

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
DATE: 4TH SEPTEMBER 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: FIRE AND RESCUE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK
FOR ENGLAND 2018 – COMPLIANCE
REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members about the work done by officers to check and secure compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 (the Framework).

Recommended: That Members

- [1] Note the content of the report; and
- [2] Note and approve the content of the Compliance document.

Background

2. Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a fire and rescue national framework, which
 - a) *must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;*
 - b) *may contain guidance to fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of any of their functions; and*
 - c) *may contain any other matter relating to fire and rescue authorities or their functions that the Secretary of State considers appropriate.*

3. The Authority is required to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance. The Framework states that:

The statement should outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard – in the period covered by the document – to this National Framework, the Integrated Risk Management Plan and to any strategic plan ... prepared by the authority for that period. The authority must also provide assurance to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters.

4. The Framework contains the following sections:
 1. Introduction
 2. Delivery of Functions
 3. National Resilience
 4. Governance
 5. Achieving Value for Money
 6. Workforce
 7. Inspection, Intervention and Accountability
 8. Timescale and Scope

Information

5. A report was presented to the Fire Authority on the 20th June 2018 summarising the requirements of the Framework. Members were advised that officers were considering compliance with the requirements. The Fire Authority instructed officers to report to this Committee about compliance.
6. Whilst officers concluded that the Authority was already compliant with most aspects of the Framework there were some aspects which needed further consideration. These included:
 - The requirement for FRSs to work with other organisations to identify those most at risk from fire and develop partnerships to support risk reduction services to those identified as vulnerable. This is an area of strength but the Chief Fire Officer wanted to see the evidence to support this. (Paragraph 2.5)
 - The requirement that FRSs would keep collaboration opportunities under review. (Paragraph 2.12) Whilst the Authority had entered into a number of collaborations, officers acknowledged that more could be done to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of collaborations. This was also identified as area for improvement in the HMICFRS inspection report.
 - The requirement for FRSs to collaborate with other FRSs to deliver intraoperability between FRSs and interoperability with other responders. (Paragraph 2.15). The Chief Fire Officer was keen to ensure that the work done in response to the Kerslake report, following the Manchester Arena bombing, would provide evidence of this.
 - The requirement for FRS's risk assessments to include an analysis of any gaps between their existing capability and that needed to ensure national resilience (Paragraph 3.5). This analysis had not been done.
 - The requirement to achieve value for money (Paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8). The Treasurer believed there was a need to work

through the requirements to ensure that the Authority was compliant.

7. Officers have prepared a document which lists each element of the Framework together with a commentary (evidence) which describes how the Authority has had regard to the Framework. This document is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

Financial Implications

8. The Framework does not, in itself, have financial implications. However, the section on 'Achieving Value for Money' includes requirements that have been carefully considered.

Legal Implications

9. Every fire and rescue authority must have regard to the Framework. Every authority must publish an Annual Statement of Assurance outlining the way in which the authority has had regard to the Framework and provide assurance to its community that it complies with the Framework. Appendix 1 to this report demonstrates the steps taken by the Authority to satisfy itself about these requirements.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. Section 6 of the Framework contains requirements which relate to the workforce, including the need to have a People Strategy which takes into account the need to continuously improve the diversity of the workforce and covers equality, cultural values and behaviours. The Authority has adopted a People Strategy which addresses these issues.

Environmental Implications

11. There are no environmental implications to consider.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

Appendix 1 – Fire and Rescue National Framework for England Compliance Document