

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
DATE: 10TH APRIL 2019
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: ANDREW LEADBETTER

SUBJECT: DRAFT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2019-20

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with an opportunity to review the draft Statement of Assurance for 2019-20.

Recommended: That

- [1] The contents of the report be noted
- [2] Subject to Members' comments, the draft Statement of Assurance be approved.

Background

2. Members will be aware that one of the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (the Framework) is the publication of Statement of Assurance (the Statement).
3. The Statement should:

"...outline the way in which the authority and its fire and rescue service has had regard 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."

Information

4. The Statement would normally be published in July following approval by the Fire Authority. This year, because of Coronavirus, the Government has extended the period allowed to conclude the audit of accounts and acknowledged that the publication of the statement of accounts and associated documents will be later than usual.
5. The draft Statement for 2019-20 is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

6. The draft Statement has been prepared in accordance with national guidance. It includes sections on financial assurance, governance and operational assurance. It also outlines the way in which the Authority has had regard to the Framework. A new version of the Framework was published in May 2018 and the Statement provides evidence to show that the Authority complies with its requirements. The final section provides information about the outcomes from the HMICFRS inspection and areas for improvement. This was added last year to provide further evidence about the Authority's performance.
7. The guidance suggests that where 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. The draft Statement includes extracts or links to many of the existing key documents and policies such as the Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Annual Statement of Accounts (with Annual Governance Statement) and the HMICFRS report. Members will see that there are some areas that require updating, prior to approval by the Fire Authority.
8. Members are asked to consider the contents of this draft Statement in its present form and if approved, a final version should be presented to the Fire Authority for approval at its meeting in September 2020 prior to publication.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. Under section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 the Secretary of State must prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework. Paragraph 4.6 of the current Framework requires each fire and rescue authority to produce an annual Statement of Assurance.
11. The Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
12. The Statement of Assurance should be signed off by an elected member of the authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents. The Chair of the Authority will sign the Statement, together with the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. They formally declare that they are satisfied that the arrangements are adequate and operating effectively and meet the requirements of the Framework.

Equality and Diversity Implications

13. There are none.

Environmental Implications

14. There are none.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE