

## **Report of the Head of Corporate Services**

### **Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To consider and approve the draft Statement of Assurance 2020-21 for publication.
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#### **Recommendation**

***It is recommended that the Committee adopts the draft Statement of Assurance 2020-21 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 eighth Statement of Assurance. All previous Statements are available on the Service website.

#### **Annual Statement of Assurance 2020-21**

5. The Statement of Assurance 2020-21 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 2020-21, the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020, the Annual Governance Statement and the Statement of

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

8. This year's Statement comes at a time when the country continues to be in the grip of the global coronavirus pandemic, and provides a short overview of how the Service is responding. This includes our ongoing working with Local Resilience Forum partners and others to keep our communities safe and limit the spread of Covid-19, and the importance of our well-tested business continuity plans in protecting the ongoing health of our frontline and support teams, while maintaining our ability to respond effectively to any emergencies.
9. The Statement also reports on our Fire Alliance work with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service in preparing the new draft Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25 for consultation, prior to publication in April 2021.

### **Scrutiny of the draft Statement of Assurance 2020-21**

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 2020-21 will be the Authority's eighth 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 2020-21 will be published on the Service website. Note that the finalised version will include updated hyperlinks to the latest Statement of Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and the External Audit letter, which are reported elsewhere on your agenda.

## Corporate Considerations

<b>Resource Implications</b> (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues)	Financial, property and human resources activities are highlighted in the Statement of Assurance.
<b>Strategic Policy Links</b> (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 Annual Governance Statement and the Community Risk Management Plan 2014-2020.
<b>Risk Management / Health &amp; Safety</b> (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.
<b>Consultation</b> (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter)	Senior Management Board consultation undertaken.
<b>Equalities</b> (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 2020-21