

Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: 12th September 2024

Committee:
West Mercia Supplies Pensions Joint Committee

Date: Friday, 20 September 2024
Time: 10.00 am
Venue: Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting. The Agenda is attached

There will be some access to the meeting room for members of the press and public, but this will be limited. If you wish to attend the meeting please email democracy@shropshire.gov.uk to check that a seat will be available for you.

Please click [here](#) to view the livestream of the meeting on the date and time stated on the agenda

The recording of the event will also be made available shortly after the meeting on the Shropshire Council Youtube Channel [Here](#)

Tim Collard
Assistant Director - Legal and Governance

Members of West Mercia Supplies Pensions Joint Committee

Herefordshire Council	Councillors Graham Biggs & Peter Stoddart
Shropshire Council	Councillors Gwilym Butler & Dean Carroll
Telford & Wrekin Council	Councillors Zona Hannington & Ollie Vickers
Worcestershire County Council	Councillors Adam Kent & David Ross

Your Committee Officer is:

Shelley Davies Committee Officer
Tel: 01743 257718
Email: Shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Election of Chairman

To elect a Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies

To receive apologies for absence.

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

To appoint a Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2023.

5 Public Questions

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The deadline for this meeting is 12.00 p.m. on Monday 16th September 2024.

6 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must declare their disclosable pecuniary interests and other registrable or non-registrable interests in any matter being considered at the meeting as set out in Appendix B of the Members' Code of Conduct and consider if they should leave the room prior to the item being considered. Further advice can be sought from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

7 Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 (Pages 5 - 36)

Report of the Treasurer
Contact: James Walton

8 Pensions Liability Charges 2024/25 (Pages 37 - 44)

Report of the Treasurer
Contact: James Walton

9 Policy Decisions 2025/26 (Pages 45 - 50)

Report of the Treasurer
Contact: James Walton

10 Scheme of Delegations to the Treasurer (Pages 51 - 54)

Report of Treasurer
Contact: James Walton

11 Date of Next Meeting

To agree the date of the next meeting.

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Committee and Date

West Mercia Supplies Pensions
Joint Committee

20th September 2024

WEST MERCIA SUPPLIES PENSIONS JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023

**In the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury,
Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

10.00 - 10.21 am

Responsible Officer: Emily Marshall

Email: Shelley.davies@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257717

Present

Councillors Gwilym Butler and Adrian Hardman

1 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Butler be elected Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Carter, N England, A Kent, P Stoddart and G Biggs.

3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Hardman be appointed Vice-Chairman for the ensuing year.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27th September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

5 Public Questions

There were no public questions or petitions received.

6 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None received.

7 Statement of Accounts 2022/23 and Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

The Treasurer presented the report which outlined the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 and the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23.

RESOLVED:

1. That the finalised Statement of Accounts 2022/23 to be signed by the Chairman and the Treasurer be approved.
2. That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 be approved.

8 Pensions Liability Charges 2023/2024

The Treasurer presented the report, detailing Pension Liability Charges 2023/2024 (copy attached to the signed minutes).

Councillor Hardman on behalf of the Joint Committee expressed his gratitude on behalf of the Joint Committee, to the treasurer and his team for their swift and prudent approach.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Pension Liability charges for 2023/24 as set out in section 7 of the Treasurers report, in line with the policy approach as approved by Joint Committee in the Policy decisions 2023/24 report 27th September 2022, be approved.
2. That the amounts due to be paid by each Member Authority in respect of the Member Authority Liability Charges set out in section 8 of the Treasurers Report, and the payment mechanism set out in section 9 of the Treasurers Report be approved.

9 Policy Decisions 2024/25

The Treasurer, presented the report, Policy Decisions 2024/25, (copy attached to the signed minutes).

RESOLVED:

That the policy under which Compensatory Added Years, Lead Authority Costs and Other Costs are calculated and charged as set out in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 respectively, of the Treasurers Report be approved.

10 Scheme of Delegations to the Treasurer

The Treasurer, presented the report, outlining Scheme of Delegations to Treasurer, (copy attached to the signed minutes).

RESOLVED:

That the scheme of Delegations attached at Appendix A of the Treasurers Report be approved.

11 Date of Next Meeting

The Chairman confirmed that the next meeting would take place in September 2024, date to be confirmed.

Signed (Chairman)

Date:

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West Mercia Supplies
(Pensions)

Committee and Date

WMS Pension Joint Committee

20 September 2024

Item

7

Public

Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

Responsible Officer James Walton – Treasurer

e-mail: james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258915

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to present to the Joint Committee the Statement of Accounts 2023/24 and the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Joint Committee is asked to:

a) To consider the finalised Statement of Accounts 2023/24 to be signed by the Chairman and the Treasurer

b) To consider the Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

REPORT

3 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Details for the potential risks affecting the balances and financial health of WMS are considered within the statement of Accounts.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report considers the overall financial position of WMS in the form of the Statement of Accounts, the accounts consider the level of assets controlled by WMS and the level of balances held.

5 Background

- 5.1 The Joint Committee is required to approve the annual Statement of Accounts by the 30th September. The Statement of Accounts are contained in Appendix 1.

5.2 The Statement of Accounts is accompanied by WMS's Annual Governance Statement 2023/24, which details processes and procedures in place to enable WMS to carry out its' functions effectively. See Appendix 2

6 Statement of Accounts

6.1 The Statement of Accounts shows an Income & Expenditure balance of £0.687m (2022/23 £4.045m). The balance sheet shows total reserves of £2.156m which is a decrease from 2022/23 of £0.687m, due to a reduction in the pension reserve.

6.2 The Balance Sheet shows a debtor balance of £0.001m, this relates to lead authority reconciliation balance.

6.3 The Balance Sheet shows a Creditor balance of £0.269m which relates to the pension lump sum deficit payment in advance to be carried forward to 2024/25.

6.2 The annual Statement of Accounts 2023/24 will be published on the Shropshire Council website following approval by the Joint Committee

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Member Chair of the WMS Pension Joint Committee
Appendices Appendix 1 - Statement of accounts Appendix 2 - Annual Governance Statement



**WEST MERCIA SUPPLIES (Pensions)
JOINT COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR
ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024**

WEST MERCIA SUPPLIES (Pensions) JOINT COMMITTEE

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WEST MERCIA SUPPLIES (Pensions) JOINT COMMITTEE

FINANCIAL SUMMARY **FOR THE YEAR 2023/24**

Introduction

This document is the Statement of Accounts for West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee. It covers the financial year 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 and shows the organisation's financial position at the year end together with the trading income and expenditure figures.

The Statements

Narrative Report

This provides an effective guide to the most significant matters reported in the accounts, including an explanation of the financial position and details the performance during the financial year.

Statement of Responsibilities and Joint Committee Approval

This section deals with the financial responsibilities of the Joint Committee and the Treasurer to the Joint Committee and confirms the date when the Joint Committee approved the accounts.

Movement in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement

This account summarises the annual income and expenditure of the trading operations to show the organisation's net surplus for the year.

Balance Sheet

This sets out the financial position of the Joint Committee as at the year end 31 March 2024.

Narrative report 2023/24

West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee was set up from 1st April 2020 by the Executives of the four Member Authorities, Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council.

West Mercia Energy (Pensions) is an employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund, which holds the pension deficit liability in relation to former WMS employees.

Management by the Joint Committee enables the pensions deficit to remain the joint responsibility of the four Member Authorities in a reasonably cost-effective way without the transfer of risk between any parties.

The West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee is responsible for the administration and approval of the West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) liability charges. This is defined as the total annual charge relating to all financial transactions, payments and charges relating to West Mercia Supplies (Pensions).

The Pension liability transferred at 1st April 2021 was £6.928m, Shropshire County Pension Fund actuary, Mercer Ltd advised that the balance at 31st March 2024 was £2.156m (31st March 2023 £2.843m), which is a decrease of £0.687m during 2023/24.

Further Information

For further information about the Joint Committee's Statement of Accounts, please contact:

James Walton, S151 Officer
Shropshire Council
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND
Tel 0345 678 9000

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES AND JOINT COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Responsibilities of West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee

West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee 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 organisation, that officer is the Treasurer to the Joint Committee. Day to day financial management is the responsibility of the Director. The Director is also responsible for:
 - i. keeping proper accounting records, which are up to date.
 - ii. taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets.
- to approve the Statement of Accounts.

Responsibilities of the Treasurer to the Joint Committee

The Treasurer to the Joint Committee is responsible for the preparation of West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee Statement of Accounts which, in terms of the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom ('the Code'), is required to provide a true and fair view of the financial position of the organisation at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024.

In preparing this Statement of Accounts the Treasurer to the Joint Committee has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;
- complied with the Code;
- applied the concept of 'going concern' by assuming that Joint Committee's services will continue to operate for the foreseeable future.

The Treasurer to the Joint Committee has also to:

- ensure proper accounting records are kept, which are up to date;
- take reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Treasurer to the Joint Committee

I certify that the Committee's Statement of Accounts provides a true and fair view of the financial position of the West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee as at 31 March 2024 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024.

James Walton

**Executive Director of Resources for Shropshire Council
Treasurer to West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee**

Joint Committee Approval

I certify that the West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee approved the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Councillor Gwilym Butler

Chairman of the West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee

Date:

Movements in Reserves Statement

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee. The gain or (loss) for the year shows the true economic cost of the Joint Committee's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT			
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024			
	General fund	Pensions reserve	Total reserves
		Note 10	
	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2023	-	2,843	2,843
Total comprehensive income & expenditure	(687)	-	(687)
Transfer to/from Reserves	687	(687)	-
Increase/decrease in year	-	(687)	(687)
Balance at 31 March 2024	-	2,156	2,156

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT			
AS AT 31 MARCH 2023			
	General fund	Pensions reserve	Total reserves
		Note 10	
	£000	£000	£000
Balance at 31 March 2022	-	6,888	6,888
Total comprehensive income & expenditure	(4,045)	-	(4,045)
Transfer to/from Reserves	4,045	(4,045)	-
Increase/decrease in year	-	(4,045)	(4,045)
Balance at 31 March 2023	-	2,843	2,843

Pensions Reserve

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Joint Committee. The gain or (loss) for the year shows the true economic cost of the Joint Committee's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

	2023/24	2023/24	2022/23
		£	£
INCOME			
Pension costs recharges	(169,684)		(209,108)
Admin Charges	<u>(13,350)</u>		<u>(4,173)</u>
Total Income		(183,034)	(213,281)
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Pension Employer Costs	135,200		177,566
Pension Fund Compensation	33,670		31,185
Less Employer Costs	<u>(169,000)</u>		<u>(209,000)</u>
	(130)		(249)
Actuary Costs	1,030		1,080
Pension Admin Costs	13,134		3,450
Total Operating Expenses		14,034	4,281
(SURPLUS)/DEFICIT ON SERVICES		<u>(169,000)</u>	<u>(209,000)</u>
Financing and investment income and expenditure		119,000	187,000
NET OPERATING (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT		<u>(50,000)</u>	<u>(22,000)</u>
Remeasurement		(637,000)	(4,023,000)
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		(687,000)	(4,045,000)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION				
AS AT 31 MARCH 2024				
31 March 2023		31 March 2024		Notes
£		£	£	
<u>1,014</u>	Debtors	<u>826</u>		
1,014	Current assets		826	6
<u>(1,014)</u>	Creditors	<u>(269,426)</u>		
(1,014)	Current liabilities		(269,426)	7
<u>0</u>	Net current assets		<u>(268,000)</u>	
	<u>Other long term liabilities</u>			
(2,843,000)	Pensions Liabilities		(1,887,400)	8
(2,843,000)	Net liabilities		(2,156,000)	
	<u>Financed by:</u>			
2,843,000	Pension reserve		2,156,000	10
2,843,000	Total reserves		2,156,000	

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Accounting Policies

1.1 General Principles

This Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 summarises the Joint Committee's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at 31 March 2024. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code Board, as far as it is practicable and applicable to the Joint Committee, supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The nature of the Joint Committee as a purchasing consortium means that full compliance is not always possible. The only departure relates to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement layout which shows the income first and then all the expenditure grouped by type of expense. This differs from Local Authority Accounting, but this layout does allow a reader to interpret the statement in relation to the industry the Joint Committee operates in.

1.2 Concepts

The Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with all prevailing concepts of accrual and going concern together with relevance, reliability and comparability. The going concern concept assumes that the organisation will continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future.

1.3 Legislation

Where specific legislative requirements regarding accounting treatment conflict with the Joint Committee's own accounting policies, legislative requirements shall apply.

1.4 Prior Period Adjustments, Changes in Accounting Policies and Estimates and Errors

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policy 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 changes provide more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the organisation's financial position or financial performance.

Where a change is made it is made 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 comparable amounts for the prior period.

1.5 Accruals of Expenditure and Income

Revenue and capital transactions are accounted for on an accruals basis in accordance with proper accounting practices. In particular:

- Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the performance obligations in the contract.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed.
- Expenses in relation to services received 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.

Sums owed to the Joint Committee as at 31 March are included as debtors. Sums still owed by the Joint Committee at 31 March are included as creditors.

1.6 Debtors and Creditors

Revenue and capital transactions are accounted for on an accruals basis and 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.

Revenue from contracts with service recipients, whether for services or the provision of goods, is recognised when (or as) the goods or services are transferred to the service recipient in accordance with the obligations in the contract or transfer of economic benefits.

1.7 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), and
- fair value through other comprehensive income (FVOCI)

The Joint Committee's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows i.e. payments of interest and principal. Most of the Joint Committee's 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.

Financial Assets Measured at Fair Value through Profit and Loss

These are financial assets in the form of loans and receivables. These are assets that have fixed or determinable payments but are not quoted in an active market. The loans and receivables are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost.

Financial assets that are measured at FVPL are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Joint Committee 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.

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

Expected Credit Loss Model

The Joint Committee recognises expected credit losses on all of its financial assets held at amortised cost (or where relevant FVOCI), either on a 12-month or lifetime basis. The expected credit loss model also applies to lease receivables and contract assets. Only lifetime losses are recognised for trade receivables (debtors) held by the Joint Committee.

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

1.8 Financial Liabilities

Financial liabilities are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to 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.

1.9 Reserves**General Fund Balance**

The Balance Sheet includes a sum for the General Fund Balance. This shows the total unused accumulated net surplus for the Joint Committee carried forward to 2024/25.

Pensions Reserve

The Pensions Reserve represents the difference between the actuarially calculated value of the pension fund assets and the present value of the scheme liabilities.

1.10 Employee Benefits

The accounting policy relating to the treatment of benefits payable during employment and post-employment benefits is consistent with IAS 19 Employee Benefits.

Benefits Payable During Employment

Where the accumulating short-term absences (e.g. annual leave and flexi time earned by employees but not taken at 31st March) are not material, these are not accrued for in the accounts.

Post-Employment Benefits

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Joint Committee offers retirement benefits. These benefits will not be payable until retirement, but the Joint Committee has a commitment to make payments that need to be disclosed at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The Joint Committee participates in the Shropshire County Pension Fund, which is a funded Defined Benefit scheme.

The liabilities of the Pension Fund attributable to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the project 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 projected warnings for current employees.

Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of 4.9% (based on the indicative rate of return on high quality corporate bonds of appropriate duration).

The assets of Shropshire County Pension Fund attributable to the Joint Committee are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:

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

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

- Service cost comprising:
 - 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 service expenditure
 - past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the Surplus or Deficit on Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement
 - net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

- Remeasurements comprising:
 - The return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
 - 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 – charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure
- Contributions paid to the Shropshire County 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, the General Fund Balance is to be charged with the amount payable by the Joint Committee 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 transfers 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.

1.11 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 can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period - the Statement of Accounts is adjusted to reflect such events;
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after 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.

There were no other events after the Balance Sheet date which need to be considered.

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 (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. This applies to the adoption of the following new or amended standards within the 2024/25 Code:

- IFRS 16 Leases issued in January 2016 (but only for those authorities that have not decided to voluntarily implement IFRS 16 in the 2023/24 year).
- Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1) issued in January 2020. The amendments:
 - specify that an entity's right to defer settlement must exist at the end of the reporting period
 - clarify that classification is unaffected by management's intentions or expectations about whether the entity will exercise its right to defer settlement
 - clarify how lending conditions affect classification, and
 - clarify requirements for classifying liabilities an entity will or may settle by issuing its own equity instruments.
- Lease Liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16) issued in September 2022. The amendments to IFRS 16 add subsequent measurement requirements for sale and leaseback transactions.
- Non-current Liabilities with Covenants (Amendments to IAS 1) issued in October 2022. The amendments improved the information an entity provides when its right to defer settlement of a liability for at least 12 months is subject to compliance with covenants.
- International Tax Reform: Pillar Two Model Rules (Amendments to IAS 12) issued in May 2023. Pillar Two applies to multinational groups with a minimum level of turnover. The amendments introduced:
 - a temporary exception to the requirements to recognise and disclose information about deferred tax assets and liabilities related to Pillar Two income taxes, and
 - targeted disclosure requirements for affected entities.
- Supplier Finance Arrangements (Amendments to IAS 7 and IFRS 7) issued in May 2023. The amendments require an entity to provide additional disclosures about its supplier finance arrangements. The IASB developed the new requirements to provide users of financial statements with information to enable them to:
 - assess how supplier finance arrangements affect an entity's liabilities and cash flows, and
 - understand the effect of supplier finance arrangements on an entity's exposure to liquidity risk and how the entity might be affected if the arrangements were no longer available to it.

These changes are not expected to have a material impact on the accounts

3. Critical judgements in applying accounting policies

We've generally complied with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code). In instances where code is not relevant, we would make a critical judgement.

In applying the accounting policies set out in Note 1, the Joint Committee has had to consider certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events.

There are no critical judgements made in the Statement of Accounts.

4. Assumptions Made About the Future and Other Major Sources of Estimation Uncertainty

The Statement of Accounts contains estimated figures based on assumptions made by the Joint Committee. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. There is, however, a risk that actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The items in the Joint Committee's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024 for which there is a risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming year are as follows:

Item	Uncertainties	Effect if Actual Results Differ From Assumptions
Pensions Liability	Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates, and expected returns on pension fund assets. A firm of consulting actuaries is engaged to provide expert advice about the assumptions to be applied.	The effects on the net pension liability of changes in individual assumptions can be measured. For instance, a one year increase in life expectancy would result in an increase in the pension liability of £289,000. However the assumptions interact in complex ways. During 2023/24 the actuaries advised that the net pensions liability had decreased by £687,000.

5. Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure

Interest and Investment Income

The Joint Committee's daily bank balances are invested with Shropshire Council balances. Interest is debited or credited to the Joint Committee because of the level of daily bank balances invested.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions	119,000	187,000
Total	119,000	187,000

6. Debtors – Receivable within one year

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Debtors – LA Authorities	826	1,014
Total	826	1,014

7. Creditors – Payable within one year

	2023/24	2022/23
	£	£
Creditors	(826)	(1,014)
Creditors- pension lump sum deficit payment	(268,600)	-
Total	(269,426)	(1,014)

8. Defined Benefits Pension Scheme

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Joint Committee offers retirement benefits. These benefits will not be payable until retirement but the Joint Committee has a commitment to make payments that need to be disclosed at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The Joint Committee participates in the Shropshire County Pension Fund, which is a funded Defined Benefit scheme. This means that retirement benefits are determined independently of the investments of the fund and the Joint Committee has an obligation to make contributions where assets are insufficient to meet employee benefits. The Joint Committee and its employees pay contributions into the fund which is calculated at a level intended to balance pension liabilities with investment assets. The Joint Committee recognises the cost of retirement benefits in the cost of employees when they are earned rather than when the benefits are paid as pensions.

The principal risks to the Joint Committee of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large-scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme.

The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the Movement in Reserves Statement during 2023/24.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
Operating Expense (Employees):		
• Current Service Cost	-	-
• Employers Contributions	(169)	(209)
Pension Impact (IAS19)	(169)	(209)
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure:		
• Net Interest Cost	119	187
Total Post-employment benefits contained within Net Operating Surplus	(50)	(22)
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure:		
Remeasurement of the net defined benefit liability comprising;		
Return on plan assets (excluding the amount included in the net interest expense)	(605)	310
Actuarial (gains) and losses arising on changes in Financial assumptions	(32)	(4,333)
Total Post-employment Benefits contained within the Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure	(637)	(4,023)
Net charge to Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(687)	(4,045)

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its employees, the Joint Committee offers retirement benefits. These benefits will not be payable until retirement but the Joint Committee has a commitment to make payments that need to be disclosed at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Movement in Reserves Statement:		
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with IAS19	(119)	(187)
Actual Amount Charged against the General Fund Balance for Pensions in the Year:		
• Employers contributions payable to the Scheme	169	209
Remeasurement of the net defined liabilities	637	4,023
Movement on Pensions Reserve	687	4,045

Pensions Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet

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

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Present Value of the defined benefit obligation	(11,025)	(11,281)
Fair Value of plan assets	9,138	8,438
Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	(1,887)	(2,843)

Reconciliation of the Movements in the Fair Value of the Scheme (Plan) Assets:

	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Opening fair value of scheme assets	8,438	8,755
Interest income	422	244
Remeasurement gain		
The return on Plan assets	605	(310)
Employer contributions	169	209
Benefits paid	(496)	(460)
At 31 March	9,138	8,438

Reconciliation of Present Value of the Scheme Liabilities (Defined Benefit Obligation):

	Funded Liabilities	
	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
At 1 April	(11,281)	(15,643)
Current Service Cost	-	-
Interest cost	(541)	(431)
Remeasurement (Liabilities)		
• Experience (gain)/Loss	(118)	(1,482)
• Actuarial (gains)/losses on financial assumptions	-	5,570
• (Gain)/Loss on demographic assumptions	150	245
Benefits paid	496	460
Lump sum deficit repayment	269	-
Business Combinations	-	-
	(11,025)	(11,281)

Pension Scheme Assets

	Fair value of Scheme Assets	
	2023/24	2022/23
	£000	£000
Cash & Cash Equivalents		
• Cash Accounts	128	40
Cash Total	128	40
Equity Instruments		
• UK Quoted	-	-
• Global quoted	5,167	4,321
Equity Instruments Total	5,167	4,321
Bonds		
• Overseas – Global active investment grade	954	
• Overseas – Global Fixed Income	-	514
• Overseas – Global Dynamic	379	567
• Other Class 2 – Absolute return bonds	-	500
Bonds Total	1,333	1,581
Property		
• Property Funds	322	280
Property Total	322	280
Private Equity	750	752
Private Equity Total	750	752
Other Investment Funds		
• Infrastructure	570	541
• Hedge Funds	385	555
• Property debt	93	118
• Private Debt	150	122
• Insurance Linked Securities	240	128
Other Total	1,438	1,464
Total assets	9,138	8,438

All scheme assets have quoted prices in active markets.

Discount Rate

The financial assumptions for IAS19 & FRS101/102 depend on market yields at the accounting date. Those yields vary between employers depending on the duration of their pension liabilities. The discount rate is based on a yield on corporate bonds of 4.9% p.a. at 31 March 2024.

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

The liabilities of the scheme 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 upon assumptions including mortality rates and salary levels.

The Pension Fund liabilities have been assessed by Mercer Human Resource Consulting Limited who are independent actuaries.

The significant assumptions used by the actuary have been:

	2023/24	2022/23
Mortality assumptions:		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners (years):		
Men	21.8	22.2
Women	24.2	24.5
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners (years):		
Men	23.1	23.5
Women	26.0	26.3
Rate of CPI Inflation	2.7%	2.7%
Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.95%	3.95%
Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.8%	2.8%
Rate for Discounting Scheme Liabilities	4.9%	4.9%

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.

Impact on the Defined Benefit Obligation in the Scheme*		
	Increase in Assumption	Decrease in assumption
	£000	£000
Longevity (increase or decrease in 1 year)	11,583	11,005
Rate of inflation (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	11,648	10,940
Rate of increase in salaries (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	11,294	11,294
Rate of increase in pensions (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	11,648	10,940
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities (increase or decrease by 0.1%)	10,618	11,970

*The current Defined Benefit Obligation as at 31st March 2024 is £11.294 million

Techniques Employed to Manage Risk

The Shropshire County Pension Fund does not hold an Asset & Liability Matching Strategy however does use other techniques to manage risks within the Fund. The Fund's primary long term risk is that the Fund's assets will fall short of its liabilities (i.e. promised benefits to pay members). Therefore the aim of investment risk management is to minimise the risk of an overall reduction in the value of the Fund and to maximise the opportunity for gains across the whole fund portfolio. The Fund achieves this through asset diversification to reduce exposure to market risk (price, currency and interest rate risk) and credit risk to an acceptable level. In addition, the Fund manages its liquidity risk to ensure there is sufficient liquidity to meet the Fund's forecast cash flows.

Impact on the Joint Committee's Cash Flows

The objectives of the scheme are to keep employers' contributions at as constant a rate as possible. The Lead Council has agreed a strategy with the scheme's actuary to achieve a funding level of 100% over the next 14 years. Funding levels are monitored on an annual basis. A triennial valuation was completed as at 31 March 2022. Revised contribution rates from the 2022 actuarial valuation took effect on 1st April 2023.

The Joint Committee anticipates to pay £178,000 expected contributions to the scheme in 2024/2025.

The weighted average duration of the defined benefit obligation for scheme members is 14 years, 2023/2024 (14 years, 2022/2023).

Early payment of 2 years LGPS deficit lump sum in April 2023

The pension scheme undertakes a valuation process which establishes each employer's deficit in respect of previous years and the period over which this is to be repaid. As the full amount is due now each employer pays the pension fund a rate of interest for allowing payment over a longer period to compensate the fund for investment opportunities which it has foregone. Paying in advance for this schedule enables a gross saving to be taken due to the avoidance of these interest payments. As a result of the early payment there is a difference between the value of the pensions reserve and the pensions liability held on the balance sheet as per the below table.

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
	£	£
Balance on pensions reserve	(2,156)	(2,843)
2024-26 Lump sum deficit repayment	269	-
Balance on Pensions Liability	(1,887)	(2,843)

9. Reserves

An analysis of the reserves is shown below:

	Opening Balance 1 st April	Contributions		Closing Balance 31 st March
	2023 £000	To £000	From £000	2024 £000
General Fund	-	-	-	-
Pensions reserve	2,843	(1,228)	541	2,156
Total reserves	2,843	(1,228)	54)	2,156

Comparative Analysis in 2022/23

	Opening Balance 1 st April 2022 £000	Contributions		Closing Balance 31 st March 2023 £000
		To £000	From £000	
General Fund	-	-	-	-
Pensions Reserve	6,888	(476)	431	2,843
Total reserves	6,888	(476)	431	2,843

10. Pension Reserves

The Pensions Reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post employment benefits and for funding benefits as if in accordance with statutory provisions. The Joint Committee accounts for post employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement as the benefits 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. Statutory arrangements, however, require benefits earned to be financed as the Joint Committee makes employer's contributions to pension funds or pays any pension for which it is directly responsible.

The balance on the Pensions Reserve shows a shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources available to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding is available by the time the benefits come to be paid.

	2023/24 £000	2022/23 £000
Opening Balance at 1 April	2,843	6,888
Remeasurement (Liabilities & Assets)	(637)	(4,023)
Reversal of items relating to retirement benefits debited or credited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	119	187
Employer's pensions contributions & direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(169)	(209)
Settlements	-	-
Closing Balance at 31 March	2,156	2,843



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Shropshire
SY2 6ND

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ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2023/24

Scope of Responsibility

West Mercia Supplier (Pensions) Joint Committee (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 and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Joint Committee 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 Joint Committee is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the organisation's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The Joint Committee has procedures that provide assurance in corporate governance matters which are consistent with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework and guidance notes (2016), and CIPFA, The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government and meets the requirements of regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture values, by which the Joint Committee is directed and controlled and reviews how its activities contribute to the strategic objectives of the Member Authorities. It enables the Joint Committee to monitor the achievement of its own strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of the intended outcomes

The Joint Committee seeks to maintain sound systems to protect against risks and mitigate their impact upon the organisation. The systems are constantly being reviewed and updated.

The Governance Framework

The business is operated under the authority of a Joint Committee formed under the Local Government Act 1972, the Member Authorities being Shropshire Council, Herefordshire Council, Worcestershire County Council

West Mercia Supplies (Pensions)

and Telford & Wrekin Council. A Joint Agreement between those Member Authorities determines the governance arrangements.

The Joint Committee is the elected Member body responsible for the discharge of the functions of the Member Authorities. The Joint Agreement determines a number of strategic policies that shall be maintained and provides Financial Regulations for the business

Shropshire Council acts as the Lead. A Secretary and a Treasurer to the Joint Committee are appointed from the Officers of the Member Authorities.

Key decisions are made by the Joint Committee based on written reports which may include assessments of legal and financial implications, consideration of risks and how these will be managed.

Managing Risks

Lead Authority review the risk profile of the business as necessary and will report any findings to the Joint Committee.

All financial decisions are reported through to Joint Committee in an appropriate and transparent basis and challenge is welcomed from members and Officers.

Certification

To the best of our knowledge, the governance arrangements as defined above have been operating effectively during the year. Steps will be taken over the coming year to resolve the governance arrangements as highlighted above. Any improvements implemented shall be monitored as part of the next annual review.

Treasurer:
(James Walton)

Chairman of the
West Mercia Supplies (Pensions) Joint Committee:
(Councillor)

Pension Liability Charges 2024/25

Responsible Officer James Walton – Treasurer
e-mail: james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258915

1. Summary

- 1.1. From 1 April 2020, the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy (and the former stationery supplies business called West Mercia Supplies) authorised the pension liability relating to former West Mercia Supplies employees to be managed by the newly established WMS Pension Joint Committee.
- 1.2. The WMS Pension Joint Committee has delegated authority to make arrangements for the payment of liabilities of the Member Authorities in respect of the pension deficit liability from the former WMS employees which are allocated to the WMS Pension employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund. In order to establish such arrangements and determine the amounts payable by each Member Authorities, each year the WMS Joint Committee is required to approve Liability Charges Report.
- 1.3. The Policy Decisions report approved 26th September 2023 details the arrangements for the WMS Pensions costs to be calculated and each Members share of the charges.
- 1.4. This meeting is to approve arrangements for the 2024/25 Financial Year.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Joint Committee:

- 2.1. Approve the Pension Liability charges for 2024/25 as set out in section 7 of the report below in line with the policy approach as approved by Joint Committee in the Policy decisions 2023/24 report 26th September 2023.
- 2.2. Approve the amounts due to be paid by each Member Authority in respect of the Member Authority Liability Charges set out in section 8 below, and the payment mechanism set out in section 9 below.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1. The necessary approvals have been given by each of the Owing Authorities for the creation and administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee. Member Authorities have a Joint Agreement to provide the governance framework, principles for the calculation and sharing of the WMS Pension liabilities and details of delegations to the Joint Committee. This framework manages the risks associated with the operation of the Joint Committee and the financial risk of any decisions taken.
- 3.2. The methodology for the valuation and calculation of Pension Fund liabilities is undertaken by an independent actuary and this approach remains unchanged.
- 3.3. The purpose of the WMS Pension Joint Agreement is to ensure that no transfer of risk is made, to or between the Owing Authorities and Lead Authority, in amending the arrangements previously in place for the treatment of Pension Liabilities for former WMS employees.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The decisions taken by the Joint Committee as a result of this report seek to ensure basic parity between the Member Authorities and with previous arrangements in respect of the shared liability for the pension deficit relating to the former WMS employees. Payment dates and mechanisms aim to ensure cashflow implications are managed equitably across the four authorities as far as possible.
- 4.2. Any decisions that create financial implications for the Member Authorities are set out within the relevant section of the report. Payments and charges included in the WMS Pension Liability Charge payable by the Member Authorities are set out in Section 7 of this report and specifically within Tables 1 to 5.
- 4.3. For each Member Authority, the specific amount payable in respect of the Member Authority Charge is set out in Section 8.

5. Climate Change Implications

- 5.1. Energy and fuel consumption: No effect
- 5.2. Renewable energy generation: No effect
- 5.3. Carbon offsetting or mitigation: No effect
- 5.4. Climate Change adaptation: No effect

6. **Background**

- 6.1. Between 26th March and 30th April 2020 the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy agreed to remove the responsibility for the discharge of their functions in relation to the pension deficit liability in relation to former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) from the business of the WME Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020 and to allocate the pension deficit liability to a new employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund called 'WMS Pension'. This is to enable any pension deficit to be separately identified, separately valued and monitored.
- 6.2. The four Member authorities agreed to transfer this function to a new joint committee established pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, known as the WMS Pension Joint Committee and delegate their responsibilities relating to the pension deficit liability from former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) allocated to the WMS Pension Employer to that Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020. Management by the Joint Committee enables the pension deficit to remain the joint liability of the four Member Authorities in a reasonably cost-effective way without the transfer of risk between any of the parties.
- 6.3. The WMS Pension Joint Committee is responsible for the administration and approval of the WMS Pension Liability Charges. This is defined as the total annual charge relating to all financial transactions, payments and charges relating to WMS Pension and will include the following as a minimum:
 - A. Deficit Recovery Payments
 - B. Compensatory Added Years Benefits plus a 1% handling fee of the total recharge of compensation being paid on behalf of WMS Pension.
 - C. Costs incurred by the Lead Authority for the administration of the payment mechanism, production of WMS Pension Joint Committee accounts, facilitation of the WMS Pension Joint Committee and any other relevant costs.
 - D. Any other charges and costs specifically relating to WMS Pension or WMS Employees that may be incurred from time to time
- 6.4. The WMS Pension Joint Committee is also responsible for the approval of the Member Authority Liability Charges, which is the proportion of the WMS Pension Liability Charge payable by each Member Authority.

7. Payments and Charges included in the WMS Pension Liability Charge payable by the Member Authorities

7.1. A. Deficit Recovery Payments:

7.1.1. The policy within which the Deficit Recovery Payments due to the Pension Fund are made for each relevant financial year is determined via a policy approved by the WMS Pension Joint Committee in the previous financial year for the relevant financial year.

7.1.2. On the 27th September 2022 the WMS Joint Committee approved to pay the aggregate of the three years valuations at the beginning of the 2023-24 financial year. The payment of £403,800 was made in April 2023 therefore there are no charges in relation to this in 2024/25.

7.2. B. Compensatory Added Years Benefits:

7.2.1. Compensatory Added Years (CAY) Benefits relate to early retirement costs for former WMS employees. The policy within which Compensatory Added Years Benefits Payments due to the Pension Fund are made for each relevant financial year is determined via the policy approved by the WMS Pension Joint Committee in the previous financial year for the relevant financial year.

7.2.2. The payments for CAYs are made on a monthly basis for 2024/25 by Shropshire Council, as the Lead Authority. These payments are included in the table below.

7.2.3. For 2024/25, there is an adjustment for under or over payment for the previous year, there are no other adjustments, although provision is made for this in the table below, for future years.

Table 1

Compensatory Added Years Benefits	Total Charge	Charge for each Owing Authority
Adjustment for under/overpayment of previous year	(0.36)	(0.09)
Estimated charges for 2024/25	36,029.88	9,007.47
Other adjustments	-	-
Total Deficit Recovery Payments Charge for 2024/25	36,029.52	9,007.38

7.3. **C. Lead Authority Costs:**

7.3.1. Lead Authority costs include, but are not limited to:

1. Annual determination and administration of WMS Pension Payment Mechanism
2. Drawing up of annual WMS Pension Joint Committee Accounts
3. Administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee Meetings (minimum of one per annum)
4. Administration and approval for triennial actuarial valuation

7.3.2. Costs relating to this area are determined using the standard recharge rates including overheads for work on behalf of external bodies for all staff and resources incurred for the estimated time requirement.

7.3.3. Details of the 2024/25 Charges are set out in the Table 3 below.

Table 2

Breakdown of Lead Authority Costs	Total Charge
Annual determination and administration of WMS Pension Payment Mechanism	1,158.00
Drawing up of annual WMS Pension Joint Committee Accounts	1,313.76
Administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee Meetings (minimum of one per annum)	1,168.00
Cashflow implications for the lead authority	-
Total	3,639.76

7.3.4. For 2024/25, there is a reconciliation for under or over payment of 2023/24, there are no other adjustments, although provision is made for this in the table below, for future years.

Table 3

Lead Authority Costs	Total Charge	Charge for each Owing Authority
Adjustment for under/ (overpayment) of previous year	(1,100.48)	(275.12)
Estimated charges for 2024/25	3,639.76	909.94
Other adjustments	-	-
Total Lead Authority Charge for 2024/25	2,539.28	634.82

7.4. **D. Other Costs:**

7.4.1. These are any other costs not identified above, but reasonably incurred on behalf of WMS Pension. Such costs include, but are not limited to:

1. Actuary Costs
2. External Audit Costs

7.4.2. The basis for charging will be determined based upon the nature of the cost identified.

7.4.3. Any amount due will be determined annually based on a review of previous years requirements, any adjustment for previous years under or over charges, and an estimate of requirements for the current financial year.

7.4.4. The payment of Other Costs will be incurred throughout the year by Shropshire Council.

7.4.5. Details of the 2024/25 Charges are set out in the table below.

Table 4

Breakdown of Lead Authority Costs	Total Charge	Charge for each Owing Authority
Adjustment for under/ (over) payment of previous year	-	-
Actuary Costs	1,000.00	250.00
External Audit Costs	-	-
Total	1,000.00	250.00

7.5. **WMS Pension Liability Charges**

7.5.1. As calculated above, the total WMS Pension Liability Charges for 2024/25 is £39,568.80 as detailed in the table below.

Table 5

WMS Pension Liability Charges	Total Charge	Charge for each Owing Authority
Compensatory Added Years Benefits (Table 1)	36,029.52	9,007.38
Lead Authority Costs (Table 2)	2,539.28	634.82
Other Costs (Table 4)	1,000.00	250.00
Total Pension Liability Charges 2024/25	39,568.80	9,892.20

8. **Member Authority Liability Charge for 2024/25**

8.1. As set out in the Joint Agreement between the Member Authorities, the calculation of liability of each Member Authority is made on a simple even split between each authority (i.e. 25% based on four Member Authorities) of the total WMS Pension Liability Charge for the relevant financial year.

8.2. Subject to the Joint Committee's approval of the WMS Pension Liability Charges for 2024/25, the Member Authority Liability Charge for 2024/25 shall be £9,892.20

9. **Payment Mechanism:**

9.1. To balance cashflow and risk, and reduce administration, the Lead Authority will incur all WMS Pension Liability Charges in the first instance and then seek to recover the Member Authority Liability Charges as single annual payments approximately halfway through the relevant financial year. Once the annual WMS Pension Liability Charges for the current financial are approved they will be notified to the Member Authorities' representative.

9.2. The WMS Pension Liability Charges and the Member Authority Liability Charges will be presented to the WMS Pension Joint Committee for approval no later than 30 September within the relevant financial year to which they apply.

9.3. An invoice will be raised following the WMS Pension Joint Committee each year for their Member Authority Liability Charge for the current financial year.

9.4. All Member Authority Liability Charges due for each financial year must be received by the Lead Authority 30 days from invoice date

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

WMS Policy Decisions report approved 26th September 2023

Member

Chair of the WMS Pension Joint Committee

Appendices

None

West Mercia Supplies (Pensions)

<u>Committee and Date</u>

WMS Pension Joint Committee

20 September 2024

<u>Item</u>

9

Public

Policy Decisions 2025/26

Responsible Officer James Walton – Treasurer

e-mail: james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258915

1. Summary

- 1.1. From 1 April 2020 the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy (and the former stationery supplies business called West Mercia Supplies) authorised the pension liability relating to former West Mercia Supplies (WMS) employees to be managed by the WMS Pension Joint Committee.
- 1.2. The WMS Pension Joint Committee has delegated authority to make arrangements for the payment of the liabilities of the Member Authorities in respect of the pension deficit liability from former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) which are allocated to the WMS Pension employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund. In order to establish such arrangements and determine the amounts payable by each Member Authority, each year the WMS Joint Committee is required to approve two key documents; a Policy Decisions Report and a Pension Liability Charges Report.
- 1.3. This meeting is to approve arrangements and policies for the calculation of the WMS Pension Liability Charges for the forthcoming 2025/26 Financial Year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Joint Committee;
 - a) Approve the policy under which Compensatory Added Years, Lead Authority Costs and Other Costs are calculated and charged as set out in sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 respectively of this report.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1. The necessary approvals have been given by each of the Member Authorities for the creation and administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee. The Member Authorities have a Joint Agreement to provide the governance framework, principles for the calculation and sharing of the WMS Pension liabilities and details of delegations to the Joint Committee. This framework and the development and approval of policies around payment of the deficits due to the Pension Fund set out in this report manage the risks associated with the operation of the Joint Committee and the financial risk of any decisions taken.
- 3.2. The methodology for valuation and calculation of Pension Fund liabilities is undertaken by an independent actuary and this approach remains unchanged, other than to now separately identify liabilities due to WMS Pension.
- 3.3. The purpose of the WMS Pension Joint Agreement is to ensure that no transfer of risk is made, to or between the Member Authorities and Lead Authority, in amending the arrangements previously in place for the treatment of Pension Liabilities for former WMS employees.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The decisions taken by the Joint Committee as a result of this report seek to ensure basic parity between the Member Authorities and with previous arrangements in respect of the shared liability for the pension deficit relating to the former WMS employees. Payment dates and mechanisms aim to ensure cashflow implications are managed equitably across the four authorities as far as possible.
- 4.2. Any decisions that create financial implications for the Member Authorities are set out within the relevant section of the report. This is limited to section 7 of this report.

5. Climate Change Implications

- 5.1. Energy and fuel consumption: No effect
- 5.2. Renewable energy generation: No effect
- 5.3. Carbon offsetting or mitigation: No effect
- 5.4. Climate Change adaptation: No effect

6. Background

- 6.1. Between 26th March and 30th April 2020 the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy agreed to remove the responsibility for the discharge of their functions in relation to the pension deficit liability in relation to former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) from the business of the WME Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020 and to allocate the pension deficit liability to a new employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund called 'WMS Pension'. This is to enable any pension deficit to be separately identified, separately valued and monitored.
- 6.2. The four Member authorities agreed to transfer this function to a new joint committee established pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, known as the WMS Pension Joint Committee and delegate their responsibilities relating to the pension deficit liability from former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) allocated to the WMS Pension Employer to that Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020. Management by the Joint Committee enables the pension deficit to remain the joint liability of the four Member Authorities in a reasonably cost-effective way without the transfer of risk between any of the parties.
- 6.3. The WMS Pension Joint Committee is responsible for the administration and approval of the WMS Pension Liability Charges. This is defined as the total annual charge relating to all financial transactions, payments and charges relating to WMS Pension and will include the following as a minimum:
 - A. Deficit Recovery Payments – three year decision made in September 2022
 - B. Compensatory Added Years Benefits plus a 1% handling fee of the total recharge of compensation being paid on behalf of WMS Pension.
 - C. Costs incurred by the Lead Authority for the administration of the payment mechanism, production of WMS Pension Joint Committee accounts, facilitation of the WMS Pension Joint Committee and any other relevant costs.
 - D. Any other charges and costs specifically relating to WMS Pension or WMS Employees that may be incurred from time to time

7. Payments and Charges included in the WMS Pension Liability Charge payable by the Member Authorities

7.1. A. Deficit Recovery Payments:

- 7.1.1. Deficit Recovery Payments relate to pension fund deficits from former employees that are agreed to be repaid over a period of years (a deficit recovery period).
- 7.1.2. Every three years, or other such period as determined by statute, an actuarial valuation will be undertaken for the Shropshire County Pension Fund. Deficit recovery payments for former WMS employees are currently determined every three years following an actuarial valuation undertaken by the Shropshire County Pension Fund Actuary (presently Mercer).
- 7.1.3. The amount due to the Pension Fund from WMS Pension will be determined annually based upon the latest valuation results and this will be the overall WMS Pension Deficit Recovery Payment figure for the year.
- 7.1.4. On the 27th September 2022 the WMS Joint Committee approved to pay the aggregate of the three years valuations at the beginning of the 2023-24 financial year. The payment of £403,800 was made in April 2023 for financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

7.2. B. Compensatory Added Years Benefits:

- 7.2.1. Compensatory Added Years (CAY) Benefits relate to early retirement costs for former WMS employees.
- 7.2.2. CAY Benefits were awarded under the Local Government (Early termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations or previously under The Local Government (Discretionary Payments) Regulations. The amount of CAY Payment was determined at the time of retirement by the WMS Employees employer. This liability is paid on a monthly basis for as long as the former employee (or their dependant on their death) draws the pension.
- 7.2.3. The amount due is determined annually, adjusted for inflation and other such requirements. Monthly payments (plus a 1% handling fee) will be adjusted for any CAYs that have ended throughout the year. Beyond the first year, each year's CAYs figure will be adjusted for any in-year adjustments arising from the previous years or other such amendments or corrections identified at that time.
- 7.2.4. Payments will be based on the overall WMS Pension CAYs figure for the year.

- 7.2.5. The Treasurer is to have delegated authority for confirming acceptance of the CAYs liability for the year on behalf of WMS Pension and the onward communication of the liability to the WMS Pension Joint Committee and Member Authorities.
- 7.2.6. The payments for CAYs are made on a monthly basis by Shropshire Council as the Lead Authority and the appropriate charge for each Member Authority's share will be included in the Member Authority Liability Charge.
- 7.3. **C. Lead Authority Costs:**
- 7.3.1. Lead Authority costs include, but are not limited to:
1. Annual determination and administration of WMS Pension Payment Mechanism
 2. Drawing up of annual WMS Pension Joint Committee Accounts
 3. Administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee Meetings (minimum of one per annum)
 4. Administration and approval for triennial actuarial valuation
- 7.3.2. Costs relating to this area will be determined using the standard recharge rates including overheads for work on behalf of external bodies for all staff and resources incurred for the estimated time requirement.
- 7.3.3. The amount due will be determined annually based on a review of previous years requirements, any adjustment for previous years under or over charges, and an estimate of requirements for the current financial year.
- 7.3.4. The payment of Lead Authority Costs will be incurred throughout the year by Shropshire Council as the Lead Authority. An appropriate charge for each Member Authority's share will be included in the Member Authority Liability Charge.
- 7.4. **D. Other Costs:**
- 7.4.1. Any other costs not identified above, but reasonably incurred on behalf of WMS Pension will be identified within this area. Other costs include, but are not limited to:
1. Actuary Costs
 2. External Audit Costs
- 7.4.2. The basis for charging will be determined based upon the nature of the cost identified.

7.4.3. Any amount due will be determined annually based on a review of previous years requirements, any adjustment for previous years under or over charges, and an estimate of requirements for the current financial year.

7.4.4. The payment of Other Costs will be incurred throughout the year by Shropshire Council as the Lead Authority. An appropriate charge for each Owning Authority's share will be included in the Member Authority Liability Charge.

8. Payment Mechanism:

8.1. The payment mechanism will be approved annually in the Pension Liability report.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Member Chair of the WMS Pension Joint Committee
Appendices None

West Mercia Supplies (Pensions)

<u>Committee and Date</u>
WMS Pension Joint Committee
20 th September 2024

<u>Item</u>
10
Public

Scheme of Delegations to the Treasurer

Responsible Officer James Walton – Treasurer

e-mail: james.walton@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 258915

1. Summary

- 1.1. From 1 April 2020 the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy (and the former stationery supplies business called West Mercia Supplies) authorised the pension liability relating to former West Mercia Supplies (WMS) employees to be managed by the WMS Pension Joint Committee.
- 1.2. The WMS Pension Joint Committee has delegated authority to make arrangements for the payment of the liabilities of the Member Authorities in respect of the pension deficit liability from former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) which are allocated to the WMS Pension employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund.
- 1.3. The Joint agreement between the four Member Authorities establishes a Lead Authority of which the Section 151 Officer acts as the Treasurer for WMS Pension. The WMS Pension Joint Committee has the authorisation to delegate authority in respect of the matters set out in Appendix A to the Treasurer appointed further to the Joint Agreement between the Member Authorities of the Joint Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Joint Committee;
 - a) Approve the scheme of Delegations attached at Appendix A.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1. The necessary approvals have been given by each of the Member Authorities for the creation and administration of WMS Pension Joint Committee. The Member Authorities have a Joint Agreement to provide the governance framework, principles for the calculation and sharing of the WMS Pension liabilities and details of delegations to the Joint Committee and representative offers. This framework and the development and approval of policies around payment of the deficits due to the Pension Fund set out in this report manage the risks associated with the operation of the Joint Committee and the financial risk of any decisions taken.
- 3.2. The creation of WMS Pension as an employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund reduces the financial risk placed on West Mercia Energy (WME). WME Risk Register identified a potential risk in bidding for future contracts while carrying the WMS Pension Liability on its balance sheet.
- 3.3. The purpose of the WMS Pension Joint Agreement is to ensure that no transfer of risk is made, to or between the Member Authorities and Lead Authority, in amending the arrangements previously in place for the treatment of Pension Liabilities for former WMS employees.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The decisions taken by the Joint Committee as a result of this report seek to ensure basic parity between the Member Authorities and with previous arrangements in respect of the shared liability for the pension deficit relating to the former WMS employees. Payment dates and mechanisms aim to ensure cashflow implications are managed equitably across the four authorities as far as possible.

5. Climate Change Implications

- 5.1. Energy and fuel consumption: No effect
- 5.2. Renewable energy generation: No effect
- 5.3. Carbon offsetting or mitigation: No effect
- 5.4. Climate Change adaptation: No effect

6. Background

- 6.1. Between 26th March and 30th April 2020 the Executives of the four Member Authorities of West Mercia Energy agreed to remove the responsibility for the discharge of their functions in relation to the pension deficit liability in relation to

former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) from the business of the WME Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020 and to allocate the pension deficit liability to a new employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund called 'WMS Pension'. This is to enable any pension deficit to be separately identified, separately valued and monitored.

- 6.2. The four Member authorities agreed to transfer this function to a new joint committee established pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, known as the WMS Pension Joint Committee and delegate their responsibilities relating to the pension deficit liability from former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) allocated to the WMS Pension Employer to that Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020. Management by the Joint Committee enables the pension deficit to remain the joint liability of the four Member Authorities in a reasonably cost-effective way without the transfer of risk between any of the parties.
- 6.3. The WMS Pension Joint Committee delegates authority in respect of the matters set out in Appendix A to the Treasurer appointed further to the Joint Agreement between the Member Authorities of the Joint Committee.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Member Chair of the WMS Pension Joint Committee

Appendices Appendix A: Scheme of Delegations to the Joint Committee

**WMS PENSION JOINT COMMITTEE
SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS TO THE TREASURER**

The WMS Pension Joint Committee delegates authority in respect of the following matters to the Treasurer appointed further to the Joint Agreement between the Member Authorities of the Joint Committee (capitalised terms are as defined in the Joint Agreement):

1. To agree the amounts and make any payments required to Shropshire County Pension Fund in respect of the liabilities of the employer in the fund known as WMS Pension (including the Deficit Recovery Payments and the Compensatory Added Years Benefits Payments), such payments to be made in accordance with any relevant policies approved by the WMS Pension Joint Committee;
2. To sign the Employer's Agreement on behalf of WMS Pension with the Shropshire County Pension Fund following each Triennial Actuarial Valuation where such Employer's Agreement is in accordance with the current agreed policies of the WMS Pension Joint Committee;
3. To sign any documents on behalf of WMS Pension with the Shropshire County Pension Fund or enter into any arrangements on behalf of WMS Pension with relevant third parties in order to implement any decision or policies of the WMS Pension Joint Committee in order to further its objectives or to properly undertake the responsibilities of the Treasurer as set out in the Joint Agreement;
4. To calculate the amounts due in accordance with the agreed policies and invoice the Member Authorities in respect of the Member Authority Liability Charges where such amounts are agreed by the WMS Pension Joint Committee for the relevant Financial Year;
5. The Treasurer may make such onward delegation of his powers and responsibilities to officers of the Lead Authority as he/she shall deem appropriate and any such delegation shall be recorded in writing stating the date upon which it shall take effect. The Treasurer may revoke such delegations at any time.