



**Monday,
12 June 2017
14.00**

**Meeting of
Governance and
Constitution Committee
Fire Service HQ
Winsford**

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Cheshire Fire Authority

Notes for Members of the Public

Attendance at Meetings

The Cheshire Fire Authority welcomes and encourages members of the public to be at its meetings and Committees. You are requested to remain quiet whilst the meeting is taking place and to enter and leave the meeting room as quickly and quietly as possible.

All meetings of the Authority are held at Fire Service Headquarters in Winsford. If you plan to attend please report first to the Reception Desk where you will be asked to sign in and will be given a visitors pass. You should return your pass to the Reception Desk when you leave the building. There are some car parking spaces available on site for visitors at the front of the Headquarters Building. Please do not park in spaces reserved for Fire Service personnel.

If you feel there might be particular problems with access to the building or car parking please contact the Reception Desk at Fire Service Headquarters on Winsford (01606) 868700.

Questions by Electors

An elector in the Fire Service area can ask the Chair of the Authority a question if it is sent to the Monitoring Officer at Fire Service HQ to arrive at least five clear working days before the meeting. The contact officer named on the front of the Agenda will be happy to advise you on this procedure.

Access to Information

Copies of the Agenda will be available at the meeting. A copy can also be obtained from the contact officer named on the front of the Agenda. Alternatively, individual reports are available on the Authority's website (www.cheshirefire.gov.uk)

The Agenda is usually divided into two parts. Members of the public are allowed to stay for the first part. When the Authority is ready to deal with the second part you will be asked to leave the meeting room, because the business to be discussed will be of a confidential nature, for example, dealing with individual people and contracts.

This agenda is available in large print, Braille, audio CD or in community languages upon request by contacting; Telephone: 01606868414 or email: equalities@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Recording of Meetings

Anyone attending the meeting should be aware the Authority audio-records its meetings. There is a protocol on reporting at meetings which provides further information. Copies are available on the Service's website www.cheshirefire.gov.uk or alternatively contact Democratic Services for details

Fire Evacuation

If the Fire Alarm sounds you should make your way to the nearest exit as quickly as possible and leave the building. Please follow any instructions from staff about evacuation routes.



**MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 12 JUNE 2017**

Time : 10.00 am

Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire

AGENDA

Part 1 - Business to be discussed in public

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1A Recording of Meeting

Members are reminded that this meeting will be audio-recorded.

1B Apologies for Absence

1C Declarations of Members' Interests

Members are reminded that the Members' Code of Conduct requires the disclosure of Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Non-Statutory Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

1D Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

(Pages 1 - 4)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 8th February 2017.

ITEMS REQUIRING DISCUSSION / DECISION

2 Draft Statement of Assurance 2016-17

(Pages 5 - 44)

3 New Member Decision-Making Body

(Pages 45 - 48)

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE held on Wednesday, 8 February 2017 at Lecture Theatre - Fire Headquarters, Cheshire at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillors P Booher, A Dirir, E Johnson, D Marren, R Polhill, S Wright, and independent (non-elected) members A Ruddy and L Thomson

1 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

A Recording of Meeting

Members were reminded that the meeting would be audio-recorded.

B Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

C Declarations of Members' Interests

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reminded Members that a dispensation had been granted to all Members in relation to the approval of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Item 3 Members' Allowance Scheme 2017-18

All Members present acknowledged that they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in this item and indicated that they would rely upon the dispensation.

D Minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee

RESOLVED: That

The minutes of the Governance and Constitution Committee held on 5th October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING:

A Member raised an issue related to Item 4 within the minutes – Review of Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure. He had previously requested that the list of those who could be contacted with concerns be enlarged and that it be made explicit in the policy that employees can report issues to Members. This was not reflected in the minutes as drafted. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that he would ensure that the policy included appropriate wording.

2 CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE - UPDATE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services introduced the report and informed Members that the commentary concerning the action plan Improvement

Areas/Actions was encouraging. Members were referred to Appendix 1. He confirmed that items 1, 2 and 4 were essentially complete (although there was an element of these that would always be 'ongoing'). Policies were regularly reviewed and a report was regularly prepared to ensure the visibility of this work. Performance had recently been reconsidered in light of changes in staffing and responsibilities. This would be reviewed further as the collaboration with Cheshire Constabulary saw the creation of further joint corporate services supporting fire and police. Reporting on the relationship with and performance of North West Fire Control was now embedded with some rigour added to the annual process of review/audit. The one area that remained a challenge was the review of partnerships. It felt like this could remain something of a work in progress but that there was a level of confidence that appropriate governance existed where was deemed necessary e.g. health interventions being supported by the Service.

The Chair asked how proposals/activity of partnerships were challenged. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that members of the Service Management Team shared information about proposals and understood the need to have appropriate governance. Where it was felt necessary and proportionate performance measures enabled the Service to monitor the quality of partnerships.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the progress report be noted.

3 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reminded Members that a dispensation had been granted to all Members in relation to the approval of the Members' Allowances Scheme (MAS). He introduced the background to the report and informed Members that an individual from Cheshire East's Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP member) had assisted with the review and had provided recommendations in relation to the MAS.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services provided further information on the suggested recommendations of the IRP member, which included changes to the travel allowance and the dependants' carers' allowance. The IRP member also provided some observations e.g. about certain roles.

He referred Members to Appendix 2 to the report which contained a draft MAS for 2017-18 and beyond. Members went through the recommendations and accepted them.

RESOLVED: That

[1] the recommendations from the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme set out in Appendix 1 be accepted; and

[2] the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2017-18 onwards be finalised, based on the draft set out in Appendix 2 for consideration by the Fire Authority.

4 REMOVAL OF POLICY COMMITTEE

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services informed Members that the report considered the removal of Policy Committee from the Authority's meeting structure and changes to the Authority's Constitution to enable a report to be presented to the Fire Authority on 14th February 2017.

He referred Members to Appendix 1 which contained an extract from the Constitution which had been changed (using the 'track changes' feature) to reflect the removal of Policy Committee from the Authority's meeting structure. He advised that policies etc. that were currently the responsibility of Policy Committee would become the responsibility of the Fire Authority, but that the additional business was manageable given that not all of the matters were reported regularly.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services asked Members to consider two questions. They decided that membership of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) need not be restricted. They agreed that Performance and Overview Committee should take on the responsibility to act as the Closure of Accounts Committee (with Finance Member Champions invited to the meeting).

RESOLVED: That Members

- [1] support the removal of Policy Committee from the Authority's meeting structure; and**
- [2] recommend to the Fire Authority changes to the Authority's Constitution (based on an updated version of Appendix 1) which should take effect at the start of the next municipal year.**

5 INVOLVEMENT OF POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR CHESHIRE IN CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that the report provided Members with an opportunity to consider the arrangements which would allow the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cheshire (the Cheshire PCC) to be involved in the Fire Authority. He explained the current legal position, informing Members that the Cheshire Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1997 [the Order] and the Policing and Crime Bill, now an Act, did not currently provide a mechanism to allow the Cheshire PCC to become a member of Cheshire Fire Authority.

Members were informed that the Cheshire PCC wished to become a member of the Fire Authority, but that he had stated that he did not require the right to vote nor did he intend to claim allowances. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services referred Members to the rights suggested within the report that could be afforded to the Cheshire PCC without a change in the law.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services also referred Members to the proposed additional section of the Constitution.

RESOLVED: That

- [1] a report based on the draft report attached as Appendix 1 be agreed for submission to the Fire Authority.**

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 12TH JUNE 2017
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: CHRIS ASTALL

SUBJECT: DRAFT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2016-17

Purpose of Report

1. To give Members an opportunity to review an early draft of the Statement of Assurance 2016-17.

Recommended that Members:

- [1] Review the draft Statement of Assurance 2016-17.

Background

2. The 'Fire and rescue national framework for England', 2012 (the National Framework) includes a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to, "...provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan and the requirements included in this Framework." In order to do so authorities are required to publish a statement of assurance annually.
3. Guidance on statements of assurance was published by the Government in 2013. This provided some context:
 - "7. One of the principal aims of the statement of assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.
 8. Where fire and rescue authorities have already set out relevant information that is clear, accessible, and user-friendly within existing documents, they may wish to include extracts, or links to these documents within their statement of assurance."
4. The Guidance also contained sections dealing with 'Financial', 'Governance' and 'Operational' aspects of the statement of assurance. The approach to Financial matters was already governed by substantial legislative requirements. Similarly Governance matters were already captured in the Annual Governance Statement, another legal requirement.

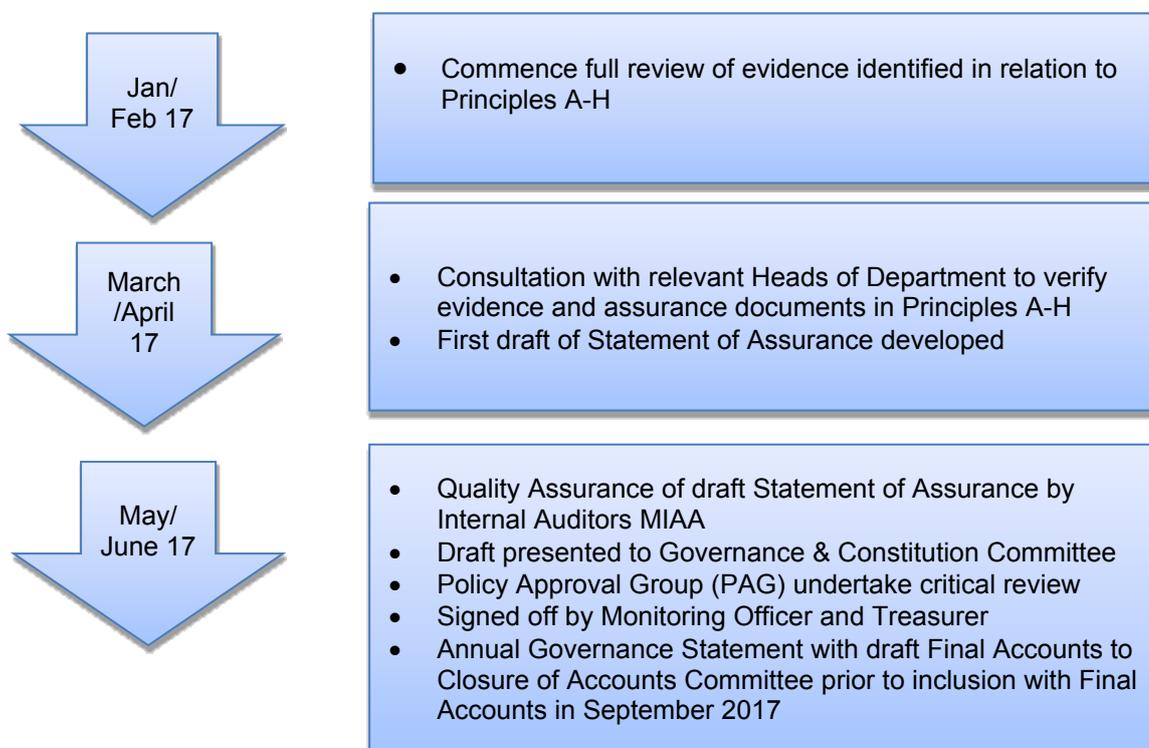
5. The Authority has, for some time, also used the CIPFA/Solace framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' to assist it in gathering and presenting evidence in relation to Financial and Governance matters. This was supplemented by the Authority with an additional 'local' principle concerned with compliance with the National Framework (which encompasses operational matters as well as the broader requirements of the National Framework). The CIPFA/Solace framework was refreshed last year and reframed various elements.

Information

Process to Support Preparation of Statement of Assurance

6. The process to support the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Assurance is unchanged. This has commenced with an evaluation and review of the evidence relating to the principles in the CIPFA/Solace framework (as supplemented locally). Where areas of improvement are identified, action plans will be put in place. A summary of the CIPFA/Solace principles is attached to this report as Appendix 1. In addition, the current version of the supplementary local principle (H) relating to compliance with the National Framework is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

The process map below highlights the key steps and timelines for development and production of the Authority's Statement of Assurance 2016-17.



Draft Statement of Assurance

7. The draft Statement of Assurance is attached to this report as Appendix 3. In accordance with the Guidance mentioned earlier, Members will see that the document includes various links to other documents and evidence which will be published on the Authority's website (or be available elsewhere). Officers are continuing to review these links to ensure that they refer to up-to-date documents and are working properly.

Financial Implications

8. There are no significant financial implications other than staff time involved in research, evidence gathering and publication of the Statement of Assurance.

Legal Implications

9. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, it is important that the Authority publishes the Statement of Assurance. Parts of it must be published by law, e.g. the Annual Governance Statement.

Equality & Diversity Implications

10. There are no differential impacts on any particular section of the community arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

11. There are no specific impacts on the environment arising from this report. However, it is worth noting that the Statement of Assurance is not published in hard copy: it is an electronic document that signposts various other pieces of information/evidence.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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APPENDIX 1

Delivering Good Governance in Public Sector - Refreshed Code - 2016

PRINCIPLE A

Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law

A1	Behaving with Integrity <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensuring members and officers behave with integrity and lead a culture where acting in the public interest is visibly and consistently demonstrated.▪ Ensuring members take the lead in establishing specific standard operating principles or values for the organisation and its staff and that they are communicated and understood.▪ Leading by example and using the above standard operating principles or values as a framework for decision making and other actions.▪ Demonstrating, communicating and embedding the standard operating principles or values through appropriate policies and processes.
A2	Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Seeking to establish, monitor and maintain the organisation ethical standards and performance.▪ Underpinning personal behaviour with ethical values and ensuring they permeate all aspects of the organisations culture and operations.▪ Developing and maintain robust policies and procedures which emphasis on agreed ethical values and performance.▪ Ensuring that external providers of services on behalf of the organisation are required to act with integrity and compliance with ethical standards expected by the organisation.
A3	Respecting the rule of the law <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensuring members and staff demonstrate a strong commitment to the rule of law as well as adhering to relevant laws and regulations.▪ Creating the conditions to ensure that the statutory officers, other key post holders and members are able to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with legislative and regulatory requirements.▪ Striving to optimise the use of full powers available for the benefit of citizens, communities and other stakeholders.▪ Dealing with breaches of legal and regulatory provisions effectively.▪ Ensuring corruption and misuse of power are dealt with effectively.

PRINCIPLE B:

Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

B1	Openness <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensuring an open culture through demonstrating, documenting and communicating the organisation commitment to openness.▪ Making decisions that are open about actions, plans, resource use, forecasts, outputs and outcomes.▪ Providing clear reasoning and evidence for decisions both in public records and explanations to stakeholders and being explicit about criteria, rationale and considerations used.▪ Using formal and informal consultation and engagement.
B2	Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Effectively engaging with stakeholders to ensure that the purpose, objectives and intended outcomes are clear.▪ Developing formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes achieved effectively.▪ Ensuring that partnerships are based on trust; a shared commitment to change; a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners; and that the added value of partnership working is explicit.▪

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Delivering Good Governance in Public Sector - Refreshed Code - 2016

B3	Engaging with individual citizens and service user effectively <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establishing a clear policy on the type of issues that the organisation will meaningfully consult with or involve communities, individual citizens, service users and other stakeholders to ensure that service provision is contributing towards the achievement of intended outcomes.▪ Ensuring that communication methods are effective and that members and officers are clear about their roles with regard to community engagement.▪ Encouraging, collecting and evaluating the views and experiences of communities, citizens, service users and organisations of different backgrounds including reference to future needs.▪ Balancing feedback from more active stakeholder groups with other stakeholder groups to ensure inclusivity.▪ Taking account of the impact of decisions on future generations of tax payers and service users.
PRINCIPLE C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits	
C1	Defining Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Having a clear vision, which is in an agreed formal statement of the organisation's purpose and intended outcomes containing appropriate performance indicators, which provide the basis for the organisation's overall strategy, planning and other decisions.▪ Specifying the intended impact on, or changes for stakeholders including citizens and service users.▪ Delivering defined outcomes on a sustainable basis within the resources that will be available.▪ Identifying and managing risks to the achievement of outcomes.▪ Managing service users' expectations effectively with regard to determining priorities and making the best use of resources available.
C2	Sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Considering and balancing the combined economic, social and environmental impact of policies and plans when taking decision about service provision.▪ Taking a longer term view with regard to decision making, taking account of risk and acting transparently where there are potential conflicts between organisation's intended outcomes.▪ Determining the wider public interest associated with balancing conflicting interests between achieving the various economic, social and environmental benefits, through consultation where possible, in order to ensure appropriate trade-offs.▪ Ensuring fair access to services.
PRINCIPLE D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	
D1	Determining Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ensuring decision makers receive objective and rigorous analysis of a variety of options indicating how intended outcomes would be achieved and associated risks.▪ Considering feedback from citizens and service users when making decisions about service improvements or where services are no longer required in order to prioritise competing demands within limited resources available including people, skills, land and assets.
D2	Planning Interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establishing and implementing robust planning and control cycles that cover strategic and operational plans, priorities and targets.▪ Engaging with internal and external stakeholders in determining how services and other courses of action should be planned and delivered.▪ Considering and monitoring risks facing each partner when working collaboratively, including shared risks.▪ Ensuring arrangements are flexible and agile so that the mechanisms for delivering goods and services can be adapted to changing circumstances.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishing appropriate performance indicators (KPIs) as part of the planning process in order to identify how the performance of services and projects is to be measured. ▪ Ensuring capacity exists to generate the information required to review service quality regularly. ▪ Preparing budgets in accordance with objectives, strategies and the medium financial plan. ▪ Informing medium and long term resource planning by drawing up realistic revenue and capital expenditure aimed at developing a sustainable funding strategy.
D3	<p>Optimising achievement of intended outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring the medium term financial strategy integrates and balances service priorities, affordability and other resource constraints. ▪ Ensuring the budgeting process is all-inclusive, taking into account the full cost of operations over the medium and longer term. ▪ Ensuring the medium financial strategy sets the context for ongoing decisions on significant delivery issues or response to charges in the external environment that may arise during the budgetary period in order for outcomes to be achieved while optimising resource usage. ▪ Ensuring the achievement of 'social value' through service planning and commissioning
<p>PRINCIPLE E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</p>	
E1	<p>Developing the entity's capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reviewing operations, performance and use of assets on a regular basis to ensure their continuing effectiveness. ▪ Improving resource use through appropriate application of techniques such as benchmarking and other options in order to determine how resources are allocated so that defined outcomes are achieved effectively and efficiently. ▪ Recognising the benefits of partnership and collaborative working where added value can be achieved. ▪ Developing and maintaining an effective workforce plan to enhance the strategic allocation of resources.
E2	<p>Developing the capability of the entity's leadership and other individuals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Developing protocols to ensure that elected and appointed leaders negotiate with each other regarding their respective roles early on in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained. ▪ Publishing a statement that specifies the types of decisions that are delegated and those reserved for the collective decision making of the governing body. ▪ Ensuring the leader and the chief executive have clearly defined and distinctive leadership roles within a structure whereby the chief executive leads by implementing strategy and managing the delivery of services and other outputs set by members and each provides a check and balance for the other's authority. ▪ Developing the capabilities of members and senior management to achieve effective leadership and to enable the organisation to respond successfully to changing legal and policy demands as well as economic, policy and environmental changes and risks by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring members and staff have access to appropriate induction tailored to their role and that ongoing training and development matching individual and organisational requirements is available and encouraged. - Ensuring members and officers have the appropriate skills, knowledge, resources and support to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and ensuring that they are able to update their knowledge on a continuing basis. - Ensuring personal, organisation and system-wide development through shared learning, including lessons learnt from governance weaknesses both internal and external.

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Delivering Good Governance in Public Sector - Refreshed Code - 2016

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that there are structures in place to encourage public participation. ▪ Taking steps to consider the leadership's own effectiveness and ensuring leaders are open to constructive feedback from peer review and inspections. ▪ Holding staff to account through regular performance reviews which take account of training or development needs. ▪ Ensuring arrangements are in place to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and support individuals in maintaining their own physical and mental wellbeing.
PRINCIPLE F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	
F1	Managing risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recognising that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making. ▪ Implementing robust and integrated risk management arrangements and ensuring that they are working effectively. ▪ Ensuring that responsibilities for managing individual risks are clearly allocated.
F2	Managing performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring service delivery effectively including the planning, specification, execution and independent post implementation review. ▪ Making decisions based on relevant, clear objective analysis and advice pointing out the implications and risks inherent in the organisation's financial, social and environmental position and outlook. ▪ Ensuring an effective scrutiny or oversight function is in place which provides constructive challenge and debate on policies and objectives before, during and after decisions are made thereby enhancing the organisation's performance and that of any organisation for which it is responsible for a (common system). ▪ Encouraging effective and challenge and debate on policies and objectives to support balanced and effective decision making.
F3	Robust Internal Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aligning the risk management strategy and policies on internal control with achieving objectives. ▪ Evaluating and monitoring risk management and internal control on a regular basis. ▪ Ensuring effective counter fraud and anti-corruption arrangements of the framework of governance, risk management and control is provided by the internal auditor. ▪ Ensuring an audit committee or equivalent group/function, which is independent of the executive and accountable to the governing body: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides a further source of effective assurance regarding arrangements for managing risk and maintaining an effective control environment. - That its recommendations are listened to and acted upon.
F4	Managing Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safe collection, storage, use and sharing of data, including processes to safeguard personal data. ▪ Ensuring effective arrangements are in place and operating effectively when sharing data with other bodies. ▪ Reviewing and auditing regularly the quality and accuracy of data used in decisions making performance monitoring.
F5	Strong public financial management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring financial management supports both long term achievement of outcomes and short-term financial and operational performance.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensuring well-developed financial management is integrated at all levels of planning and control including management of financial; risks and controls.
PRINCIPLE G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability	
G1	Implementing good practice in transparency <ul style="list-style-type: none">Writing and communicating reports for public and other stakeholders in a fair, balanced and understandable style appropriate to the intended audience and ensuring that they are easy to access and interrogate.Striking a balance between providing the right amount of information to satisfy transparency demands and enhance public scrutiny while not being too onerous to provide and for users to understand.
G2	Implementing good practice in reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reporting at least annually on performance, value for money and stewardship of resources to stakeholders in a timely and understandable way.Ensuring members and senior management own the results reported.Ensuring robust arrangements for assessing the extent to which the principles contained in this framework have been applied and publishing results on the assessment, including an action plan for improvement and evidence to demonstrate good governance (the Annual Governance Statement).Ensuring that this framework is applied to jointly manage or share service organisations as appropriate.Ensuring performance information that accompanies the financial statement is prepared on a consistent and timely basis and the statements allow for comparison with other, similar organisations.
G2	Assurance and effective accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensuring that recommendations for corrective action made by external audit are acted upon.Ensuring an effective internal audit service with direct access to members is in place, providing assurance with regard to governance arrangements and that recommendations are acted upon.Welcoming peer challenge, reviews and inspections from regulatory bodies and implementing recommendations.Gaining assurance on risks associated with delivering services through third parties and that this is evidenced in the annual governance statement.Ensuring that when working in partnership, arrangements for accountability are clear and the need for wider public accountability has been recognised and met.

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APPENDIX 2:

PRINCIPLE H: Compliance to National Framework 2012	
<p>The priorities in the National Framework are for fire and rescue authorities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face; make provision for prevention and protection activities; and respond to incidents appropriately. ▪ Work in partnership with communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally to deliver their service. ▪ Be accountable to communities for the service they provide. 	
1. – Safer Communities	
1.3	Produce an integrated risk management plan that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border multi-authority and/or national nature.
1.9	Work with communities to identify and protect them from risk and to prevent incidents from occurring
1.10	<p>Each fire and rescue authority must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate how prevention, protection and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk. ▪ Set out its management strategy and risk based programme for enforcing the provision of Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order.
1.11	Make provision to respond to incidents such as fires, road traffic accidents and emergencies within their area and other areas in line with mutual aid agreements.
1.14	Have effective business continuity arrangements in place in accordance with duties under Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
1.15	<p>Collaborate with other fire and rescue authorities to deliver interoperability. Interoperability between fire and rescue authorities includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Compatible communications systems, control rooms and equipment. ▪ Common command and compatible control and co-ordination arrangements. ▪ Effective information, intelligence and data sharing. ▪ Compatible operational procedures, and guidance with common terminology. ▪ Compatible training and exercising (both individually and collectively). ▪ Cross border working with other English fire and rescue authorities and those in devolved administrations.
1.17	Collaborate with other FRAs, other emergency services, wider Category 1 & 2 responders and Local Resilience Forums to ensure interoperability.
1.26	Engage with the Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board in order to support discussions and decision making.
1.29	Fire and rescue authorities risk assessments must include an analysis of any gaps between existing capability and national resilience.
1.31	Fire and rescue authorities must highlight to the department or the Fire and Rescue strategic resilience board, any capability gaps that cannot be met having taken into account mutual aid arrangements, pooling and reconfiguration of resources and collective action.

1.33	Fire and Rescue Strategic Resilience Board, to provide assurance to Government that risks are assessed, plans are in place and any gaps between existing capabilities commissioned to deliver by Government are procured, maintained and managed cost effectively.
1.38	Work in partnership with communities and a wide range of partners locally and nationally in order
2. – Accountable to Communities	
2.3	Each fire and rescue authority integrated risk management plan must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be accessible and publicly available ▪ Reflect effect consultation throughout development ▪ Cover at least a three year time span and be reviewed and revised as often as necessary ▪ Reflect up to date risk analysis and evaluation
2.4	Hold the CFO to account for the delivery of the fire and rescue service
2.5	Have arrangements in place to ensure that decisions are open to scrutiny
2.8	Make communities aware of how they can access data and information on their performance
3. – Assurance	
3.2	Publish an annual statement of assurance
3.4	Fire and rescue authorities must work collectively, with the Strategic Resilience Board, to provide assurance to Government that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risks are assessed, plans are in place and any gaps between existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience are identified ▪ Existing specialist national resilience capabilities are fit for purpose ▪ Any new capabilities that fire and rescue authorities are commissioned to deliver by Government are procured, maintained and managed in the most cost effective way that delivers value for money whilst ensuring fit for purpose.
4. – Firefighter Fitness	
4.1	Each Fire & Rescue Authority must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have a process of fitness assessment and development to ensure that operational personnel are enabled to maintain the standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely. ▪ Ensure that no individual will automatically face dismissal if they fall below standards of personal fitness required in order to perform their role safely ▪ Ensure that all operational personnel will be provided with support to maintain their levels of fitness for the duration of their career ▪ Consider where operational personnel have fallen below the fitness standards required whether an individual is able to continue on full operational duties or should be stood down, taking into account the advice provided by the authority's occupational health provider. In making this decision, the safety and well being of the individual will be the key issue.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Commit to providing a minimum of 6 months of development and support to enable individuals who have fallen below the required fitness standards to regain the necessary levels of fitness.▪ Refer an individual to occupational health where underlying medical reasons are identified that restrict/prevent someone from achieving the necessary fitness and that individual must receive the necessary support to facilitate a return to operational duties and▪ Fully explore opportunities to enable the individual to remain in employment including through reasonable adjustment and redeployment in role where it appears the medical condition does not allow a return to operational duties.
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Annual Statement of Assurance 2016 - 2017

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DRAFT

1. Introduction

This is Cheshire Fire & Rescue Authority's fifth annual Statement of Assurance in line with the Government's requirements set out in the *Fire and Rescue National Framework* for England.

Intended Purpose of Statement of Assurance

The aim of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an easy and accessible way in which communities, government, local authorities and partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.

Statements of Assurance are published annually by fire and rescue authorities to integrate where practicable with existing governance reporting arrangements.

Complying with the Statement of Assurance

The published Statement of Assurance guidance sets out compliance requirements under three broad headings :

Financial:

Cheshire Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority has a robust budget monitoring process that is subject to close scrutiny. The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring that the right controls are in place to ensure that financial assets are properly managed, financial reporting is accurate and that the Annual Statement of Accounts is prepared in accordance with statutory requirements.

[Financial Regulations](#)

[Statement of Accounts](#)

Governance:

The Authority is required to ensure that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Authority is required by law to produce an "**Annual Governance Statement**" (AGS). The AGS and supporting compliance evidence can be located in section 3 of this document.

Operational:

The Authority is required to comply with a range of laws, regulations and guidance, the following is a list of some of the key legislation:

[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](#)

[Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)

[Local Government Act 1999](#)

[Health & Safety & Work Act 1974](#)

To ensure that the Authority can demonstrate how it complies with these requirements, a number of detailed assessments are undertaken. These include:

- Health and Safety policy and framework with regular progress being presented to the Service Management Team (SMT).

- Operational capability against risk to ensure that the right resources, procedures and skills are available to professionally respond to communities within target response times that are resources are aligned to risk.
- An annual review of operational risk and performance supplemented by quarterly scrutiny Member and officer meetings.
- Risk Management Board monitoring and scrutiny of corporate risks.
- Compliance against National Framework requirements.

[Operational Assurance Guidance Principle H](#)

Accountable to our Communities

This statement is underpinned by detailed documented evidence, most of which has been made available to the public on the Service website. This includes incident and performance data, quarterly performance reports, policy decisions, audit and assurance reports.

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk.

The Authority measures and monitors performance using a range of key Performance Indicators (KPI's) that are also used to compare performance against other fire and rescue authorities in England. The Authority publishes an Annual Report in September each year summarising progress against plans. All performance information available to the public can be accessed via the Service website and continues to be reviewed and refined.

[Annual Report](#)

In addition, the Authority has adopted the best practice guidance set out in the [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#) as far as is practical.

2. Financial Assurance

Evidence Links

The Cheshire Fire Authority provides financial assurance through the publication of an Annual Statement of Accounts. This is a statutory requirement under the [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2015](#) and the accounts are prepared following the *CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting*. The financial statements are subject to review by independent auditors as directed by the [Audit Commission Act 1998](#).

[Statement of Accounts](#)

In addition to the statutory requirement to publish annual financial results, the Authority is committed to increasing transparency. One of the first steps in this process is for the publication of expenditure in excess of £500. This is compliant with Local Government Transparency Code.

[CFRS Website: What we spend](#)

External Audit:

Grant Thornton Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) is the appointed external auditor for Cheshire Fire Authority and is responsible for completion of the following assurance activities:

- Audit of the 2016-17 financial statements
- Opinion on the Authority's accounts
- Value for Money conclusion

Internal Audit:

The Internal Audit function for 2016-17 was provided by Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA) and their audit opinion for the year ending **March 2017** can be located in Section 3 of this document.

3. Annual Governance Statement (AGS)

What is the Annual Governance Statement?

An Annual Governance Statement (AGS) publicly explains how an organisation manages its governance and internal control measures. It is an open and honest account of how an organisation ensures its financial management system is adequate and effective, as well as ensuring it has a sound system of internal control, assuring utmost integrity in all its dealings.

[Delivering
Good
Governance
2016](#)

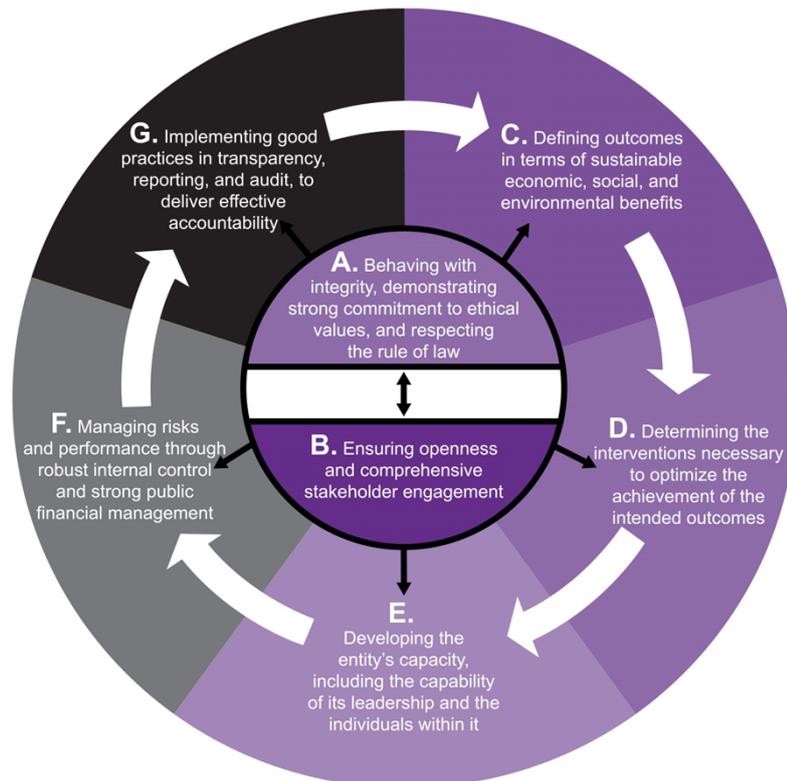
What is the governance framework?

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) published the advisory framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' ('the framework'), in 2007 and an Addendum to the framework was published in December 2012.

CIPFA/SOLACE published a new version of the framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' in 2016. The concept of the new framework is to make it more transparent and to help local authorities take responsibility for developing and shaping an informed approach to governance.

The framework defines seven core principles (A-G) that underpin the governance of each local government body. These principles are used to inform the development of our Local Code of Corporate Governance which was refreshed to reflect the new framework published in 2016. Principle H in the Local Code of Corporate Governance requires evidence of operational assurance and compliance with the National Framework and was included in the Local Code for consistency. The Authority's Local Code of Corporate Governance and compliance evidence is published on the Authority's website. An outline of the seven key areas is set out in the following model (*access the links to compliance documentation on the right for more detail*):

[Local Code of
Corporate
Governance
Principals A-H](#)



Scope of Responsibility

Cheshire Fire Authority

The Authority has responsibility for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Authority has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to show how it aims for continuous improvement and best value in delivering its services, taking into account a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Members and Officers

In discharging the statutory responsibilities of the Authority, Members and senior officers are responsible for ensuring that proper governance arrangements are in place. These need to demonstrate good management of the Authority's key risks in accordance with legislation and appropriate standards.

The Authority's Governance and Internal Control Framework

The Authority's governance and internal control framework includes the systems, processes, procedures, culture and core values by which it is directed and controlled, and through which it accounts to and engages with the communities and other stakeholders. It includes arrangements to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate and value for money services.

This framework centres on the Authority's strategic aims and objectives and includes:

- The organisation's vision and purpose which drive the service planning, delivery, risk, project and performance management frameworks
- The annual Integrated Risk Management Plan
- Consultation and Communications Strategies
- A published set of core values
- The Authority's Constitution
- Responsible Statutory Officers (Financial and Legal)
- Established structure of Authority and Committee meetings, each with formal Terms of Reference (ToR)
- Scrutiny by Members e.g. Performance and Overview Committee responsible for thematic agendas such as Finance, Risk, Equality and Diversity, Performance Management
- Integrated Corporate and Financial planning processes with regular reporting
- Treasury Management Strategy
- A refreshed Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan reviewed by the Governance and Constitution Committee.
- Policies which govern the activities of the Authority, overseen by senior managers Policy Approval Group (PAG)
- Risk Management Board responsible for maintaining and championing an effective Risk Management Policy, Framework and regularly reviewing the Strategic Risk Register
- Published Anti-Fraud, Corruption, Whistle-blowing and Complaints policies and procedures
- Medium term financial forecasting and budget management processes.
- Performance Management Board which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing organisational performance including the Corporate Performance Scorecard setting out the Authority's key indicators
- A dynamic, intelligent training programme which is tailored to the development needs of the Authority's frontline staff
- Appraisal and personal development programmes
- Project and Programme Board which monitors and challenges performance of key programmes and projects
- Established Health and Safety policies
- ICT Steering Group which provides strategic direction for the Authority's ICT and Information Management and Security policies
- SMT considering all financial issues
- Information Governance
- Code of Conduct
- Crisis Management Plan

[CFRS Vision, Mission, Core values](#)

[IRMP](#)

[Treasury Management Strategy](#)

[Whistle-blowing Policy](#)

Engaging with our Communities

Extensive efforts are made to engage with the communities and stakeholders of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington. A comprehensive twelve week programme of community consultation and stakeholder engagement is carried out each year to seek feedback on the Authority's key priorities and proposals set out in its draft annual Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). IRMP 13 covered the period ending **31st March 2017**.

[IRMP](#)

The principles by which the Authority carries out consultation are set out in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and on key issues the Authority works with the Consultation Institute to assess its performance against best practice.

Identifying and Communicating the Authority's vision

Following a period of public consultation the Fire Authority formally approved the publication of the new Five Year Strategy "Planning for a Safer Cheshire" at its meeting 17th June 2015. The Authority's vision remains "A Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires or other emergencies" and the Strategy sets out the approach to achieving that vision in the context of the challenges and risks faced by the organisation.

[Five Year Strategy](#)

Risk Management:

The Risk Management Framework and Policy is reviewed by Risk Management Board (RMB) annually. The Board accepted the new Framework at the October 2016 meeting and the policy and framework was approved by the Policy Committee in December 2016. The framework ensures all strategic, departmental, operational, programme and project risks are assessed against the achievement of objectives. RMB reviews the strategic risk register on a regular basis.

Equality and Inclusion

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has used the Fire and Rescue Equality Framework to assess its equality performance and achieved the highest level of the equality framework, 'Excellent' in 2011. In advance of a new national inspection regime for fire and rescue service being introduced later in 2017, the organisation uses a number of external accreditations to benchmark and affirm its commitment to equality – including the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index and the Disability Confident scheme. It is also a Mind Blue Light Programme champion. The Authority launched a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy 2017-2020 in April 2017.

[Equality and diversity strategy 20-17-20](#)

Stonewall

In 2017 Cheshire Fire Authority featured in the top ten of LGBT charity Stonewall's Equality Index Top 100 list of employers. The Authority has been a Stonewall Diversity Champion since 2008 and has featured in the top 50 of the Top 100 for the last five years. In 2017 the Authority ranked 8th and was the highest placed of any of the emergency services in the U.K.

[Stonewall Top Employers 2016](#)

Positive action

In 2016-17 the Authority undertook a successful positive action campaign to support its recruitment of 17 wholetime fire fighters. This included targeted communications, taster days, the assignment of buddies and mentors and canvassing for potential applicants at a number of local and regional events.

The campaign delivered the following successful outcomes in terms of diversity:

- BME – 1 successful candidate – 6% of successful candidates
- Female – 4 successful candidates – 24% of successful candidates
- LGBT – 4 successful candidates – 24%

- No candidates declared a disability

The Environment

The Authority maintains its commitment to reduce energy consumption and overall carbon emissions, with the objective of a 40% reduction by 2020. The opening of four new fire stations does present a challenge in terms of energy consumption and carbon emissions but this challenge is mitigated by environmental thinking within the planning and development stages, use of sustainable materials and planning strategic energy projects across the wider estate. New LED lighting upgrades in Widnes, Birchwood and Macclesfield Fire Stations are showing the energy reduction benefits and LED installs will be a focus in all station up-grades works in the future.

[Environmental Strategy 2014 - 2020](#)

The up-grade of oil based heating to gas supply in Northwich Fire Station delivers cleaner fuel supply, new efficient heating system and creates a better working environment for colleagues.

The Authority aims to improve its environmental evaluation of all aspects which could impact in the local environment and community.

Information Security

The Authority maintains an information security policy which represents 'best practice' within the security industry. The policy exists to protect Authority information against any type of accidental loss, damage or abuse, by its staff, third parties and partners. In addition it maintains a safeguard to ICT systems that process, store, display and transmit information. The Head of Legal & Democratic Services is the Authority's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO), and is responsible for the effective implementation of a consistent framework for management of information security across the Authority.

[Information Management Policy](#)

Information Governance Survey

During the first quarter of 2017 the Fire Service undertook an Information Governance Survey. The purpose of the survey was to:

- Feed into the Service's annual statement of assurance;
- Report to the Senior Information Risk Owner; and
- Identify any additional areas where Information Management can assist, particularly with the upcoming changes to data protection legislation and the Blue Light Collaboration programme.

The survey discovered that across the Service 84% of staff have successfully completed the mandatory data protection module. An additional 12% of staff have started the module but not completed the assessment. Only 4% have yet to start the training (or their training has expired).

[Results of Information Management Survey 16/17](#)

The survey identified that over 70% of corporate policies had been recently reviewed and updated with plans in place for the remainder to be refreshed during the next 12 months.

During 2016/2017, there were 8 incidents recorded in the Service's information security incident log. Of these, 7 were breaches, and one was a near miss. The incidents included:

- Lost mobile devices (two incidents)
- Inappropriate disclosure of information (five incidents)
- Inappropriate destruction of information (one incident)

Measures are being put in place to address issues raised during the survey, including:

- Roll out of new functionality within the document management system to facilitate the document review process;
- Reminders will be sent out to staff to complete mandatory data protection training;
- Updating the Service's information asset and information risk register, and working with departments to mitigate information risks;
- Working with the Communications team to raise awareness of data protection and information handling;
- Specialised information governance support for high risk projects that involve processing of personal data;
- Development and implantation of a project plan to work towards compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

The survey highlighted that a number of data cleansing exercises are underway in relation to the move to the new shared headquarters at Clemonds Hey. These exercises are being supported by the information management workstream of the Blue Light Collaboration programme.

Working in Partnership

North West Fire Control (NWFC)

The North West Fire Control is a unique collaboration between four partner fire and rescue services Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire and Greater Manchester. NWFC is run by a company owned by the hour services. Over the past year the Authority has continued to work closely with NWFC and the partners to ensure that the company delivers the call handling and mobilisation service to the requisite standards. Quarterly statistical performance data is sent from NWFC to each service for scrutiny. Members of the Performance & Overview Committee review this for the Authority.

Blue Light Collaboration Programme (BLC)

During 2016/17 work has continued on the Blue Light Collaboration (BLC) Programme which aims to merge the Cheshire Constabulary and Cheshire Fire Authority back office transactional services to create Joint Corporate Services (*IT, HR, Finance, Stores and Procurement, Planning and Performance, Strategic Change, Estates, Communications, Information Management, Legal*).

In December 2015 the Authority approved: the scope of the BLC Programme; the implementation budget and approach to funding; and the approach to the apportionment of costs and resultant savings. Since then work on the BLC Programme has been progressing steadily to ensure the smooth transition from the current separate organisations support services to joint services that provide services to both organisations. This has included service/departmental design and development of the

[Blue Light Collaboration Programme](#)

approach for the overarching management of the arrangements. The expected completion date for the entire BLC Programme is April 2018.

The BLC Programme Board (which is made up of the Chief Executive of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Assistant Chief Officer for the police and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for fire) approved the BLC Programme Plan which sets out the phasing and timing of moves from fire headquarters to Clemonds Hey. A People Strategy and People Transition processes documents have also been approved by the Board. The Strategy set out the guiding principles to help staff understand how both organisations will work together with staff and trade unions/staff associations in a fair, transparent and consistent way.

[People Strategy](#)

Staff receive regular communications, and a number of visits have taken place for staff directly affected by the move to the new joint Headquarters at Clemonds Hey.

Preparation of the legal documentation associated with the programme is progressing and officers are working on the financial arrangements that will underpin the collaboration. These will be contained in a Collaboration Agreement.

Detailed work has taken place to create new structures and define service levels for each joint support service. In September 2016 the Fire Authority made the decision to retain the Sadler Road site for the CFRS training requirements with some of the operational and support staff remaining at Sadler Road. In December 2016 the Fire Authority agreed to remove from the Blue Light Collaboration Programme the creation of a joint vehicle workshop, retaining the facility at Sadler Road and workshop staff as Fire Authority employees.

The formal staff transfer has commenced, staff in IT, Estates and Strategic Change have undergone a period of TUPE consultation and are now police employees. The staff in Planning and Performance, Communications, Legal and Information Management are due to transfer in October 2017. The final phase of the transfers will take place in April 2018. The site at Clemonds Hey will become the joint headquarters late summer 2017.

Fire and Rescue Indemnity Company Limited (FRIC)

The Authority works in partnership with eight other fire and rescue authorities to provide discretionary protection against claims made against the Authority and procures insurance cover on its behalf. The partnership also helps to inform the Authority's risk management activities.

Safe and Well

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has a strong record of prevention work to help target and protect vulnerable people from the effects of fire in the home. The key delivery mechanism for fire safety advice and information to householders in Cheshire is through Home Safety Assessments (HSA). Nationally, HSA work has played a key role in helping to reduce preventable fire deaths in England. Accidental dwelling fire fatalities, which account for three fifths of all fire fatalities, have reduced by around 50% over the past decade. In line with the national picture, fire deaths, injuries and incidents have reduced dramatically in Cheshire during the same period. This national success and proactive intervention work has received recognition and praise from the Cabinet Office, NHS and Public Health England. NHS England and Public Health England,

[Safe and Well Visits](#)

have publicly called for the wider role of the fire and rescue service to be recognised and used to support the broader health agenda.

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service wished to support the national programme of work to assist the health agenda. In partnership with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, CFRS and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services hosted a Health and Fire Summit at Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service's HQ in July 2016. The Summit was a great success. Health colleagues fully recognised the contribution and value Cheshire (and Merseyside) Fire and Rescue can make to the health agenda by expanding the traditional HSA to create a broader Safe and Well visit. At the Summit, health colleagues identified the following issues they considered Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service could contribute to as part of a Safe and Well visit:

- Slips, trips and falls – prevention
- Hospital discharge for the elderly admitted for a fall
- Smoking cessation and alcohol reduction
- Bowel cancer screening

Reducing hypertension and blood pressure are key objectives for Directors of Public Health in Cheshire and Merseyside. They have therefore subsequently asked that hypertension and blood pressure checks be added to the Safe and Well programme. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service is happy to take on this additional area of work as part of Safe and Well visits. Similarly, Halton Borough Council Public Health also asked CFRS to help identify people at risk from Atrial Fibrillation.

The following elements are currently covered in the Safe and Well visit:

- Slips, trips and falls
- People with mobility issues and at risk of falls
- Smoking cessation and alcohol reduction
- Bowel cancer screening
- (Atrial Fibrillation in Halton only)

Delivering Partnership Outcomes

Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service currently delivers 25,000 HSAs per year. In order to support the broader health agenda, CFRS has agreed to increase the current number of HSAs from 25,000 to 40,000 Safe and Well visits from 1 April 2016. We utilise all our advocates and operational firefighters to deliver against this volume of visits. During 2016 the appropriate training and awareness sessions for Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service staff to deliver this work programme was completed in conjunction with our NHS colleagues who provided the necessary training for all the elements of Safe and Well, free of charge. The training was a mixture of group training augmented with online training for some specific issues, such as smoking cessation.

Early indications are that Phase 1 of the project have been an outstanding success. From 1st February to 7 May 2017, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service has conducted **8,976** Safe and Well visits, resulting in:

- **708** referrals to NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Hub;
- **201** referrals to Local Authority falls teams for help and support;
- **22** referrals to Local Authority smoking cessation teams for help and support;

- 4 referrals to Local Authority alcohol reduction teams for help and support; and,
- 200 Atrial Fibrillation screening tests for Halton.

So far, **10.5%** of Safe and Well visits have resulted in a referral to health agencies.

CFRS is now in the process of identifying the elements to be included in a Phase 2. Phase 2 will comprise:

- Hypertension and blood pressure;
- Loneliness and Isolation;
- Affordable Warmth;
- Rolling out Halton Atrial Fibrillation pan-Cheshire;
- Hospital discharge for over 65s admitted to ward for a fall.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

Cheshire Fire Authority has a responsibility for conducting a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control, at least annually. This is informed by the assurances of senior officers within the Authority, who have responsibility for the development, maintenance and management of the governance and internal control arrangements.

Cheshire Fire Authority is made up of twenty-three elected Members appointed by the constituent Authorities. There are also non-elected independent members who act in an advisory role.

[Fire Authority](#)

The Authority operates with the following main Committee structure:

- Policy Committee
- Performance and Overview Committee
- Governance and Constitution Committee
- Brigade Managers Pay and Performance Committee
- Staffing Committee

Terms of Reference for each Committee are subject to regular review.

The Authority has a Health Safety & Welfare Committee which meets quarterly and is chaired by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

Member Champions

Member Champions are assigned to a number of thematic areas to provide additional scrutiny and challenge as highlighted previously, these include risk, equality, ICT, young people, older people, finance and the environment.

The Service Management Structure

The operations of the Authority are directed through a clear management structure with defined roles and responsibilities. The Policy Approval Group (PAG) comprises of the Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Head of Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) and Head of Finance, Section (151 Officer).

The full Service Management Team (SMT) is made up of PAG and Heads of Department. SMT is responsible for securing the delivery of the Authority's aims and objectives which support the achievement of the Authority's vision. This includes key priorities which reflect community, regional and national issues.

Monitoring Officer:

During the 2016 – 2017 financial year the Head of Legal and Democratic Services fulfilled the statutory role of Monitoring Officer for the Authority, ensuring all actions taken were lawful.

Chief Finance Officer:

For the financial year 2016-17 the Head of Finance had responsibility for day to day financial management in accordance with CIPFA guidance and fulfilled responsibilities set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972.

How we performed during 2016 – 2017 - Performance Management:

As part of the corporate planning process the Authority sets out the key corporate performance indicators which measure the delivery of its objectives and provide key business intelligence to help target prevention and protection activities. Targets are set where appropriate to ensure continuous improvement and evaluation. Achievements against these indicators are scrutinised quarterly by the Performance and Overview Committee and Performance Management Group and annually by the Fire Authority.

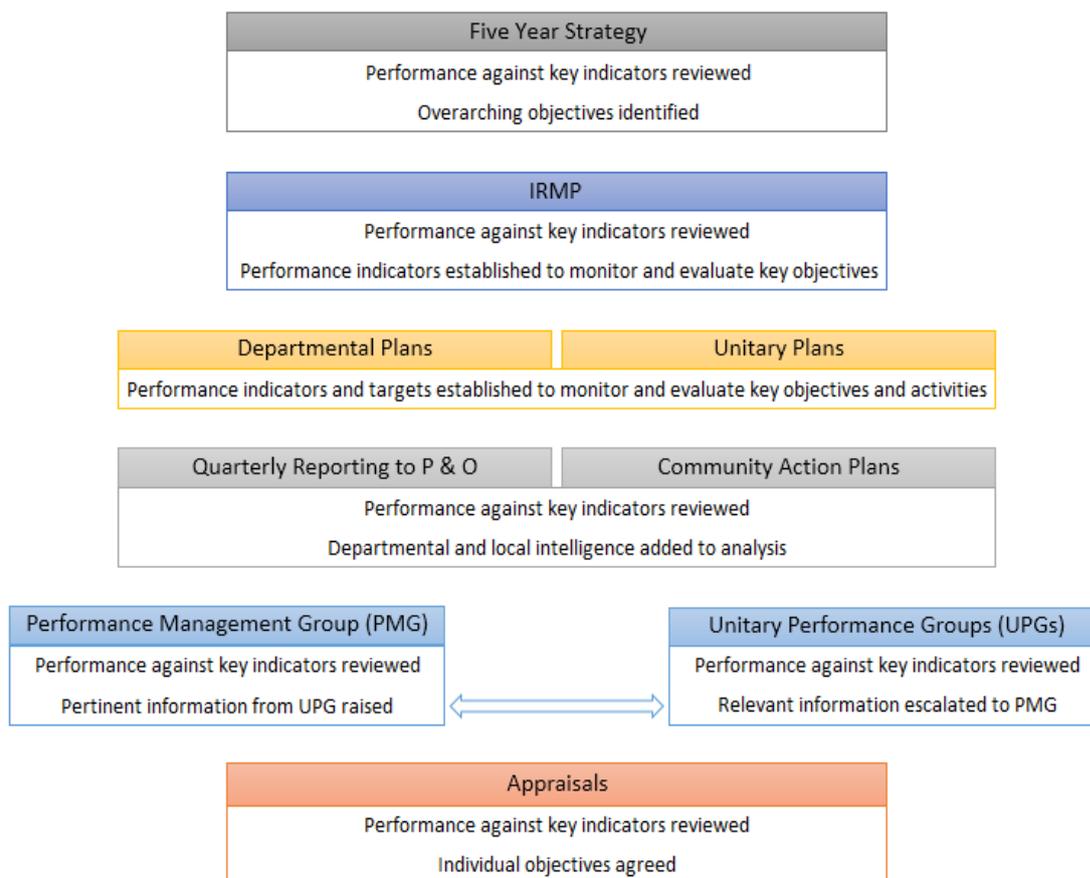
[Corporate Scorecard 16-17](#)

Performance relating to the handling of calls by North West Fire Control is also monitored quarterly, in line with agreed standards.

An Annual Report sets out how the Authority has performed over the last 12 months.

[Annual Report](#)

The diagram below presents the CFRS performance reporting model in place for 2016-17:



Monitoring and Reporting:

The Authority has an approved process of quarterly performance and financial monitoring and reporting highlighting progress against projects and activities, budget and performance indicators identified within Departmental, Unitary and Community Action Plans. Reports are presented to PAG, SMT and Members of the Authority in line with a corporate reporting cycle.

Value for Money Reviews:

The Authority’s previous four year strategy committed to carrying out departmental reviews across the organisation; 2013-14 was the last year of the three year cycle and focused on the efficiency and effectiveness of services provided. The underpinning principle of the reviews was the Authority’s duty to make best use of its resources in improving the quality of life for its communities. A full evaluation of the programme was undertaken in 2015 with the key findings reported to Performance & Overview Committee. During 2015-16 the first phase of the new organisational review programme was launched with an initial target of delivering a further £1 million in savings. That initial phase produced savings of approximately £700,000 which were removed for the 2016-17 budget.

Key Governance Improvements made during 2016-17:

In last year’s AGS the Authority set out a number of improvements it intended to implement during the year. Progress against implementation of these actions is presented to the Governance and Constitution Committee.

Statement of Assurance 2016 - 17

The table below summaries progress made to date:

Key Improvement Area	Update Position
Policy Management - continue to facilitate comprehensive review of all corporate policies due for review	This work is almost complete and will be finalised during 2017-18
Review of Performance Management Framework	Complete

The following table summarises the improvements identified during the process for 2016-17 by the relevant Governance Principal Owners:

Improvements Identified for 17-18	Lead Department
Policy Management – build on the work undertaken in 2016 and complete comprehensive review of all corporate key policies	Legal & Democratic Services
Relaunch of the Partnership Toolkit; Policy and Governance model	Prevention
Focus on initiatives highlighted in the Environmental Strategy 2014-20 supporting achievement of 40% carbon emissions target by 2020	Property Management

Internal Audit:

The Authority's Internal Audit function for 2016-17 was outsourced to Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), and established protocols are in place for working with External Audit. A risk-based internal audit plan and three year strategy was agreed with senior management and approved by the Authority in 2016. A number of audits were commissioned in line with our risk profile which provided an independent assurance level on the Authority's control frameworks.

The internal audit team completed a number of compliance and assurance audits during 2016-17 aligned to the approved internal audit plan, which have generally resulted in positive opinions with a small number of recommendations made as a result of their findings. Action Plans have been put in place to resolve the issues and deliver solutions.

[Director of
Audit's Opinion
and
Annual Report
\(2016/17\)](#)

Internal Audit Opinion 2016:

To be supplied by MIAA

Director of Internal Audit Opinion:

Significant Assurance, can be given that that there is a generally sound system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently.

All recommendations for improvements identified by Internal Audit are populated on the Authority's Cheshire Planning System for monitoring and tracking delivery of actions.

External Audit Opinion:

External Audit Opinion will be provided September 2017.

DRAFT

4. Operational Assurance

Evidence Links

Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue Authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. Links to some of the key legislation/guidance can be accessed below:

- [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](#)
- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2012](#)
- [Local Government Act 1999](#)
- [Health & Safety At Work Act 1974](#)

Corporate Planning - Integrated Risk Management Planning for Safer Communities

Cheshire Fire Authority published a new five year strategy, titled '*Planning For A Safer Cheshire 2015-2020*'. The strategy clarifies some of the stark choices facing the Authority and outlines the approach and principles adopted to ensure the Authority does not compromise on its commitment to protecting local communities, reducing risk and maintaining firefighters' safety.

[IRMP](#)

Community Risk Management

Through its Community Risk Management Policy the Service undertakes risk, intelligence and performance analysis in order to ensure that strategic, tactical and operational activities are intelligence-led and fully evaluated. This is achieved by using specialist systems, software, data and skills delivered by the Service's Business Intelligence team.

CRM Policy

Unitary Area Plans

In addition to and complementing the IRMP, Unitary Area plans are developed for each council area. Each plan is unique to that area and contains the actions the Unitary teams will take in order to mitigate risk and improve community safety. These plans are informed by the Community Risk Model which brings together historic incident data, demographic, commercial and external risk factors.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Authority is committed to involving all of its stakeholders in the development of its strategies and plans. It encourages this by carrying out a comprehensive annual consultation programme on its draft IRMP. Local communities, partners, staff, representative bodies and other stakeholder's are invited to comment to ensure that before any decision is taken all perspectives are taken into account. To enable active and informed participation, data and information relevant to the plan is made available to the public on the Service's website and via social media, in consultation packs, which are distributed at community roadshow events held across Cheshire, and also at key local stakeholder forums and meetings.

Prevention and Protection Assurance

Prevention and Protection managers have an Audit and Assurance function for the Prevention and Protection aspects of the Service. Specific areas of activity aligned to providing assurance against these elements of service delivery include:

- Compliance with the Prevention team's Quality Assurance Framework.
- Compliance with BS EN ISO 9001 - the provision of the Service's Prevention & Protection services has been assessed and accredited to BS EN ISO 9001:2008.
- Compliance with the Matrix standard – the Service's provision of the Prince's Trust Team Programme has been assessed and is accredited to the Matrix international quality standard for organisations that deliver information advice and/or guidance.
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – further detail on how we discharge our responsibilities under fire safety legislation can be accessed via our website.
- Customer surveys are undertaken as part of the Audit and Home Safety Assessment processes.

[Fire Safety advice for Businesses](#)

Performance Management – How we performed during 2016-17

A suite of corporate indicators and targets are used by the Authority and enable Stakeholders to scrutinise delivery of the IRMP.

The Authority publishes all performance and incident data on its website along with the Annual Performance Report to both drive improvement and ensure transparency of its performance. Performance Management is driven through three-tiers of quarterly meetings, Performance & Overview Committee (P&O) chaired by a Member of the Fire Authority, Performance Management Group (PMG) chaired by the DCFO and Unitary Performance Groups in each of the four unitary areas chaired by the Service Delivery Managers.

[Corporate Scorecard 16-17](#)

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk

[Annual Report](#)

External Assurance - Operational Peer Assessment

The Authority welcomed the Operational Peer Challenge team to Cheshire in July 2012. The team carried out a general health check and review of leadership, capacity and governance, as well as an assessment of a number of key organisational areas. Responsibility for fire formally moved from DCLG to the Home Office in early 2016. The Home Office are looking at options to undertake more formal assessments and inspections and the Authority is keen to take part in any pilot inspection exercises in 2017-18.

[Operational Peer Challenge](#)

Operational debriefs

Operational debriefs are used at both incidents and the Authority's exercises and form part of the quality control system concerned with its core activities. These debriefs provide valuable lessons learned which contribute to improving the service provided. They are undertaken following every incident and at a level which recognises the scale of the incident and also the involvement of other partner agencies. Debriefs will therefore fall into Level 1 Hot debriefs or more in-depth Level II Structured debriefs. Multi agency incidents will also prompt a multi agency debrief which will be facilitated and reported through the Cheshire Resilience Forum with learning outcomes reviewed and managed through the affiliated Cheshire Emergency Response Collaboration (CERC) group.

Section 28 reform – formerly known as Rule 43 Notices

In accordance with its commitment to ensure a safe and competent workforce, the Authority has conducted a thorough review of policies, procedures and training programmes in response to tragic events nationally. The learning has come from the services directly affected, information notices (**Coroner “Rule 43” Notices**) issued as a result of inquests and recommendations to all FRSs. Rule 43 Notices are used to inform policy and procedural reviews and to advise on the procurement/upgrade of operational equipment where necessary/appropriate.

Business Continuity – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Business Continuity is an important part of the Authority’s strategy and a robust programme is well established to ensure responsibilities align to best practice standards, e.g. BS25999-2. Departmental plans which support the Authority’s Crisis Management Plan are maintained and tested regularly. The Crisis Management Plan is owned by the Risk Management Board and reviewed and approved annually.

During 2014-15 there were a number of national strikes by the Fire Brigades Union, therefore the plan has undergone ‘live testing’ over the last few years. The Crisis Management Team meetings were carried out prior to, and after any strikes to plan, prepare and capture any lessons learned. These then inform the Crisis Management Plan.

Business Continuity planning and operational resilience were also tested and proved to be fit for purpose during the major incident at Bosley in 2015 which required a sustained local and regional operational presence over an extended period of time.

Interoperability, Resilience and Safety

A comprehensive range of risk intelligence data and information is taken into account as part of the risk identification and analysis process underpinning the IRMP. This includes Community Risk Registers, with the Authority having a leading role in the Cheshire Local Resilience Forum (CRF) which focuses on interoperability and joint planning with other emergency services using the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability principles (JESIP).

CRF structures, policies and practices are regularly reviewed to better reflect the changing make up of partner agencies. Governance is managed through a monthly meeting cycle of the Management Group which reports twice yearly to the CRF Executive Group.

Over the Border Mutual Aid Arrangements

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. Cheshire Fire Authority has in place contractual agreements with the following bordering Fire Authorities for response to life risk incidents:

- Merseyside
- Staffordshire
- Shropshire
- Derbyshire
- Greater Manchester

- North Wales

The creation of the North West Fire Control led to mobilisation and support to a wider range of over the border (OTB) incidents.

Health and safety

The Authority seeks to comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant legislation in managing its health and safety (H&S) duties.

The Authority has an H&S management system based on Health & Safety Executive (HSE) guidance. As part of this we have clearly defined management responsibilities; as far as reasonably practicable we assess and manage the risks arising from our activities, we consult our employees on matters affecting H&S, we provide training and information to our employees.

The Service has an Occupational Health Unit to support the health and wellbeing of staff. We have a program of health and wellbeing campaigns e.g. we have signed up to the MIND Blue Light campaign to support mental health and wellbeing in the Service and provided training to mental health champions

[Annual Health and Safety Report 2015](#)

We have introduced an electronic system to support the reporting of all accidents and near misses that occur within the Service and to track the investigations conducted with the intention of preventing a recurrence. The Service seeks to learn not only from events that happen within the Service but also from events that occur in other FRSs; we have conducted reviews of our own policies and procedures in light of these and made improvements when necessary with actions tracked through the Cheshire Planning System.

We have arrangements to respond to any emergency that occurs at work.

As part of the H&S Management System there is a program of audits and inspections; the audits are based on the Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents Quality Safety Audit (ROSPA) (QSA) system and its performance indicators. These audits and inspections inform our annual review of H&S Policy and performance. They also contribute towards an annual H&S report submitted to the Authority's Performance and Overview Committee.

Firefighter Fitness

The Authority has had a policy to ensure the fitness of its operational staff for some time; in December 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued an addendum to the National Framework for England in relation to firefighter fitness. In 2015 the Authority proposed amendments to its then current fitness policy to align it to the National Framework requirements and the national fitness standard proposed by CFOA.

The Authority recruited a fulltime Fitness Advisor to lead on supporting firefighters to attain and maintain the fitness standards required, and to undertake fitness testing. Fitness testing for all operational staff takes place annually.

[Firefighter Fitness Addendum](#)

[Firefighter Fitness Policy](#)

An audit of compliance with the National Framework requirements on management of firefighter fitness concluded that the Authority complied with the requirements of the framework.

Operational Training

The operational training strategy was formally launched in 2012. This strategy is underpinned by a number of specialist training policies and together these deliver a competence training framework covering a three year training cycle. The Service is now in its fifth year of training planning, delivery and review against this strategy.

[Operational Training Strategy](#)

All new firefighters attend basic training which is broken down into modules and each module is assessed. Whilst attending at the Training Centre on their initial training they are regarded as Trainee Firefighters. After this training they are posted to their fire station where they are allowed to commence riding the station's fire appliance in a limited capacity and under the close watch of their supervisory managers and their competent co workers. As the newly appointed firefighter enters their development phase of their career they are enrolled and registered with the awarding body Edexcel onto a level three National Vocational Qualification Diploma, Operations in the Community. During this phase they are assessed by competent qualified vocational assessors who ensure that the firefighters meet the assessment criteria of National Occupational Standards within their role map and go on to achieve competence within three years. This robust process of assessment is internally quality assured by vocationally qualified level 4 Internal Quality Assurers. It is later externally quality assured by an independent external Standards Verifier from Edexcel, the awarding body.

All front line operational staff, inclusive of new starters attend regular station planned training in order to maintain their operational abilities and competence. They also attend centrally planned refresher training in order to support this maintenance programme.

Breathing apparatus refresher training, which takes place in dedicated 'hot fire' conditions is scheduled annually and the Authority aims to ensure that 100% of all eligible staff attend through an electronic course management and staffing system.

Compartment fire behaviour training capability is refreshed every two years and a joint venture with Manchester Airport Fire Service and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service commenced in June 2013 whereby all three services use training facilities at the airport to train and assess gas cooling and backdraft awareness skills, knowledge and understanding. This collaboration continues to be successful and effective and has underpinned the Authority's operational capability to deal safely and competently with severe compartment scenarios. Once again the Authority aims to ensure 100% of all eligible staff attend.

Road traffic extrication techniques, trauma care, hazardous materials, and working safely at height skills are refreshed over a three year period and each year the Service aims to refresh the skills, knowledge and understanding of one third of its operational workforce with an overall target set to achieve 100% of all eligible staff attendance after three years.

The Swift water rescue capability of the Service's key water stations is validated by the staff attending two days of assessment every year.

The Service's emergency response drivers attend a one day emergency response driver training refresher within a five year period. The Service is just introducing an Emergency Fire Appliance Driver Risk Index rating assessment in order to identify if any of its drivers display any 'high' risk indicators whilst driving at high speed. This assessment will result in a coaching plan being prepared for anyone identified with these tendencies.

To enhance the teaching and training capability of the instructional staff, all have now achieved or are in the process of achieving the level three award in education and training.

The Operational Training Group (OTG) also manages the Authority's Accredited Centre; currently Edexcel and Skills for Justice are the awarding bodies. Visits by external standards verifiers annually assess and confirm that the Authority operates to and maintains the awarding standards and this assists OTG in quality assuring its planning, delivery and review of training.

As well as external verification OTG also review all operational training delivery against its policies and annual training plan to assess its effectiveness and to ensure that the requisite number of operational personnel have attended these continuous professional development programmes.

Managers are all trained and assessed for their skills, knowledge and understanding in Incident Command. A dedicated Command Training Group (CTG) of vocationally qualified Officers plan, deliver and assess these training programmes. The quality of the Incident Command Training within the Service has attracted business from several other Fire & Rescue Services including Cumbria, Shropshire and Nottinghamshire as well as several high risk industries.

5. Assurance Conclusion

This Statement of Assurance provides an accurate account of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Financial (and associated documentation), Governance and Operational Assurance arrangements to 31st March 2017. In addition we are satisfied that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority conducted its business practices within the appropriate legal framework and standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

Signatures:

Fire Authority (Chair):

Chief Fire Officer/
Chief Executive Officer:

Treasurer:

DRAFT

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CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE : 12TH JUNE 2017
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: NEW MEMBER DECISION-MAKING BODY

Purpose of Report

1. To allow Members to consider a proposal for a new Member decision-making body.

Recommended that Members:

- [1] Determine whether they wish to recommend to the Fire Authority that it creates an additional Member decision-making body:
- [2] Agree the name, membership and responsibilities of the additional Member decision-making body: and
- [3] Decide on the allowance payable to the Chair of the additional Member decision-making body.

Background

2. The introduction of a new service management structure and creation of the new joint corporate services with Cheshire Constabulary has required officers to review the Service's management responsibilities and reporting arrangements. This has coincided with the development of a range of significant projects/programmes that will need to be delivered, e.g. the Training Centre. Officers believe that there would be a benefit from having a smaller group of Members able to make some decisions and support officers in the delivery of the projects/programmes. Some additional issues could also be included in the remit of a body formed to fulfil this primary role.
3. A discussion took place between officers and a number of Members from the Brigade Managers' Pay and Performance Committee. As a consequence, officers were asked to bring forward a proposal to create an additional Member decision-making body.

Information

What would the new Member decision-making body be concerned with?

4. Paragraphs 5-11 below provide examples of the sort of issues that led to the discussion about introducing a new Member decision-making body. The paragraphs are in no particular order of importance.
5. The Authority's properties are beginning to show their age and there is a backlog of work. The fire stations no longer reflect the image of a modern fire and rescue service; a situation which is emphasised now that we have new fire stations. A programme of refurbishment and improvement is needed. This programme needs to be fully costed, prioritised, procured and then delivered over a period of time. Members should engage with officers about aspects of this process.
6. The Authority is continuing to work closely with police colleagues to identify opportunities for site/premises sharing. It is expected that this could lead to the creation of approximately ten shared sites. There may also be further opportunities to share sites with North West Ambulance Service. Members should be fully appraised of the proposals, especially if they may have any impact locally.
7. The Authority is also involved in a range of potential projects (with both public and private sector organisations) at its key fire station sites, some or all of which will include property transactions/broader contractual arrangements. Whilst the Authority is clearly required to set the direction/strategy the involvement of Members in some of the detail could be necessary and helpful.
8. The Training Centre project is significant and relatively complex, involving not only a build project, but also the securing of suitable arrangements to continue to deliver training away from Sadler Road during the project. The budget is likely to come under some pressure and Members could provide objective input when priorities are considered. They can also help to engage in the programme in a way that would not be expected at the Performance and Overview Committee.
9. The Authority's Environmental Strategy currently has no obvious 'home': the Environment Board was ended some time ago. The involvement of Members will help provide fresh impetus to the Authority's environmental work.
10. The Authority's procurement activity is likely to be one area of focus for the new inspectorate at a time when there is a push for increased collaborative buying. The Authority will be committing to significant expenditure, which can no longer be funded from reserves (it will need to borrow) and it will be more important than ever that it makes good procurement choices and follows best procurement practise. Member involvement can help to provide additional governance.

11. The Authority will, shortly, see the commencement of the operation of Safety Central. Members were always expected to retain an interest in the running of the safety centre and this body could fulfil this role.
12. The following is a suggested set of words to describe the responsibilities (associated with the issues captured in the preceding paragraphs) that would need to be incorporated into the Authority's Constitution:

The [body] will be responsible for:

Ensuring that the Fire Authority's property management arrangements are appropriate, providing guidance to officers as necessary.

Providing guidance to officers and the Fire Authority in relation to property transactions.

Providing guidance to officers and the Fire Authority in relation to the sharing of its sites/premises with third parties.

Assisting in the co-ordination of and agreeing the prioritisation of property-related projects/programmes.

Assisting in the co-ordination of and agreeing the prioritisation of environmental projects/programmes and supporting officers and the Fire Authority in the delivery of matters that further the Authority's Environmental Strategy.

Engaging in key procurement issues as necessary.

Overseeing the arrangements for Safety Central.

13. Progress on the delivery of projects/programmes would continue to be monitored by the Performance and Overview Committee.

What should the new Member decision-making body be called?

14. Whilst this should not be a significant issue, there has been some difficulty finding a name that Members appeared to favour and which encapsulates the responsibilities listed above. Officers have concluded that Assets Committee or Assets Board might be appropriate options given that much of the body's responsibilities are concerned with property assets. However, it is acknowledged that the body has a broader remit than just assets.

Who should sit on the new Member decision-making body?

15. Members have suggested the following:

The four Lead Members representing each of the unitary authorities, plus three other Members one of whom should be Chair.

Officers have suggested that it would be beneficial to ensure that the appointments include the Member Champions for the Environment and

Procurement and an independent (non-elected) member is also invited to attend.

When will meetings be held?

16. It is proposed that the Committee will meet as and when required to allow for greater flexibility. The ability to meet at relatively short notice will be particularly useful when dealing with procurement issues and property transactions.

Financial Implications

17. The cost of an additional Member decision-making body will depend upon which Member is appointed to the role of Chair and whether any other special responsibility allowance is already payable to that Member. Members have suggested that the allowance for the Chair should be the same as that payable to the Chair of Governance and Constitution Committee (currently £1579.43). Additional costs will be met by the existing budget allocation for Members allowances.

Legal Implications

18. There are none.

Equality and Diversity Implications

19. There are none.

Environmental Implications

20. There are none.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE