



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority

2020-21 Annual Statement of
Assurance

Devon and Somerset
Fire & Rescue Authority

29/09/2021

Contents

1	Introduction	3
2.	Operational	4
3.	Governance	15
4	Financial Assurance.....	23
5	Future Improvements	26
6.	Conclusion	26

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (“the Authority”) recognises that good governance supports the setting of clear objectives, effective management of risk to delivery of these objectives, delivery of defined performance standards, accountability in the use of public money, continued public engagement and helps to deliver the Authority’s vision and defined outcomes for the community that it serves.
- 1.2 The Authority is responsible for:
- Ensuring that there is a sound system of governance in place.
 - Ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for.
 - Meeting its 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.
 - Preparing an annual governance statement in support of its Statement of Accounts in line with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015. This is an expression of the measures taken to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance.
 - Publishing an annual Statement of Assurance as required by The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (May 2018). The statement should outline the way in which the Authority and its Fire and Rescue Service has had regard to the Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan (e.g. the Fire and Rescue Plan) prepared by the Authority for that period. Each Authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters.
- 1.3 The Authority has agreed that the most appropriate way to meet both the National Framework and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 requirements is through the creation of one assurance report entitled ‘Annual Statement of Assurance’. The Annual Statement of Assurance details the approach for how the Authority has developed and applied its governance framework in accordance with its statutory responsibilities.

2. Operational

2.1 The Authority functions within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. The key documents setting this out are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- Localism Act 2011
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018

2.2 In addition, other key statutes include:

- Local Government Act 1972
- Local Government Finance Act 1988
- Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- Local Government Finance Act 1992
- Local Government Act 2003

2.3 Within this statutory framework, the Authority has three main responsibilities: to determine a strategic policy agenda for its area; set a budget to fund delivery of the policy agenda; and to undertake scrutiny to ensure that intended outcomes are being achieved efficiently, effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements. The Authority creates the organisational capacity to 'operationalise' these responsibilities through the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (the Service), which is led by the Chief Fire Officer.

Planning, Performance and Continuous Improvement

2.4 The Authority's strategic plans are detailed in three key corporate documents: the [Integrated Risk Management Plan](#), the [Fire & Rescue Plan](#) and the [Safer Together Programme](#).

2.5 The Integrated Risk Management Plan requires the Authority to determine and analyse the risks present within the communities that it serves and is a statement to the public about how its Prevention, Protection and Response activities will address these risks. The plan is subject to regular review, with the present document covering the period 2018-22. Work has commenced on developing the next iteration.

2.6 The Fire & Rescue Plan 2018-22 details the Service's strategic intent for improvement, and contains the Vision, Purpose and Values by which its staff are encouraged to operate. The plan focuses on six priorities: service delivery; people; value for money and use of resources; governance; collaboration; and digital transformation.

- 2.7 In 2019, the Safer Together Programme was borne out of the change and improvement activities identified as necessary for the delivery of the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Fire & Rescue Plan. The programme sets out the prioritised and sequenced work required to achieve the optimal balance between efficiency and effectiveness of the service provided to our communities. The programme is governed by a programme board, chaired by a member of the Service Executive Board, with the constituent projects each having their own project boards and jointly governed by the Business Design Authority. The Business Design Authority is concerned with ensuring that all of the business outputs of the projects remain aligned to the Service's future state and strategic objectives. It also allows the wider Service Leadership Team (Heads of Departments) to identify any dependencies with work that may be taking place in their area which is not in the programme to ensure that as a Service, we are building the right capability. It allows the Service Leadership Team to apply scrutiny to the deliverables of the programme. The programme and project boards and the Business Design Authority have continued to operate virtually throughout 2020-21.
- 2.8 The supporting work to deliver these strategic plans is cascaded via plans made by directorates, departments, groups and capabilities. As well as aligning to the priorities set by the Authority, these plans reflect the pillars of inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire & Rescue Services (the Inspectorate), and describe how, at operational levels, the strategic plans will be delivered. The Directorate Statements and Department/Service Plans are reviewed at least quarterly by their respective management teams.
- 2.9 A review of the Service's planning framework and capability has commenced and has identified areas of improvement that will support better continuity of objectives from the strategic to the operational level. The planning templates are being replaced by a software product that will support improved accountability and ownership of activities and engender a positive culture whereby every team will be able to see how its work contributes to achieving the Authority's objectives.
- 2.10 The Service continuously strives to improve. It aims to do this in a number of ways, through horizon scanning for emerging risks and opportunities, to constantly reviewing processes and policies to ensure that it is delivering in an efficient and effective manner and delivering value for money to its communities.

Process for Operational Assurance

- 2.11 In accordance with the Authority's commitment to public and staff safety, the Operational Assurance Team ensures that all learning submitted nationally is positively utilised to review current ways of working, implement improvements where necessary, and to raise awareness across the Service. National and regional learning is fed in and out of the Service via a number of different pathways, which include:
- National Operational Learning.
 - Joint Organisational Learning.
 - Coroner's Regulation 28 - Prevention of Future Death reports.
 - Health and Safety Executive recommendations.

- Local Resilience Forum debriefing focus group.
- South West Regional Operational Assurance Group.

2.12 The Operational Assurance Team is a key stakeholder in a number of these groups which enables the Service to play a vital role in ensuring that all learning received drives positive organisational change in a timely manner. The Team also strives to promote a culture where all internal learning and best practice, identified from a variety of activities linked to operational response, is shared and communicated in a way that supports self-development and organisational improvement, including regular updates on internal social media, a dedicated intranet repository for employees to use, and via posters and printed media for stations.

2.13 A process has been developed to enable the effective management of identified learning and outcomes, which is achieved through:

- Operational monitoring and feedback.
- Debriefing incidents and training exercises.
- National and regional learning.
- Audit and engagement with all key stakeholders within the Service.

2.14 Debriefs provide the opportunity for operational personnel to identify good practice and any lessons learned for further improving the delivery of service. An operational debrief strategy and policy is in place within the Service, and is currently subject to review to ensure consistency with new national guidance.

2.15 The Operational Assurance Team has adapted its working practices throughout the current pandemic to ensure a minimal impact on the Service's ability to capture and manage organisational learning and best practice.

Training and Development - Academy

2.16 The Service, through its Training Academy, has enabled the delivery of quality assured training to its staff to improve safety and overall effectiveness, which is underwritten by the ISO 9001 (2015) Quality Management Framework. The Executive Board monitor performance in this area through a Service Delivery dashboard which specifically outlines the number of staff and type of skills that are 'in date' for assurance purposes. In addition, where new training requirements are introduced (e.g. Marauding Terrorist Attacks), the Academy can introduce e-learning and other training quickly across the whole organisation.

2.17 Training is an essential activity, helping to keep staff and the public safe from harm. Following the initial Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, all training was temporarily suspended for a short period. The Training Academy then commenced a planned and phased resumption of training, focusing initially on high risk activities such as Breathing Apparatus, Incident Command and Driving.

- 2.18 The Service has put strict safety measures in place, supported by risk assessments, to make sure that all training venues are Covid-19 secure. This enabled other elements of training to be gradually re-introduced. As the country has moved in and out of lockdown the Training Academy has strived to continue to provide as much training as possible, maintaining the overall focus on staff safety and welfare.
- 2.19 The Service continues to invest in new vehicles to assist in the delivery of training, such as an additional mobile Incident Command Training Vehicle which has received excellent feedback. The e-learning system continues to grow, enabling student access to theoretical elements of training from a range of access points, for example tablets and laptops. This enables a greater focus on practical based training on drill night sessions.

Commitment to Health & Safety

- 2.20 The Authority recognises and accepts its responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and others who may be affected by its activities. To achieve this, the Service works to meet all relevant requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (together with all other statutory provisions associated with it) and support staff in meeting their obligations under the Act and subordinate legislation. The Chief Fire Officer currently chairs the Strategic Safety Committee.
- 2.21 Health, Safety and Wellbeing has been identified as a key theme within the Service's People Strategy. Progress towards achieving the underpinning aims of this strategy is monitored via the People Strategy monitoring group.
- 2.22 Elements of the People Strategy have been accelerated in order to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, remote and more agile working for employees, home working provisions and promotion of the welfare provisions available to all employees.
- 2.23 Detailed health, safety and welfare arrangements are set out in Service policies developed to take account of relevant legislation and guidance, including the Health and Safety Executive's HS(G)65 methodology. The policies provide employees with relevant and comprehensive information on the risks they face and the preventative and protective measures required to control them. The policies also identify the roles and responsibilities of those employees who have a duty to ensure that measures are implemented. Additional safe systems of work, risk assessments and guidance for employees have been developed to support employees during the Service response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2.24 Systems for monitoring the effectiveness of health and safety management procedures are in place; this includes proactive and reactive monitoring. The processes include air sampling on station of diesel engine exhaust emissions, provision of accident and near miss incident data to the Strategic Safety Committee for review, annual completion of premises Health, Safety and Welfare Assessment Report Forms, Covid-19 Secure audits and a means to fully audit the organisation's Health and Safety management systems.

- 2.25 Procedures are in place to report all safety events, allocate an investigator and where required make recommendations for corrective action to be completed. Functional and process issues were encountered with the software solution for reporting safety events, which impacted on the recording and management of safety event investigations as well as the ability to monitor accidents through trend analysis. This has been raised on the Corporate Risk Register and work is progressing with the development of a replacement Safety Event Management System to enable this process to work more effectively.
- 2.26 Effective management of, and learning from, safety events also relies upon the right cultural conditions to support this. The Service's People Strategy sets out the intention to identify the cultural conditions needed to meet the Service's aspirations, to work together to grow the ideal work environment and also sets out the intent to be a learning organisation and to have an engaged health and safety culture. Through research, observation, feedback from the Inspectorate, staff survey and cultural audit around psychological safety, it has been identified that the key cultural condition that the Service needs to embed is psychological safety; people need to feel included and feel safe to speak up, to learn, to contribute and to challenge.
- 2.27 The approach that the Service is now taking, based on theories of psychological safety and, in terms of Just Culture, drawing on experience from Civil and Military Aviation, is to support positive leadership behaviours and employee relationships to improve the health safety and wellbeing of everyone. This addresses both behaviours around fairness and respect and creating an engaged safety culture, ultimately supporting high performance. This intervention is called 'Safe To' and means Safe To:
- learn – sharing and learning from our experiences, successes and mistakes.
 - contribute – sharing our ideas to make things better.
 - challenge – where things aren't right with working practices, behaviours and values.
- 2.28 This work may reduce work related poor mental health impacts and is designed to create an inclusive supportive culture where there is simply no place for bullying and harassment. This initiative is being supported with processes to ensure the top level commitment is supported with organisational procedures and support.

Fleet, Equipment and Water Supplies

- 2.29 A Fleet and Equipment Workstream forms part of the Safer Together Programme. The governance and reporting to deliver the two main investment projects in relation to this strategy are; Fleet Capital Programme and the Asset Management Project. To date both are on track for completion.
- 2.30 The Service adheres to the National Fire Chiefs Council Best Practice Manual for the maintenance of Fire Service Vehicles.
- 2.31 In 2020 the service upgraded its fleet management system as part of the asset management project.

- 2.32 Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act the Authority has a duty to secure water. Adopting the National Guidance Document for provision of water for fire-fighting purposes (2017), the Service operates a risk based approach for the 70,000+ hydrant management and maintenance requirements.

Collaborative and Partnership Working

- 2.33 The Service is committed to forming or joining partnerships that assist it in achieving its organisational objectives and contribute to its core purpose “to Protect and Save”.
- 2.34 The Service continues to strengthen its partnership working with other fire and rescue services, blue light services, local authorities, community groups and other organisations by working to common objectives at the local, regional and national level. The improvement of prevention and protection work is a major priority and the Service also contributes to wider community objectives identified in Local Area Agreements where appropriate.
- 2.35 The Service established the South West Emergency Service Collaboration Forum and the Chair of the Fire Authority is the appointed Chair of this regional forum. The Chief Fire Officer is the regional coordinator and is supported with a vice chair from Devon and Cornwall Police at Assistant Chief Constable level.
- 2.36 Collaborative working continued to grow through the South West Emergency Services Collaboration, to achieve a number of agreements. The working group is continuing to liaise and work together on new pieces of work, and has changed from a group that worked together to reach agreement on changing practice in individual organisations into a good practice sharing forum. For example, the Service will share its experience of the trial on community responders (the dual role of a firefighter and special constable) and police access to fire stations.
- 2.37 A Tripartite agreement was formed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, between the National Fire Chiefs Council, the Fire Brigades Union and fire service national employers, which outlined additional responsibilities that fire and rescue services could assist with to further help support their communities and partner agencies.
- 2.38 In line with the Tripartite agreement, the Service provided employees to support ambulance personnel, as well as to provide support to Nightingale hospital transfers and to complete face-fit testing of PPE for other services and for care home staff. Risk assessments were completed for any other requests for assistance that have arisen.
- 2.39 The Service also provided driver familiarisation training packages and driving assessments for ambulances to Service employees and to those from other fire and rescue services.
- 2.40 The Service has extended the trial of Community Responders by a further year (until January 2022) and is seeking to extend the hours that this team is available to provide more community support.

- 2.41 The Police and Fire Community Support Officer roles which were previously trialled, have been maintained in North Devon. Agreement was gained in 2020-21 to recruit two additional employees into this role, which can be provided in alternative areas of Devon.
- 2.42 Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, the Service provided support to the Local Resilience Forums, which included establishing a Strategic Community Support cell and a volunteer co-ordination cell for the Devon, Cornwall, and Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum. The Chief Fire Officer also represents Chief Fire Officer colleagues in the region on a weekly Regional Strategic Coordinating Group which includes health, local authority, military and emergency service partners to coordinate activity related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Partnership working was commended by the Inspectorate and their letter as to findings can be seen on the Inspectorate's website.
- 2.43 In terms of Fire/Fire collaboration, the five South West Chief Fire Officers meet bi weekly to discuss opportunities and share learning. A key outcome of this work is the regional commitment to the South West Ambulance Service for Firefighters to drive ambulances and the Service is the regional Fire lead for this work. These discussions have also seen key risk information and desktop reviews with presentations shared between Chief Fire Officers and cascaded within respective services.

Co-Responding

- 2.44 The Authority has a formal partnership agreement in place with the South Western Ambulance Service to provide a co-responder medical response (an initial medical provision to stabilise casualties in life-threatening emergencies prior to the arrival of the ambulance service). Any indemnity of health service activity has been covered by the Coronavirus Act 2020 during this reporting year.

Civil Contingencies

- 2.45 The Emergency Planning Team is responsible for ensuring that the Service meets the Authority's obligations as laid out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the Fire Services Act 2004.
- 2.46 Effective arrangements are in place to collaborate with partners through Local Resilience Forums, the National Inter-Agency Liaison Officers network and Safety Advisory Groups which support multi-agency planning activity and the Critical National Infrastructure in line with Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles.
- 2.47 The Service has created a specialist team of volunteers to respond to Marauding Terrorist Attacks. Following changes in the National Planning Assumptions, the Service has supplemented this capability with a further 16 specialist responders based at Plympton, funded via a Home Office grant.
- 2.48 This Marauding Terrorist Attacks capability has been established in order to support specialist emergency service response alongside Police and Ambulance responders in response to a Marauding Terrorist Attack incident within the Authority area or, under National Mutual Aid, to any other location within the UK as requested. The overall aim is to save life, and the two main strands of fire and rescue support during this type of incident are for casualty care and fire hazard management.

- 2.49 The capability is made up of two key groups; National Interagency Liaison Officers and Specialist Response Team Operatives. Both of these groups undergo specialist training for responding to the Marauding Terrorist Attack threat, but fulfil different specific functions within a response. In addition, all operational staff have recently completed an e-learning module to support awareness and to improve preparedness of all staff who may be faced with such an event.

National Resilience

- 2.50 The National Resilience Capabilities are comprised of a number of specialist capabilities which are funded by the English Government via lead Government Department the Home Office and hosted within English fire and rescue services.
- 2.51 The National Resilience Capabilities hosted by the service are Urban Search & Rescue, High Volume Pumping, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (explosion) Mass Decontamination and Command & Control (Enhanced Logistics Support).
- 2.52 The Capabilities are managed and assured on behalf of the Home Office by the National Resilience Assurance Team, supported under a Lead Authority arrangement by Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

- 2.53 Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. The Authority has in place contractual agreements with neighbouring fire and rescue authorities for response to incidents requiring their support.
- 2.54 In addition to sections 13 and 16 there is a partnership agreement between the Authority and Dorset & Wiltshire and Hampshire fire and rescue authorities to provide a common, networked mobilising system with the principal aim of ensuring that the response mobilised to an incident is always the nearest and most appropriate resource/s based upon travel time and attributes (i.e. having the necessary skills or equipment) to deal with the incident.
- 2.55 Further work is underway to ensure cross border training and awareness is undertaken, supported with exercises where appropriate.

Networked Fire Services Partnership

- 2.56 The Networked Fire Services Partnership is a significant collaboration between three fire and rescue services (Hampshire, Devon & Somerset and Dorset & Wiltshire) initially set up to deliver a networked fire control solution, which was achieved in April 2016. An Information Governance Partnership Group meets regularly to review the required governance procedures that are required under legislation and monitor current and emerging risks to the information the system holds. A risk remediation plan is in place to ensure that security risks are managed effectively, supplemented by an annual IT health check for assurance. This supports the Authority's compliance with the Airwave Code of Connection and the upcoming Emergency Services Network, which is due to replace the Airwave service.
- 2.57 Subsequently the Networked Fire Services Partnership has committed to scoping further collaboration opportunities that will support all three services in achieving increased effectiveness and efficiency as well as sharing and developing good practice with regards to staffing issues.

Business Continuity and Resilience

- 2.58 The Service has a Strategic Business Continuity Policy which sets out the corporate business continuity management structure and goals for business continuity assessment, training and exercising. The Service also has a business continuity framework that details how the organisation will respond to specific disruptions.
- 2.59 The Service has 36 tactical business continuity plans in place to ensure that it is prepared for a range of threats and challenges. Business Continuity Management processes are also undertaken so that the Service can continue the delivery of services following a disruptive incident.
- 2.60 The Business Continuity Manager is responsible for providing specialist advice and guidance on business continuity issues, including the co-ordination, development, implementation and review of business continuity plans, processes and procedures.
- 2.61 The Service has a statutory responsibility to conduct business continuity as mandated in The Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Service embraces the principles of 'Plan, Do, Check, and Act' and aligns with aspects of the ISO: 22301 (Societal Security – Business Continuity management systems and requirements).
- 2.62 On 23 March 2020 the Service activated strategic and tactical business continuity plans in accordance with the national Covid-19 lockdown arrangements and the organisation moved into a 'response' posture. The following measures were implemented:
- All employees were mandated to 'work from home' where possible.
 - Daily tactical telephone conferences were held to ensure that managers were regularly updated. Actions and decisions were recorded and distributed.
 - The Service Extended Leadership Team met regularly to ensure that appropriate Strategy was set.
 - Regular corporate communications messages were distributed to employees.

- Avon & Somerset Local Resilience Forum and Devon & Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Resilience Forum held daily multi-agency teleconferences. The Service was a key stakeholder and was represented at strategic and tactical levels.
- The Business Continuity Manager engaged with both Local Resilience Forums and the National Fire Chiefs Council in order to share best practice and monitor the local and national situation.
- Strategic and tactical business continuity plans were regularly updated to ensure that actions and decisions were recorded.

2.63 In September 2020 a tactical exercise was conducted in order to rehearse the potential response to a localised lockdown. An appropriate exercise debrief was conducted and an exercise report was distributed.

2.64 In October 2020 strategic and tactical debriefs were conducted to identify potential areas for improvement throughout the response phase. Appropriate reports were written and distributed.

2.65 During November 2020 the Service was subject to an inspection by the Inspectorate. The audit focused specifically on the organisational response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Inspectorate's findings were published in January 2021 and concluded that "In line with good governance, the Service had a pandemic flu plan and business continuity plans in place, which were in date. These plans were activated. The plans were detailed enough to enable the service to make an effective initial response, but understandably, they didn't anticipate and mitigate all the risks presented by COVID".

2.66 On 18 December 2020 the Service held a strategic business continuity exercise in order to identify potential gaps in planning while dealing with concurrent events, for example Covid-19 and a no deal Brexit.

2.67 A Covid-19 Integrated Risk Management Plan was introduced which has driven a number of changes to the work that would usually be undertaken, the most significant of which were:

- Home safety technicians redeployed to provide telephone fire safety advice to approximately 2,000 people that had existing bookings. Full visits will take place for those clients upon return to business as usual.
- Home safety technicians working with local councils to visit those that are shielding due to age and / or long-term health effects.
- Insight driven communications have targeted members of the public to alert to the dangers around emerging risks and changing behaviours. This included risks around barbecues, garden bonfires, road risk, water safety and advice for businesses.
- Businesses with Site Specific Risk Information were contacted to confirm that all information held is up-to-date.
- A technical fire safety helpdesk was established to support businesses during working hours.

- The introduction of National Fire Chiefs Council desktop fire safety audits.
- Bespoke technical fire safety support provided to key sectors, such as healthcare and care home providers.
- The introduction of risk-based compliance checks of communal areas of high rise residential buildings.
- Provision of guidance to businesses throughout the phases of lockdown, such as 'closing your business', 're-opening your business' and frequently asked questions. The Service is in the process of producing further communications to support those businesses balancing Covid-19 secure requirements with fire safety.
- Planning of up to date training for Service employees on care homes, factories and high-rise buildings.
- Protection team mask fitting and training and access to Personal Protective Equipment for 'dangerous conditions' inspections.
- Consultation and support provided to the design and build of the Nightingale Hospital in Exeter.

2.68 The Covid-19 business continuity event has provided the Service with the unique opportunity to review and ensure that all department and strategic plans pull in the same direction.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (the Inspectorate)

- 2.69 The Inspectorate undertook its first annual assessment of fire and rescue services in 2018-19. The assessment examined services' effectiveness, efficiency and how well they looked after their employees. The Inspectorate was satisfied with certain aspects of the performance of the Service but there were several areas where improvement was needed. In particular, a Cause for Concern was raised regarding the fitness testing of firefighters. The Service implemented an action plan in response.
- 2.70 The Service has a Physical Fitness Policy and three dedicated Fitness Advisors in post to support firefighters to attain and maintain the fitness standards that are required for their role. The Service has also introduced Fitness Advocates who are existing operational employees that provide an additional fitness role to the Service and are qualified to a minimum of a Level 2 Gym Instructor.
- 2.71 Service fitness culture and results improved by 13.78% during 2020-21, despite significant adjustments due to Covid-19. The Inspectorate is currently planning a re-inspection to assess the Service's improvements in this area.
- 2.72 The Service commissioned an external review of how it manages its people. A number of internal changes have been made and the Service is working to identify a longer term plan for implementing the People Strategy.

- 2.73 In 2020, the Inspectorate conducted inspections of England's fire & rescue services, assessing and reporting on their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This inspection reported overwhelmingly positive findings for the Service, with the recommendations that the Service explores how to implement innovative ways of working for the longer term and that the use of whole time firefighters for other roles could be explored whilst also protecting them against Covid risks. Actions to address these recommendations are currently being explored.

3. Governance

Code of Corporate Governance

- 3.1 The Authority has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, consistent with the principles of the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) / SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". A copy of the Code is on the Authority's [website](#) or can be obtained from the Clerk to the Authority. This Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the Code.

Review of Effectiveness

- 3.2 The Authority has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance arrangements including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness is informed by the work of senior managers within the Service who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 3.3 The 2020-21 review has identified the following key elements to the Authority's governance arrangements.
- (1) The Authority was constituted under the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority (Combination Scheme) Order 2006. The Authority has strategic responsibility for discharging fire and rescue authority functions for the combined area with the day-to-day responsibility resting with the Chief Fire Officer and other officers within the Executive Board.
 - (2) During the 2020-21 financial year, the Authority comprised 26 Members appointed by the constituent authorities (Devon County Council, Somerset County Council, Plymouth City Council and Torbay Council). In addition, an "independent person" is appointed in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and in June 2019 the Authority agreed to the appointment of a second independent person in line with recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life following its review of local government ethical standards.
 - (3) During the 2020-21 financial year, the Authority operated with the following permanent committees:
 - Resources Committee (7 Members)
 - Human Resources Management & Development Committee (7 Members);

- Audit & Performance Review Committee (7 Members);
 - Community Safety & Corporate Planning Committee (6 Members);
 - Appraisals and Disciplinary Committee (4 Members); and
 - Standards Committee (7 Members).
- (4) Terms of reference for each of these committees were approved by the Authority. The committee structure (including terms of reference) is subject to annual review but may also be amended in-year as circumstances dictate.
- (5) The Audit & Performance Review Committee operates in accordance with the CIPFA best practice guidance on audit committees. It provides an additional level of review and scrutiny of the Authority's internal and external audit arrangements (including consideration and monitoring of any reports and associated action plans), corporate governance and risk arrangements and financial statements (Annual Statement of Accounts). The Committee has responsibility for the operation of the Authority's strategy for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption and monitors performance of the Service.
- (6) The constitutional governance arrangements are contained in the following documents:
- Members Roles and Responsibilities
 - Standing orders
 - Financial Regulations
 - Treasury Management Policy
 - Contract Standing Orders
 - Scheme of Delegations
 - Members Code of Conduct
 - Protocol for Member / Officer Relations
 - Policy on Gifts and Hospitality
 - Scheme of Members Allowances
 - Corporate Governance Code
 - Confidential Reporting Policy (Whistleblowing" Code)
 - Strategy on the prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption
 - Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity

- (7) These documents, with the exception of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity (which is a national document issued by the Government under Section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986), are subject to review at least annually and are updated as and when necessary to reflect legislative change, organisational change or best practice, as relevant, to ensure that they remain up-to-date and fit for purpose. The documents are available on the Authority's [website](#).
- (8) The Authority's Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that effective financial stewardship is in place across the Service in conducting the business of the Authority. The Authority's financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the "CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government".
- (9) The statutory functions of the Treasurer and the Monitoring Officer provide a source of assurance that the Authority's systems of governance and internal control are effective and being complied with.
- (10) The effective management of risk is critical for the Service to ensure that it maintains services and continues to progress effectively towards achieving its strategic objectives. The risk management framework provides a structured way to deal with uncertainty which can help everyone in the Service to manage their area effectively. The Service risk management framework has been reviewed and updated and now includes the risk escalation and de-escalation process that ensures that risks are considered at appropriate levels within the Service.
- (11) The Service risk registers are updated and reviewed periodically. This process in turn informs the Corporate Risk Register. The Service only escalates risks to the Corporate Risk Register if they cannot be managed or mitigated at the department or directorate level. The Authority's Corporate Risk Register is reviewed by Service management on a monthly basis (dependent on the level of risk) to ensure that risks to the Authority's strategic objectives and corporate plans are appropriately identified and managed. Horizon scanning has now been introduced into Service management review of the Corporate Risk Register to support deep dive risk identification and assessment. Corporate Risks are presented to the Audit & Performance Review Committee every six months.
- (12) The Authority maintains comprehensive insurance cover to support its management of organisational risk. The Authority is a member of the Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company (FRIC), the mutual protection provider that has 12 fire and rescue authority members and has completed its fifth year of operations culminating in surplus being achieved every year since it was formed, with a current total of in excess of £1m. This is a significant result for FRIC and shows what can be achieved when fire authorities collaborate in an innovative and mutually beneficial manner. The surplus generated would otherwise have been lost to the public sector, but instead it can be retained to support further improvements and drive better risk management and, ultimately, deliver lower costs for FRIC's members. For example resources allocated to the motor claims reduction project delivered FRIC claim contact cards that are carried in every vehicle. This has resulted in a reduction in motor claims numbers and costs.

- (13) The 2020-21 Internal Audit Plan resource was approved by the Audit & Performance Review Committee on the 4 March 2020. The plan set out the combined resource required for internal assurance activity to be completed by the Service's Audit & Review Manager and the Authority's shared service internal audit arrangements with Devon Audit Partnership. The latter conforms to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in public service organisations.
- (14) Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the plan was not fully delivered, with internal audit resource reassigned to an assurance role as part of the business continuity arrangements. The plan was subsequently re-prioritised and internal audits completed on higher priority subjects. Based on the completed audit work and knowledge from previous years, it is the view of Internal Audit that the systems in operation within the Service demonstrate a reasonable level of internal control.
- (15) The Authority also participates in the biennial National Fraud Initiative scheme. A new data matching exercise was completed in 2020-21, with results being due for release to participants to review.
- (16) The Service has a Strategic Health & Safety Committee which meets quarterly to monitor health, safety and welfare of employees as per section 2(7) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. All representative bodies (trades unions) recognised by the Authority, i.e. the Fire Brigades Union, the Fire and Rescue Services Association, the Fire Officers Association and UNISON are invited to sit on this Committee.
- (17) The Human Resources Management and Development Committee receives a report on the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of the Service which is positively received. The report helps the Committee to monitor and question performance in these areas on behalf of the Authority.
- (18) The Organisational Safety and Assurance Manager attends the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Health & Safety meetings and chairs the regional NFCC Health & Safety meetings. The Health and Safety Manager has assumed the responsibility for this from January 2021.
- (19) A governance framework has been prepared for change management, which defines roles and responsibilities and outlines the methodology that will be applied as the Service adopts a centralised Portfolio office approach to all requests for strategic change.

- (20) The Service monitors compliance with the Personal Information Management System to provide assurance that handling of personal information is compliant with General Data Protection Regulation. This is an industry / British standard known as PIMS (ISO27701) which is effectively a personal information framework for managing and monitoring compliance. Wider monitoring of the Personal Information Management System was reduced this year as a result of invoking business continuity plans. Performance of critical compliance areas including responding to Subject Access Requests and Freedom of Information requests, remains in place with a high level of compliance achieved. Information Risk Assessments have matured as a result of being in a response phase with the introduction of Technical Security Assessments which have enhanced how the Service manages its information risk and demonstrates its risk appetite. The Information Assurance Team is undergoing a transformational restructure to add further value by becoming an Information Governance function. This will include ownership of records management and achieve a consistent standard for managing information throughout the organisation.
- (21) Contract Standing Orders are subject to annual review and in-year changes as and when required. Guidance materials on procurement and contract management are available on the Authority's [website](#) and internal systems. Priorities for this year have been supply of Personal Protective Equipment during the Covid-19 response, ongoing supply arrangements and delivery of Service projects. The Service continues to be part of the National Fire Chiefs Council Commercial Transformation Programme and is the national lead for the Fleet Category as well as working on opportunities with our Networked Fire Service Partnership.
- (22) The Procurement Team reviews third party expenditure and manages contracts above £20,000 in value. This is to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice, to ensure that the Authority can demonstrate value for money and deliver savings and efficiencies. The Team is actively engaged in wider collaborative national and local procurement initiatives. The Service's Head of Fleet and Procurement is part of the Local Government Association National Advisory Group for Procurement representing the fire and rescue service nationally. During 2020-21 the Procurement Team has been responsible for managing centralised communications and providing briefing papers on the NFCC's Emergency Response Vehicles framework and Respiratory Protective Equipment framework and suppliers operating positions on behalf of the fire sector during the Covid-19 Response. The Procurement Team liaised closely with key suppliers and fire and rescue services nationally to expedite the delivery of critical products ensuring that those fire and rescue services that needed them most were prioritised. The Team also worked with Suppliers to identify alternative 'approved' products where suppliers could not provide their own due to Covid related supply chain issues.

- (23) Red One Ltd. was established in 2012 to allow the Authority to deliver commercial activities within the legislative framework that applies. The Authority has taken legal advice to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and to ensure effective governance arrangements, which were enhanced in January 2018 by the appointment of independent non-executive directors. Governance arrangements were further enhanced in July 2018 by the adoption of revised Articles of Association, which strengthened the composition of the Board to include a mix of: Authority Member non-executive directors; independent non-executive directors; Service officer non-executive directors and company appointed executive directors.
- (24) Service commitments to equality, diversity and inclusion are set out in the Fire & Rescue Plan and People Strategy, which address issues relevant to equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace at each stage of the employee lifecycle, including attraction, recruitment, retention, development and progression. These documents also set out how the Service will meet the needs of different communities and vulnerable people in order to reduce risk and align with the changes needed to support the Integrated Risk Management Plan and the Inspectorate's inspection outcomes. The Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion benchmarked the Service against Talent, Inclusion, Diversity & Equality and awarded the Service a Silver Award in July 2020. The Human Resources, Management & Development Committee monitors progress of actions relating to the People Strategy, and particularly matters related to diversity and inclusion, every three months.
- (25) The Service has a process in place to ensure that potential equality impacts are identified and mitigated when preparing or reviewing policies and procedures. The process is called Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis and it helps the Service to deliver better services and working practices as well as ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty. In 2019 the Service introduced a broader assessment of impact i.e. the People Impact Assessment into which the Equality Risks and Benefits Analysis is incorporated. Implementation of the People Impact Assessment includes wider impacts on people including data protection, health & safety and safeguarding. This process has been used extensively during the pandemic to support the Service's decisions in response and recovery. Mandatory equalities training has been reviewed and was rolled out in early 2020. The Service has now started work on increasing psychological safety including addressing identified levels of unwanted behaviour.

3.4 The 2020-21 review by the Authority has concluded that there are good systems, procedures and checks in place to manage the Authority's governance arrangements.

Response to Covid-19

3.5 On 4 April 2020, the Government introduced Regulations under the Coronavirus Act 2020 providing for formal Authority meetings to be held "virtually" i.e. with remote access (including telephone and video conference) for Authority Members, the press and the public. The Regulations, which remained in force until 7 May 2021, also provided that an Annual Meeting need not be held until 2021.

3.6 As a result, the Authority:

- Agreed not to hold an Annual Meeting in 2020. Any appointments that would normally be made at an Annual Meeting, remained in place until the next Annual Meeting (in 2021);
- Introduced a platform to enable its meetings to be held virtually, with proceedings livestreamed to the press and public (in compliance with the Regulations);
- Introduced a Remote Meetings Protocol and amended Standing Orders to reflect the provisions of the Regulations and the Protocol. These documents can be found on the Authority's [website](#);
- Approved a calendar of meetings for 2020-21 proportionate to meeting business need while maintaining public transparency and the democratic process. Details of meetings for 2020-21, together with agendas (once published) for the meetings, can be found on the Authority's [website](#); and
- In the absence of timely, formal meetings, used the Urgency provisions of its Standing Orders to make certain decisions for example approval of the Remote Meetings Protocol and amended Standing Orders; budget outturn; and disposal of Budleigh Salterton Fire Station. The detail of all decisions taken using the Urgency provisions can be found on the Authority's [Website](#).

3.7 A temporary Gold, Silver and Bronze level command structure was implemented within the Service, to improve speed of decision-making, in response to the pandemic. The Bronze level consisted of Cells with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, captured in a Business Continuity Response governance document. A dedicated Triage team was established to handle queries and direct actions to the most appropriate cells. Action tracking software was developed and implemented to enable visibility of outstanding and completed actions, and to assist with resource allocation.

3.8 The Silver team held regular meetings with all cell leads, at an agreed, variable frequency, as required. Throughout 2020-21 this frequency varied between daily and twice-weekly. The Gold team met on a weekly basis, with Gold representation also available at Silver meetings.

3.9 A Recovery Planning team was established, which met regularly throughout 2020-21. Its work was aligned with other members of National Fire Chiefs Council Business Continuity planning groups, and with other members of the Local Resilience Forums. The role of this team was to ensure that appropriate measures were put in place to enable the authority to return to more standard ways of working without risking the safety of employees or the public.

How we measure and monitor our performance

- 3.10 The Service has a performance framework in place to ensure that it is able to effectively measure and review performance in a way that is meaningful and practical. A suite of strategic performance indicators is reported to the Audit and Performance Review Committee and to the Service's Executive Board, whilst a real-time dashboard is provided to support operational Service Delivery activity. Work has commenced in 2020-21 to redesign the performance framework, and to procure a system to support this. Data integrity remains a challenge for 2021-22.
- 3.11 The Service has invested in its analytical capability in order to provide more sophisticated measurement and understanding of the performance of its activities. These provisions will develop into the availability of self-serve performance information for Service employees and communities via the relaunch of the website. By presenting timely and relevant information to all employees, the Service is growing a performance-focused culture of continuous improvement and evaluation.

Performance Measures

- 3.12 As part of the ongoing improvement to performance reporting, work is focussed on the provision of information appropriate to the different levels of the organisation.
- 3.13 The Service's strategic aims and objectives are set by the Authority, with the Directorates and Departments supporting and delivering the performance to achieve these. As such, the Authority and the Service Executive Board are provided with high-level indicators and reporting by exception, to provide governance and oversight of service provision and performance. These reports are presented to governance meetings, including the Audit & Performance Review Committee on a monthly or quarterly basis as appropriate.
- 3.14 Community-facing employees and their managers require performance information specific to their roles and areas, presented in such a way as to clearly demonstrate how their operational activity supports and delivers the corporate objectives. Information at this level is much more dynamic and is presented in an easily accessible way, on a shorter timescale to facilitate timely management and intervention.
- 3.15 These supporting measures also apply to non-operational roles so that functions such as training, fleet and IT and measures such as fitness, budget and compliance, are all reported on in order to maximise effectiveness and efficiency in achieving good performance.

Performance Targets

- 3.16 As with performance measures, appropriate targets should be set at all levels of the Service, from the strategic key performance indicators to the targets set for individuals within appraisals. Individuals' objectives are agreed with their line managers and are aligned to departmental plans, which in turn support the Authority's objectives.

- 3.17 Targets should be reviewed annually or where appropriate and are set on the basis of historic benchmarks, identified trends, comparison with other fire and rescue services and future aspirations. The Service is currently reviewing the current arrangements in place with a view to strengthening the 2021/22 target setting process.

Performance Reporting

- 3.18 Regular reporting against plans and performance measures help to ensure a sustained focus on those things that matter most, resulting in delivery of the Service's priorities and improvement agenda.
- 3.19 Reports of key measures will be produced and will include interpretation, analysis and any actions to be taken. The audience for these reports are the Authority, the Audit, Performance and Review Committee, the Service Executive Board, the Service Leadership Team, Group Commands and support departments.
- 3.20 Reports focus on exceptions, i.e. those measures that are exceeding target and those not on target. This encourages celebration of success and sharing of good practice along with discussion on actions needed to rectify under performance.
- 3.21 The Service has invested in significantly upgrading its performance management technology, to better facilitate the management of, and links between, corporate planning, performance and improvement. The platform, once fully implemented, will integrate with analytical and visualisation tools, such that information will be presented to employees in a way that is relevant to them, and provide greatly enhanced visibility of performance, accountability and objectives.
- 3.22 This platform also promotes the identification and capture of best practice and areas for improvement. By carrying out this evaluation, the Service learns from its own actions, which, combined with national guidance and peer learning, feeds back into how the Service defines its strategic direction and planning.

4 Financial Assurance

Statement of Accounts

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement under the *Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015* for authorities to publish the financial results of their activities for the year. The 'Statement of Accounts', shows the annual costs of providing the service and is determined by a Code of Practice published by CIPFA, which aims to give a "true and fair" view of the financial position and transactions of the Authority.
- 4.2 The Treasurer is responsible for the approval of the Statement of Accounts prior to publication. To meet the requirements of the Regulations, the draft Statement of Accounts is published by the end of May with the final audited Statement of Accounts published once the audit process has been completed. The Redmond Review has recommended that the publication date be the end of September.

External Audit Arrangements

- 4.3 On an annual basis, the Statement of Accounts is subject to external audit. Following a national procurement exercise, Grant Thornton was appointed as the external auditors for the South West region.
- 4.4 Grant Thornton is therefore responsible for the completion of the following assurance activities:
- Audit of the 2020-21 financial statements
 - Proposed opinion on the Authority's accounts
 - Proposed Value for Money commentary
- 4.5 No significant issues have arisen to date from the External Audit work completed in 2020-21.

Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”)

- 4.6 The Regulations set out a legal framework for contracting public authorities to follow in securing a contract for works, supplies and services where the contract value exceeds set thresholds unless the contract qualifies for a specific exclusion as defined in the Regulations. The Regulations are not static but subject to change, driven by evolving European and UK case law. The Regulations reflect and reinforce the value for money focus of the Government's procurement policy. Based on the Treaty principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment and proportionality even where the procurement process is not subject to the Regulations the Treaty based principles apply.
- 4.7 The Head of Fleet and Procurement and Corporate Procurement Manager is responsible for review of all third party expenditure and ensuring that the Service processes conform to UK Regulations.

Data Transparency

- 4.8 The Authority complies with the Government's 'Local Government Transparency Code 2015' for releasing public data. The following arrangements are in place:
- A Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
 - Publication of the annual statement of accounts
 - Publication of all expenditure over £500
 - Publication of all Government Procurement Card transactions
 - Publication of Procurement Information
 - Publication of land ownership
 - Publication of Trade Union facility time
 - Publication of a Pay Policy Statement including all senior employee salaries and pay multiple comparators
 - Publication of fraud investigations

- Publication of Members' allowances and expenses
- Publication of External Audit reports
- Publication of all committee reports (other than those where a statutory exemption for publication applies).

Financial Planning

- 4.9 Currently, the amount of Central Government funding is reviewed annually. A number of scenarios are included within the Medium Term Financial Plan demonstrating the possible funding position for the next 5 years. This assists Authority Members in understanding the potential risks regarding funding. The [Medium Term Financial Plan](#) is published alongside the underpinning: [Reserves Strategy](#); [Capital Strategy](#); and the [Safer Together Programme](#).

Covid-19 impact

- 4.10 The key financial issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic were reported to the Resources Committee on the 2 July 2020 (available on the Authority [website](#)). The cessation of some activity, in particular delays to the capital programme, will have the effect of improving cash flows for the Authority during 2020-21. The Authority has a healthy cash position, with sufficient reserves to ensure protection from any delayed payments in 2020-21. The majority of cash reserves are held in short-term investments which are accessible should the need arise. In addition, fire authorities have been supported by the Government, which has paid several grants early to ease any cash flow pressures. Cash flow issues are not anticipated to impact the Authority over the medium term financial period.
- 4.11 On the 2 July 2020 the Government announced further measures to support local authorities with budgetary pressures arising from loss of income from Council Tax and Business Rates, spreading any losses over a three year period. The Authority, in collaboration with the fire sector, will be seeking to measure and understand the longer-term impact of losses and request government support against any detriment.
- 4.12 Whilst it is not possible to predict the ultimate extent and duration of the pandemic, or its wider impact on the economy, stakeholders will look to authorities to use best endeavours to explain the specific known impacts on their organisation to date, as well as the anticipated future impacts under different scenarios. The specific areas affected by uncertainty are discussed below in more detail, however we would expect that many authorities will have to reconsider their strategies and outlook going forward given the significant impacts of Covid-19. Further, measures to contain the pandemic have likely put pressure on governance processes and on elected members in discharging their responsibilities.

5 Future Improvements

5.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the Service's ability to be able to progress in some areas in line with the timescales that were originally anticipated. The following areas for improvement therefore carry forward and remain our key areas of focus throughout 2021-22:

- Service policy management.
- Information management to allow employees to easily locate accurate and up to date information when required.
- Aligning resources to risk and prioritising prevention and protection activity.
- Improving diversity across the Service including operational management and senior roles.
- Ensuring that the Service's planning processes integrate performance, projects and risk so that all activity is aligned to the strategic objectives, vision and purpose.
- Improving the integrity of data in order to support the effective implementation of the performance framework and the system to support this.

5.2 The following new areas for improvement have been identified:

- Strategic Policy determination (set by the Fire Authority) with scrutiny applied to those areas where matters are delegated to the Chief Fire Officer.
- Further improving our Efficiency, Effectiveness and People arrangements.

5.3 Continuing appraisal of the governance and internal control mechanisms during the accounting period has identified the following internal control issues which the Service will continue to address in the next year:

- Functional and process issues were encountered with the software solution for reporting safety events, which impacted on the recording and management of safety event investigations as well as the ability to monitor accidents through trend analysis. This has been raised on the Corporate Risk Register and, despite originally being hampered by the impact of Covid-19, work is progressing with the development of a replacement system.
- The Service's processes and systems for the management of assets require improvement. This will continue with implementation of Phase 2 of the asset management implementation project in 2021-22.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Authority is satisfied that the issues identified above are appropriate and that steps are already in place to address the improvement areas identified in this review. The Audit & Performance Review Committee will receive updates on the implementation and operation of these improvement activities annually, through the updated action plan attached in Appendix A to this report.

6.2 Additionally, the Authority is satisfied that the systems and processes that are in place across the organisation fulfil the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

**CHAIR, DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE & RESCUE
AUTHORITY**

APPENDIX A TO 2020-21 ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE – ACTION PLAN

Identified Issue	Action Needed	Lead Officer
Service Policy Management Improvements are required to ensure that the Service has an effective policy framework, effective document lifecycle management and compliance with the latest accessibility standards.	As part of the Microsoft 365 rollout: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver new policy template repository with automated document management information reporting on the policy lifecycle. • Enable automatic publication of policies to the website to decrease the Freedom of Information response burden. • Implement an improved mechanism to store documents to enable easier location by employees. 	Head of ICT
Information management The approach to information management is driven at department level rather than taking an enterprise approach to how information is managed across the Service. This leads to difficulty for employees easily finding accurate and up to date information when required. This also impedes the ability to lead to smarter working practices.	As part of the Microsoft 365 project, an enterprise wide approach to information management will be developed which will form the basis of the new Intranet.	Head of ICT
Aligning resources to risk and prioritising prevention and protection activity. We need to ensure that we allocate our resources for response, prevention and protection in a way that best reflects the risks to our communities, prioritising our prevention and protection work to prevent fires and other emergencies from occurring, but being able to respond when emergencies do happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the decisions of the Fire and Rescue Authority with regards to the new Service Delivery Operating Model have been implemented. • Review the Community Safety Plan to ensure that the most vulnerable communities are being prioritised through our prevention work. • Review the Risk Based Inspection Programme to ensure that high risk buildings are being inspected and are compliant with legislation. • Review the Service Delivery strategic plan to ensure that resources are deployed to support efficiency and effectiveness of all response, prevention and protection activity. 	Area Manager Service Delivery - Community Risk
Improving diversity across the Service including operational management and senior roles. There is a need to further develop contracts and career paths to support inclusivity ensuring that the Service has a workforce that reflects the communities that it serves.	Implement positive action such as direct entry (an NFCC project) supported by the 'Our Time' sponsorship programme.	Head of HR
Planning, Performance and Continuous Improvement	The planning and performance management framework that is currently under development needs to be finalised and rolled out.	Area Manager Service Improvement -

Identified Issue	Action Needed	Lead Officer
In order to ensure that all activity is aligned to the strategic objectives, vision and purpose, the Service's planning processes need to integrate with performance, projects and risk.	This has been reworked to address the identified issue and we are in the process of purchasing a new system through the procurement framework. The new system is cloud based so will require connection rather than installation and will support the integrated approach, linking planning, performance, projects and risk as well as giving a much clearer view of performance against key objectives.	Risk & Planning (IRMP)
Data integrity Work has commenced to redesign the performance framework and to procure a system to support this. In order to ensure successful implementation, work is required to improve the integrity of data and to ensure proportionate and robust controls on data in order to: promote valid data at the point of capture; maintain up to date, accurate records; enable the exploitation of external data sources, particularly in relation to location and premises data; and ensure consistency in reporting information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map the data requirements for the Service and where these are held. • Agree data owners. • Develop automated reporting. 	Area Manager Service Improvement - Risk & Planning (IRMP)
Safety Event Management Functional and process issues were encountered with the software solution for reporting safety events, which impacted on the recording and management of safety event investigations as well as the ability to monitor accidents through trend analysis.	Develop and implement an improved solution for the recording and management of safety event investigations	Head of Organisational Assurance
Integrated Service Asset Register (Fleet and Operational Equipment) An integrated fleet and operational service asset register needs to be developed and embedded to ensure that all assets are effectively recorded and managed to provide consistent data to inform replacement plans and ensure operational assets are fit for purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Operational Equipment review – complete. • Develop an equipment register to capture all legislative and manufacturer requirements for the different categories of equipment and their corresponding risk assessments - complete. • Implement Phase 2 of the asset management implementation project. 	Head of Fleet & Procurement
Strategic Policy determination Lack of a clearly defined strategic policy agenda.	Fire & Rescue Authority to set strategic policy agenda with professional advice and support from Service Officers.	Chief Fire Officer
Further improving our Efficiency, Effectiveness and People arrangements. We need to deliver our statutory duties, add value through improved community outcomes and create a workplace where all employees are able to perform at their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness and Efficiency: Improve the performance management framework to ensure that all activities are aligned to corporate priorities to reduce duplication of effort and to performance manage the Service. • People: Further to the external review of Human Resources and Organisational Development, identify key priorities and implement an improvement plan. 	Chief Fire Officer

Identified Issue	Action Needed	Lead Officer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People: Implement the Safe To intervention throughout the Service so that people feel included and feel safe to speak up, to learn, to contribute and to challenge 	