
- Cash Flow Statement 9
- Balance Sheet 9
- Notes to the Accounts 10
- Annual Governance Statement 18

❖ Management Commentary

- The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) was set up in 1997 as a Joint Committee of 12 Local Authorities in the region. However, North Lanarkshire Council left the Joint Committee on 31 March 2009, as did Inverclyde Council on 31 March 2013, in both cases after service of the requisite two-year notice period. East Renfrewshire and South Lanarkshire Councils, having previously submitted two years' notice of withdrawal from the service which would have come into effect on 1st April 2018, rescinded their notice following progress on revisions to the service delivery model, and remain members.

- In 2004 West Lothian Council became members of the Joint Committee, and since 2018 archaeological advice has also been provided to East Dunbartonshire Council, which became part of the Joint Committee in 2019.

- The primary purpose of the Archaeology Service is to provide planning related archaeological advice to its member councils to allow them to discharge their duties in respect of Scottish Government planning guidance for the treatment of archaeological remains in the planning process.

- Since 2003, a curatorial archaeological advice service has also been provided to the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, originally in conjunction with Perth & Kinross Heritage Trust and with the Stirling Council archaeologist. Since 1 July 2012 WoSAS has been the sole service provider.

- At various stages the Service has also provided advice to the Forestry Commission and its successor authorities, and to the Scottish Rural Development Programme. The Service has carried out specific archaeological advice contract work for a number of other public sector clients including Transport Scotland. It also previously received grant aid from the former Historic Scotland for specific projects.

- The Service covers a large, geographically diverse region stretching from the Southern Uplands to Argyll and its islands. This varied territory includes the Clydeside conurbation and the City of Glasgow with its strong industrial archaeological heritage, many important towns with medieval cores, and a large rural area containing many significant archaeological sites. The service plays a key role in identifying for its member councils and other client's archaeological issues arising from development within this diverse area. For this purpose, the service curates a detailed Historic Environment Record which contains the most up to date archaeological knowledge.

- The Historic Environment Record (HER) is the key tool for the Service in its own work. Selected data from the Record is made available online to the public through both a Geographical Information System (GIS) based interface and a searchable database. Spatial information from the Historic Environment Record is provided to the Local Government Improvement Service on behalf of each member council so that they continue to comply with the statutory requirements of the INSPIRE (Scotland) Regulations 2009. The service also responds to direct enquiries from the public.

- Not all archaeological sites are currently known – some areas of Scotland have still to be systematically surveyed. Many sites remain to be discovered below ground level, for example in the rich agricultural lands in Ayrshire where all surface traces have been ploughed flat over the centuries. Since its inception, the Service has identified and handled over 23,000 planning applications and as a result a number of significant archaeological sites have been discovered and have been excavated with developer funding, as advised in the Scottish Government policy.

- All archaeological fieldwork arising from the planning process is undertaken by private sector commercial archaeologists on behalf of developers. The service undertakes no fieldwork itself but oversees the implementation of archaeological conditions attached to planning consent for development. The service has continually refined and updated how it deals with the historic environment in the planning system, receiving Commendations for the Development Management category in the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning on two occasions, most recently in 2014.

- During the report period, the service dealt with 1,957 new casework items, a 1.1% increase on the total of the previous reporting year (2022/23 – 1,935). The new casework items comprised consultation on 874 planning applications, monitoring 605 Weekly Lists of Planning Applications, and 478 other casework items. In 2002, the Officer Steering Group put in place a suite of performance indicators which are used to inform decision making and enhance internal reporting processes. Achievements against the agreed Performance Indicators for each of these categories of work for the reporting period to 31st March 2024 are set out below.

Casework type	**Performance Indicator (As set out in WoSAS Service Level Agreement)**	**Performance Standard**	**Performance 2023-24**
Planning Application Consultations	Applications to be actioned within 21 calendar days of receipt.	80%	90.3%
Monitoring Weekly Lists	Lists to be monitored and actioned within 14 calendar days of receipt.	90%	99.8%
Other Work Areas	Casework to be actioned within 21 calendar days of receipt.	80%	93.2%

- In contrast with the last two reporting periods, the number of planning applications which required detailed assessment for potential archaeological issues fell over the 2023-24 reporting period. However, the fall in planning application case-load was exceeded by the rise in requests for assistance or consultation responses in the five categories of casework aggregated into “Other Work Areas”, the demand for which has continued to rise and is currently at a level last seen before the Covid pandemic.

- Alterations to the host authority’s timetable for the implementation of its new staff salary structure continues to delay the post-Covid review of the Service’s updated service delivery proposals, but the Service will respond flexibly to take account of the outcome of the new salary structure, and of the continuing phased introduction of the provisions of the National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4). In all of this, the Service will have to adapt and accommodate any changes in the way in which our work is carried out in response to the requirements of the member Councils.

- In the coming period, throughout any transition in working practices in the planning system, the service will continue to monitor, identify, and handle archaeological issues arising through the planning process on behalf of its member Councils and clients and will continue to give advice to the public and to make Historic Environment Record information

available to them through the Service website at www.wosas.net, and through the Improvement Service's Spatial Hub and on the Pastmap portal in partnership with Historic Environment Scotland.

Financial Results

In 2016, the Joint Committee implemented a Reserves Policy in line with recommendations from Audit Scotland. It was agreed that the adopted policy should be subject to an annual review. The purpose of the policy and the associated reviews is to build and maintain a sufficient and prudent level of financial reserves. Reviews are undertaken annually by the Service Manager, in conjunction with a Principal Finance Officer from Glasgow City Council, and are based on several factors, including projections of future income/expenditure, an analysis of key risks (including financial risks), the level of financial liabilities and the economic outlook. The most recent review, presented to the joint committee in March 2023, recommended a reserve level of £96,000.

The balance of usable reserves at 1 April 2023 was £157,225. In 2023/24 total expenditure was £188,259 (2022/23 - £182,113) and total income was £179,955 (2022/23 - £175,910) resulting in a deficit for the year of £8,305 compared to a £36,181 budgeted deficit. The balance of usable reserves at 31 March 2024 was £148,920. This represents 155% of the £96,000 reserve level recommended by the reserve policy review. The difference between the 2023/24 budgeted deficit and the actual 2023/24 year end deficit can be explained by a temporary arrangement reducing the number of hours worked by one of the employees.

Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts

1. The lead authority's responsibilities

The lead authority is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to ensure that the proper officer of the council has responsibility for the administration of those affairs (section 95 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973). In this council, that officer is the Executive Director of Finance.

- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

- Ensure the Annual Accounts are prepared in accordance with legislation (the Local Authority Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2014 and so far as is compatible with that legislation, in accordance with proper accounting practices (section 12 of the Local Government Scotland Act 2003); and

- Approve the Annual Accounts for signature.

These Annual Accounts will be considered by the Service before 31 August 2024 and submitted to the Service to be approved for signature no later than 30 September 2024.

2. The Executive Director of Finance responsibilities

The Executive Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the joint committee's Annual Accounts, in accordance with proper practices, as required by legislation and as set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing the Annual Accounts, the Executive Director of Finance has:

- Selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently,
- Made judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis,
- Complied with legislation; and
- Complied with the Code (in so far as it is compatible with legislation).

The Executive Director of Finance has also:

- Kept adequate accounting records, which were up to date; and
- Taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

I certify that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of West of Scotland Archaeology Service as at 31 March 2024 and the transactions for the year then ended.

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Martin Booth BA FCPFA MBA
Executive Director of Finance
24 June 2024

Movement in Reserves Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2024

The Code requires reserves to be summarised as usable and unusable. The balance in WoSAS is the sole useable reserve and represents the accumulated surplus of the organisation.

The balance on the fund stands at £148,920 as at 31 March 2024, a decrease of £8,305 from last year, due to the deficit on the provision of services in the year.

	Total Reserves £
Balance at 1 April 2022	**163,428**
Movement in reserves during 2022/23:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	(6,203)
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	**(6,203)**
Balance at 31 March 2023	**157,225**
Movement in reserves during 2023/24:	
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services	**(8,305)**
Other Comprehensive Income and (Expenditure)	0
Increase or (Decrease) in the year	**(8,305)**
Balance at 31 March 2024	**148,920**

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement for the Year ended 31 March 2024

2022/23 Net Exp. £		Note	2023/24 Net Expenditure £
182,113	Gross expenditure	3	188,259
(173,757)	Gross income	3	(173,977)
8,356	**Cost of Services**		**14,283**
(2,153)	Interest and investment income	7	(5,978)
(2,153)	**Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure**		**(5,978)**
6,203	**(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services**		**8,305**
0	**Other Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure**		**0**
6,203	**Total Comprehensive (Income) and Expenditure**		**8,305**

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – shows income and expenditure incurred in the year relating to the provision of WOSAS and other unrealised gains and losses. In total, this reflects the movement in the overall WOSAS reserves shown in the Balance Sheet.

Cash Flow Statement for the year ended 31 March 2024

31 March 23 £	Revenue Activities	31 March 24 £
6,203	(Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services	8,305
	Adjustments for non-cash items:	
(13,186)	Increase/(decrease) in debtors	(8,397)
6,983	(Increase)/decrease in creditors	92
0	**Net cash (inflow)/outflow from activities**	**0**
0	**Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period**	**0**
0	**Cash and cash equivalents and the end of the reporting period**	**0**

Cash Flow Statement – details the changes in cash and cash equivalents of WOSAS.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

31 March 23 £		Note	31 March 24 £
159,815	Net short-term debtors	**8**	151,418
162,088	**Current Assets**		**151,418**
(2,590)	Short-term creditors	**9**	(2,498)
(2,590)	**Current Liabilities**		**(2,498)**
157,225	**Net Assets / (Liabilities)**		**148,920**
157,225	Usable Reserves		148,920
0	Unusable Reserves		0
157,225	**Total Reserves**		**148,920**

Balance Sheet – represents the value of the assets and liabilities of WOSAS as at 31 March 2024. The net assets (assets less liabilities) are matched by the total Usable and Unusable Reserves.

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Martin Booth BA FCPFA MBA

Executive Director of Finance

24 June 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

The main objective of these notes is to provide further explanation for certain aspects of the core Financial Statements.

1. Statement of accounting policies

The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 have been compiled on the basis of recommendations made by the Local Authority (Scotland) Accounts Advisory Committee (LASAAC) and have been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 (the Code). The Code is based on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) with interpretation appropriate to the public sector. The statements are designed to give a 'true and fair view' of the financial performance and position of the Service.

The accounting concepts of materiality, accruals, going concern and primacy of legislative requirements have been considered in the application of accounting policies. In this regard the materiality concept means that information is included where the information is of such significance as to justify its inclusion. The accruals concept requires the non-cash effects of transactions to be included in the financial statement for the year in which they occur, not in the period in which the cash is paid or received. The going concern concept assumes that the Service will not significantly curtail the scale of its operation. Wherever accounting principles and legislative requirements are in conflict, the latter shall apply.

Income

Income includes all sums due in respect of subscriptions from member authorities and other organisations, fees and charges, and interest earned on fund balances for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Income includes all sums owed to the joint committee for the year of account, regardless of when cash payments are received. Specifically:

- Revenue from the sale of goods is recognised when the joint committee transfers the significant risks and rewards of ownership to the purchaser, provided it is probable that economic benefits or service potential associated with the transaction will flow to the Joint Committee.

- Revenue from the provision of services is recognised when the joint committee can reliably measure 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 Joint Committee.

- When revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor for the relevant amount will be recorded in the Balance Sheet.

- When it is probable that debts will remain unsettled, an impairment loss is recognised for bad and doubtful debtors within the Cost of Services.

The short-term debtors figure for 2023/24 included debtors impairments of £600 (2022/23 - £nil).

Short-term debtors have been recognised in the accounts at the transaction price as it has been determined that they do not contain a significant financing component as defined by IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments.

Supplies of goods and services

Suppliers' invoices received up to 31 March 2024 are included, together with the specific accrual of invoices received after that date for material amounts, provided the goods or services were received in 2023/24.

Short-term creditors have been recognised in the accounts at the transaction price as it has been determined that they do not contain a significant financing component as defined by IFRS 9 – Financial Instruments.

Salaries

Salaries earned to 31 March 2024 are included in the accounts for 2023/24 irrespective of when the actual payments were made.

Material items

When items of income and expenditure 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 the understanding of the service's financial performance.

Events after the balance sheet date

Events after the balance sheet date are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the reporting period and the date when the statement of accounts is authorised for issue. Two types of events may be identified:

Those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the Financial Statements are adjusted to reflect such events; and

Those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the Financial Statements are not adjusted to reflect such events, but where this would have a material effect, the nature and estimated financial impact of such events is disclosed in the notes.

Prior period adjustments, changes in accounting policies and estimates

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting policy are only made when required by proper accounting practice or to provide more reliable or relevant information on the joint committee's financial position. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period, as if the new policy had always been applied. Changes

in accounting estimation techniques are applied in the current and future years and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

2. New standards issued but not yet adopted

The Code requires the disclosure of information relating to the impact of an accounting change that will be required by a new standard that has been issued but not yet adopted. This applies to the adoption of the following new or amended standards within the 2023/24 Code:

- Amendments to IAS1 Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current
- Amendments to IAS1 Non-current Liabilities with Covenants
- Amendments to IAS12 International Tax Reform: Pillar Two Model Rules
- Amendments to IAS7 and IFRS7 Supplier Financing Arrangements
- Implementation of and amendments to IFRS 16 Leases

The Code requires implementation from 1 April 2024 therefore there is no impact on the 2023/24 annual accounts.

Overall, these new or amended standards are not expected to have a significant impact on the Annual Accounts.

3. Income and expenditure statement

The table below provides a detailed breakdown of income and expenditure of the Service during 2023/24.

2022/23 Net Exp. £		Note	2023/24 Net Exp. £
	Income		
(138,090)	Contributions from participating local authorities	**4**	(138,090)
(35,667)	Fees and charges	**6**	(35,887)
(2,153)	Interest on balances	**7**	(5,978)
(175,910)	**Total income**		**(179,955)**
	Expenditure		
169,153	Employee costs	**5**	175,297
200	Fees and subscriptions		200
3,000	IT maintenance	**13**	3,000
0	Purchase of services		75
7,370	Rents	**11**	7,390
2,390	Audit fee	**12**	2,298
182,113	**Total expenditure**		**188,259**
6,203	(Surplus) or deficit for year		8,305
(163,428)	(Surplus) brought forward		(157,225)
(157,225)	**Accumulated (surplus) or deficit**		**(148,920)**

4. Local authority subscriptions

The majority of income received by WOSAS is derived from contributions received from the local authorities who are members of the Service.

A detailed breakdown of each member's contribution to the Service is shown in the table below:

Annual Subscription 2022/23 £	Local Authority	Annual Subscription 2023/24 £
(22,971)	Argyll and Bute Council	(22,971)
(8,647)	Glasgow City Council	(8,647)
(12,691)	East Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(7,619)	East Renfrewshire Council	(7,619)
(12,691)	North Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(12,691)	Renfrewshire Council	(12,691)
(12,691)	South Ayrshire Council	(12,691)
(17,784)	South Lanarkshire Council	(17,784)
(7,619)	West Dunbartonshire Council	(7,619)
(12,691)	West Lothian Council	(12,691)
(9,995)	East Dunbartonshire Council	(9,995)
(138,090)	**Total**	**(138,090)**

Note: - The contribution received from Glasgow City Council is net of an agreed lead authority administrative charge of £5,000.

5. Employee benefits

The staff members of the Service are Glasgow City Council employees and the council is an admitted body of the Strathclyde Pension Fund.

In accordance with International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS 19) – Employee Benefits, the council is required to disclose certain information concerning assets, liabilities, income and expenditure, of the pension scheme. The Service's staff pension costs are reflected in the figures disclosed in Glasgow City Council's financial statements.

The Code requires that employee benefits are recognised in the accounts when they are earned rather than when they are paid. As a result, there is a requirement to consider notional entitlements to annual leave earned but not taken as at 31 March. The employees working on the Service's activities are contracted to Glasgow City Council and therefore any notional liability has been included within the accounts of Glasgow City Council who holds the contract of employment.

6. Fees and Charges

The £35,887 total for fees and charges includes £16,667 for an archeological advice service provided to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.

7. Interest

The Interest rate applied is 3.92% and is calculated on an annual basis at 31 March using an average of the Base Rate interest over the year, the rate Glasgow City Council have paid to borrow monies throughout the year and the rate Glasgow City Council have received when lending throughout the year.

8. Short-term debtors

The net short-term debtors figure for 2023/24 of £151,418 (2022/23 £159,815) comprises the following:

31 March 2023	Short-term debtors	31 March 2024
£		£
37,030	Balance held by Glasgow City Council on behalf of WOSAS	72,502
	Outstanding payments from: -	
3,536	Pay accrual	2,862
12,691	East Ayrshire Council	0
0	North Ayrshire Council	12,691
25,382	South Ayrshire Council	12,691
12,691	Renfrewshire Council	12,691
12,691	West Lothian Council	0
9,995	East Dunbartonshire Council	9,995
8,294	Glasgow City Council contribution	0
7,619	West Dunbartonshire Council	0
7,619	East Renfrewshire Council	7,619
16,667	Loch Lomond and the Trossachs	16,667
5,600	Other outstanding payments	3,700
159,815	**Total sundry debtors**	**151,418**

9. Short-term creditors

The short-term creditors figure for 2023/24 of £2,498 (2022/23 £2,590) comprises the following: -

31 March 2023 £	Short-term creditors	31 March 2024 £
2,390	Accrued audit fees	2,298
200	Subscription	200
2,590	**Total sundry creditors**	**2,498**

10. Remuneration Report

The prior year accounts have been restated to take account of updates required for the Remuneration disclosure to reflect key management personnel remuneration and the number of employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration during the year.

WOSAS does not directly employee any members of staff or key management personnel, with all services being provided by staff of the Member Authorities. A remuneration disclosure in respect of elected members and chief officers of the Councils, including those with authority and responsibility for WOSAS, are included in the Annual Accounts of each of the Member Authorities.

The number of other employees receiving more than £50,000 remuneration for the year are also included in similar Glasgow City Council disclosures as follows:

2022-23 Number of Employees (restated)	Senior Employee/Full Time Equivalent	2023-24 Number of Employees
1	£50,000 - £54,999	0
0	£55,000 - £59,999	1
1	**Total employees**	**1**

11. Related Parties

Related parties are organisations that the joint committee can control or who can control or influence the joint committee. WOSAS is a joint committee comprised of eleven member authorities, with Glasgow City Council holding the role of lead authority.

Related party transactions during the year and balances at 31 March 2024 are shown in the table below:

2022/23 Net Exp/(Inc) (Restated) £	*Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2023 (Restated) £*	Related Party transactions and balances	2023/24 Exp £	2023/24 Inc £	Debtor/(Creditor) at 31 March 2024 £
		Related bodies			
(22,971)	0	Argyll & Bute Council	0	(22,971)	0
1723	45,324	Glasgow City Council	10,390	(8,647)	72,502
(12,691)	12,691	East Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	0
(9,995)	9,995	East Dunbartonshire Council	0	(9,995)	9,995
(7,619)	7,619	East Renfrewshire Council	0	(7,619)	7,619
(12,691)	0	North Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(12,691)	12,691	Renfrewshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(12,691)	25,382	South Ayrshire Council	0	(12,691)	12,691
(17,784)	0	South Lanarkshire Council	0	(17,784)	0
(7,619)	7,619	West Dunbartonshire	0	(7,619)	0
(12,691)	12,691	West Lothian Council	0	(12,691)	0
(138,090)	**134,012**	**Totals**	**10,390**	**(138,090)**	**128,189**

12. Auditor remuneration

WOSAS incurred fees of £2,298 for the statutory inspection of the financial statements by EY. The comparable figure for 2022/23 was £2,390. Fees payable in respect of other services provided by the appointed auditor were £nil (2022/23 £nil).

13. IT Maintenance

IT provision is through a service level agreement between the Service and Glasgow City Council valued at £3,000 for 2023/24 (2022/23 £3,000).

14. Events after the balance sheet date

There were no material events between 31 March 2024 and the date of signing that require to be reflected in the Financial Statements.

Annual Governance Statement

1. Scope of responsibility

The West of Scotland Archaeology Service Joint Committee 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. Under the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, the Joint Committee also has a statutory duty to make arrangements to secure best value, which is to ensure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, and to ensure public funds and assets are used economically, efficiently and effectively.

In discharging these responsibilities, elected members and senior officers must ensure proper arrangements for the governance of the Service's affairs and facilitate the effective exercise of its functions, which includes the management of risk and stewardship of the resources at its disposal.

WOSAS's financial management arrangements complies with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit and the role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016) by virtue of the adoption by Glasgow City Council of a Local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

The Code is regularly reviewed and evidences the Council's commitment to achieving good governance and demonstrates how it complies with recommended standards.

The Joint Committee relies on the Council which has embedded a system of risk management and internal control. While providing reasonable assurance, these systems cannot, however, provide absolute assurance or certainty in entirely eliminating the risk of the Council failing to achieve its aims and objectives; incurring material errors; losses; fraud or breaches of laws and regulations.

2. The Joint Committee's Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Joint Committee is directed and controlled. Through the framework it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Joint Committee to monitor the achievement of its objectives against its plans and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services. The governance framework will be continually updated to reflect best practice, new legislative requirements and the expectations of stakeholders.

The Joint Committee has responsibility for ensuring the continuing effectiveness of its governance framework and system of internal control. The main features of the Joint Committee's governance arrangements are as follows:

- A Minute of Agreement between the member councils of WOSAS
- The Joint Committee of councillors from the member authorities is supported by a Steering Group of officers from the authorities' planning services.
- Clearly defined Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations
- Public performance reporting through the Annual Report
- Regular meetings of the WOSAS Officer Steering Group and the Joint Committee
- A budget setting process which includes the agreed local authority and other bodies contributions to the annual running costs of the organisation
- The regulation of employee matters through the Council's Code of Conduct for employees

3. Review of Effectiveness

The Council's governance arrangements set out above operated across 2023/24 and were regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The governance framework is continually reviewed to reflect best practice, new legislative requirements and the expectations of stakeholders. The effectiveness of the framework, including the system of internal control, is considered at least annually and is informed by:

(a) The work of the members of the Corporate Management Team, including statutory officers, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment. Throughout 2023/24, arrangements continued to operate to ensure that officers were clear on their role and responsibilities and that officers were compliant with the CIPFA Statements on "The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government" and "The Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations 2019".

(b) Oversight by the Director of Legal and Administrative Services, who was the Council's Monitoring Officer for 2023/24.

(c) The Head of Audit and Inspection's annual report and the work of the Internal Audit section. The latest external quality review of the section was completed in April 2021 and reported to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 5 May 2021. This report concluded that the section conforms with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 (PSIAS). The Internal Audit section continues to hold BSi quality accreditation under ISO9001:2015 and Audit Scotland continue to use the work of the section in the execution of their annual audit plan. Internal Audit continue to present a register of all outstanding audit recommendations to the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis. The Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24 was approved by the Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 22 March 2023 with a subsequent update on 20 March 2024.

(d) Observations made by external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

(e) The completion of a self-assessment questionnaire by Service Directors and Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates. This questionnaire is aligned to the principles contained in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, and requires assessments to be made of the extent to which arrangements within each Service/organisation comply with these principles. The responses to the questionnaires are confirmed on a sample basis by Internal Audit, as part of a rolling programme of corporate governance reviews.

(f) The completion of signed statements of internal control by all Service Directors and the Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates. Such statements were received for 2023/24, declaring that "There are, in my opinion, no significant matters that require to be raised in this Certificate, which is provided to support Glasgow City Council's Statement of Internal Control for the financial year 2023/24, as it is my opinion that the procedures which have been designed to ensure proper governance and financial control are operating adequately".

(g) The exercising, by the two Scrutiny Committees of respective remits including scrutiny of the performance of Services, subsidiaries and relevant associates, including financial management, statutory and other performance, and outcomes set through the GCPP Community Plan, which are relevant to partnership working and monitoring internal financial control, corporate risk management and corporate governance, and receiving and considering summaries of internal and external audit reports. In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, all Committees are required to undertake an annual evaluation of effectiveness. An independent assessment of each Council Committee was undertaken during 2023/24.

(h) The CIPFA Financial Management Code provides guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. By complying with the principles and standards within the code authorities will be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability. Council management undertook a self-assessment against the Financial Management Code 2023/24, which confirmed overall compliance with the Code's requirements.

Senior officers have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by Internal and External Audit and plans to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the systems are in place.

4. Governance Developments and Future Activity

In June 2021, Audit Scotland and the Accounts Commission published a revised Code of Audit Practice. The Code explains the revised arrangements for the audit of Best Value, this is now based on an annual thematic

report. Ernst and Young (EY) have been appointed by the Accounts Commission as external auditor of Glasgow City Council for financial years 2022/23 to 2026/27, this includes all Best Value Audits during this period.

For the 2022/23 financial year, EY completed the Best Value Audit on the theme of 'Leadership of the development of the new local strategic priorities by Councils following the local government elections in May 2022', the audit specifically focussed on:

- The clarity of the council's vision and priorities
- How effectively community views have been reflected
- The alignment of financial, workforce, asset and digital plans
- How the priorities reflect the need to reduce inequalities and climate change.

The Council engaged fully with EY throughout the audit process. The best value audit report, recommendations and management responses contained within have been agreed by officers as factually correct and achievable for implementation. An action plan for the recommendations has been agreed, with full implementation expected by 31 March 2025.

For the 2023/24 financial year, the theme for Best Value auditing is 'Workforce Innovation', specifically focussing on:

- How effectively the Council's workforce plans are integrated with its strategic plans and priorities
- How effectively the council is using hybrid and remote working and other innovative working practices to achieve service and staff benefits
- What innovative practices the council is using to develop its future workforce capacity
- How effectively the council is measuring the impact of its workforce planning

The council will fully engage with EY throughout the audit process, which is scheduled to be through the Summer of 2024.

5. Update on significant governance issues previously reported

ICT Service and Security

The 2021/22 Annual Governance Statement included the unsatisfactory audit opinion relating to ICT security and service delivered via the Council's provider. The improvements required are being progressed by the Council through an agreed action plan. Whilst a number of higher risk areas are now mostly mitigated, there are other areas where remediation is still ongoing.

Therefore the Council Group remained exposed to significant risk in this area during 2023/24. The Council's Future of ICT project, and the planned recruitment of a Cyber Security Manager, will seek to address remaining issues. The Council's Future of ICT project, and the planned recruitment of a Cyber Security Manager, will seek to address remaining issues.

SAP P1 Incident

In January 2023, a failed update to the Council's SAP ERP system resulted in a significant period of downtime for this key system, impacting Accounts Payable/Receivable, Payroll, Treasury and Banking, and Financial Ledger reporting. This also impacted on the ability to report financial performance between January and March 2023. The system was fully functional for 2023/24 and the 2022/23 outturn position was verified and reported following additional assurance activity over transactions occurring in the affected period. A lessons learned exercise has been conducted by the Council and its ICT provider. Internal Audit has completed a review of the actions undertaken following the incident to mitigate the risk of a reoccurrence. Based on the audit work carried out a reasonable level of assurance can be placed upon the control environment relating to the lessons learned process. However, two recommendations have been agreed with management and these will be monitored for completion during 2024/25.

Prior Year Audit Recommendations:

In previous years, WoSAS received several external audit recommendations highlighting the requirement to update the key strategic documents which underpin the governance of the Joint Committee.

Such documents include the Minute of Agreement, Business Plan, Service Level Agreements, and the ICT Service Level Agreement. It was also highlighted that some of the information on the WoSAS website had not been updated in several years.

At 31st March 2024, WoSAS had yet to make significant progress in the implementation of these recommendations. One factor that has impacted progress is the ongoing review of the Council's pay and grading system, which is likely to have a significant impact on the overall cost of service delivery by WoSAS. Work is ongoing to ensure that revised strategic documents can be developed as soon as the revised pay scales have been formally implemented by the Council.

6. Significant Governance Issues

Legal Documentation

In 2023/24, it was identified that the original legal agreements between the Council, as the host authority, and the relevant member authorities, had been destroyed. The lack of formal documentation to govern these relationships poses a significant strategic risk to WoSAS, and this

underscores the critical need to develop revised agreements to ensure the continuity of service delivery.

7. Internal Audit Opinion

The Council has a system of internal control designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. Internal controls cannot eliminate the risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

Based on the audit work undertaken, the assurances provided by Service Directors and Managing Directors/Chief Executives of subsidiaries and relevant associates, and noting the issues outlined at Section 3 above, it is the Head of Audit and Inspection's opinion that limited assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance and control environment which operated during 2023/24 in the council and its subsidiaries and relevant associates

8. Certification

It is our opinion that limited assurance can be placed upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of governance and internal control that operate in Glasgow City Council and its subsidiaries and relevant associates. The self-assessments, the statements of internal control signed by Service Directors and Managing Directors (of subsidiaries and relevant associates) and the work undertaken by Internal Audit has shown that, with the exception of those matters listed above, the arrangements in place are operating as planned. However, improvements are specifically required in relation to ICT services and resilience, and governance arrangements at City Building. Work is underway to address these matters and officers will monitor and report on their implementation.

We will continue to review and enhance, as necessary, our governance arrangements.