

Report of the Head of Corporate Services

Annual Statement of Assurance 2019-20

Purpose of report

1. To consider and approve the draft Statement of Assurance 2019-20 for publication.
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Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee adopts the draft Statement of Assurance 2019-20 and approves it for publication.

Introduction and Background

2. The Government's Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to publish an annual Statement of Assurance. The Statement must provide members of the public with assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. It must also show that Authorities have due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plans and other requirements in the National Framework.
3. The Statement of Assurance summarises key points and signposts the reader to other relevant publicly available Fire Authority reports; it is not designed to reproduce those other reports.
4. This is the Authority's seventh Statement of Assurance. All previous Statements are available on the Service website.

Annual Statement of Assurance 2019-20

5. The Statement of Assurance 2019-20 is a short report designed to give staff, partners and members of the public assurance that the Authority continues to do everything it can to keep them safe as well as providing value for money.
6. The Statement covers three areas; governance, finance and frontline response (operational) matters. It provides information about how Authority funds are managed and how its services are organised and carried out properly, efficiently and effectively.
7. The Statement reflects many other existing documents including the Fire Authority Annual Report 2019-20, the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020, the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of

Accounts for 2018-19. The Statement also provides links to other assurance documents to help readers assess performance and value for money.

8. This year's Statement also sits alongside the independent assessment of how well the Service is delivering its services in terms of efficiency and effectiveness and how well it leads and supports its workforce. The assessment by inspectors from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) found that the Service is good at keeping communities safe and operating effectively, but also found areas where limited resources could be used more efficiently and support the workforce better. To address these and other issues, the Service has prepared an Improvement Plan, which is updated quarterly.
9. The Statement also reports on continuing work between ourselves and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, which has now been formalised as a Strategic Fire Alliance. The Alliance aims to improve capacity and resilience for both Services into the new decade.

Scrutiny of the draft Statement of Assurance 2018-19

10. Responsibility for scrutinising the content of the Statement of Assurance lies with the Audit and Standards Committee, and Members must satisfy themselves that the Statement, alongside other documents referenced in the report, provides the appropriate levels of assurance to the public and the Government in relation to governance, financial and operational matters.
11. The Committee is asked to provide constructive scrutiny of the draft Statement and approve it for adoption and publication.
12. The draft Statement is attached as Appendix 1.

Conclusion/Summary

13. The Statement of Assurance 2019-20 will be the Authority's seventh annual Statement of Assurance. Much of the information in the Statement is already publicly available elsewhere, and links are provided in the document where appropriate as advised in the national guidance.
14. Subject to Committee approval, the finalised version of the Statement of Assurance 2019-20 will be published on the Service website.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Financial, property and human resources activities are highlighted in the Statement of Assurance.
Strategic Policy Links (identify how proposals link in with current priorities and policy framework and if they do not, identify any potential implications).	The Statement of Assurance sits alongside existing documents including the Fire Authority Annual Report, the Statement of Accounts, the Governance Statement and the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	The Statement of Assurance references, where appropriate, the work of the Authority around Risk Management and Health & Safety.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Senior Management Board consultation undertaken.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?)	Not completed as the Statement of Assurance is a high level overview document. Links to Equality & Diversity activities are highlighted as appropriate in the Statement.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 – Draft Statement of Assurance 2019-20

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