

## Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority

### Statement of Accounts 2022/2023 – Important Notification - regarding the Changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (as amended 2023)

This Notification applies to the audit of all local government bodies including the Fire Authority (and also to other bodies within the scope of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015) for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

#### Background Information

In response to a recent consultation process held in February 2023 the government has decided to further amend the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) ('the Regulations) for the financial year 2022/2023 in respect of the timetable for publishing the Authority's audited statement of accounts and other required information which is issued at the same time as the audited financial statements which includes the Narrative Statement and the Annual Governance Statement. The date the audited accounts must be published is now 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

The 2023 Amendments have also changed the common inspection period which under the 2015 Regulations is now to revert back to their original date which includes the first 10 working days of June and that the accounts subject to audit have to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023.

#### The amended publication timetable for the 2022/2023 Accounts

The new publication timetable is outlined in the table below:

	<b>Original Timetable applicable before Statutory Changes</b>	<b>Revised Timetable</b>	<b>Authority Timetable</b>
Draft financial statements subject to audit	31 <sup>st</sup> May 2023	<b>31<sup>st</sup> May 2023</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>
Final audited financial statements	31 <sup>st</sup> July 2023	<b>30<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (subject to external auditor confirmation)</b>

Although the revised timetable for 2022/23 allows more flexibility to the external auditor, there was no additional flexibility for the Authority. The regulations make it clear that authorities can publish both draft and audited accounts before the revised deadlines set out above if they are able and so wish.

**The Authority regrettably however made the decision to publish its accounts and financial statements subject to audit later than the statutory deadline because of specific challenges with its previous years accounts (2021/22) which are yet to signed off by the external auditor as a result of changes to**

**Local Government Pension Scheme data and disclosures which had a material impact on the accounts.**

### **What this means for public inspection rights**

Although the common inspection period has been reverted back to 31<sup>st</sup> May by the 2023 Regulation amendments, public inspection rights set out in the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 now also revert back to the fact the first 10 working days in June must form part of the 30 day inspection period.

This means that to comply fully with the Regulations the period for the inspection of public rights commences is on the day after the Authority has published its draft accounts, the Annual Governance Statement, the Narrative Statement and the Statement by the s151 officer that the accounts published are unaudited and subject to change.

### **For this Authority the following arrangements have been put in place:**

**The Authority is to publish the following documents, as required by Regulation 15(2) of the 2015 Regulations, on Friday 30th June 2023:**

- The draft statement of accounts (subject to audit);
- A declaration signed by the Finance Director (the Authority's S151 Officer) that the accounts are unaudited and subject to change;
- The Annual Governance Statement; and
- The Narrative Statement.

**In line with the 2015 Regulations, the period of public inspection will be revised in accordance with the Authority's revised timescales and the period of public inspection will now commence on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and will end on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023.**