

<b>REPORT REFERENCE NO.</b>	<b>APRC/21/4</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>AUDIT &amp; PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>5 MARCH 2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT OF REPORT</b>	<b>DRAFT 2019-20 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>Director of Governance &amp; Digital Services</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<i>That that the draft Annual Statement of Assurance appended to this report - required to accompany the 2020-21 final accounts – be approved in principle and submitted to the External Auditor alongside the draft Statement of Accounts for the same financial year.</i>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>To comply with both Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Fire &amp; Rescue Service National Framework, the Authority is required to produce and publish an Annual Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how the Authority has had regard to both its Integrated Risk Management Plan and the expectations in the Fire &amp; Rescue Service National Framework.</p> <p>The Annual Statement of Assurance is primarily backward looking but also features an action plan to address, in the forthcoming financial year, any significant governance issues identified as part of the review process.</p> <p>This year, additional consideration has been given to the impact of Covid-19 on the Governance arrangements within Devon &amp; Somerset Fire &amp; Rescue Service. Whilst Covid-19 has undoubtedly presented many challenges, the Annual Statement of Assurance reflects the ways in which the Service has adapted and responded to those challenges.</p> <p>The draft Statement of Assurance for 2020-21 will be submitted, along with the draft 2020-21 Statement of Accounts, to the Authority's external auditors for review.</p>
<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>	Nil.
<b>EQUALITY RISKS AND BENEFITS ASSESSMENT</b>	The contents of this report are considered compatible with existing equalities and human rights legislation.
<b>APPENDICES</b>	A. 2020-21 Draft Annual Statement of Assurance

**BACKGROUND  
PAPERS**

1. The Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015
2. The Fire & Rescue Service National Framework