

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR FIRE AND RESCUE, AND RESILIENCE****DATE: 28 JANUARY 2025****LEAD OFFICER: DAN QUIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITY PROTECTION AND EMERGENCIES (CHIEF FIRE OFFICER)****SUBJECT: SURREY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

There is a requirement in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) that fire and rescue authorities publish an annual Statement of Assurance.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member approves the annual Surrey Fire & Rescue Service Statement of Assurance for publication.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The requirement for an annual Statement of Assurance is set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

DETAILS:**Statement of Assurance**

1. As set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, fire and rescue authorities must provide an annual assurance of financial, governance and operational matters, to ensure the appropriate arrangements are in place. There must also be due regard shown to the expectations set out in their Community Risk Management Plan and the requirements included in the Framework.
2. Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority is accountable for the performance of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service. To enable this, there is a commitment to making information about Surrey Fire and Rescue Service transparent and easy to obtain and therefore the aim of the document is to provide an easy and accessible way for communities, government, local authorities and partners to make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.
3. The Statement of Assurance sets out how to find information relating to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and provides assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. The document also outlines how to find out more about our relationship with partners and how the Service works as part of Surrey County Council. Information can be viewed in detail via links to relevant documents.
4. The document references the Making Surrey Safer Plan 2020-2024 which is the Service's Community Risk Management Plan, previously known as Integrated Risk Management Plan, a framework which sets out the vision and priorities of the Service.

CONSULTATION:

5. The Statement of Assurance has been shared with the Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, and Resilience.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

6. Without a published Statement of Assurance, the Fire and Rescue Authority would not meet the requirement set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. There may be a risk that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service would not be seen to be transparent, and that information would not be accessible.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

7. The Statement of Assurance does not have any direct financial implications; however, it outlines the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and provides financial assurance.

Section 151 Officer Commentary

8. The council continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment. Local authorities across the country are experiencing significant budgetary pressures. Surrey County Council has made significant progress in recent years to improve the council's financial resilience and whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the cost of service delivery, increasing demand, financial uncertainty and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to deliver financial efficiencies and reduce spending in order to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
9. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority, in order to ensure the stable provision of services in the medium term.
10. The Statement of Assurance sets out the governance and operational arrangements within which Surrey Fire and Rescue Service operates. There are no direct business issues, risks or financial implications associated with the publication of this statement.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

11. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published on 8 May 2021, sets out that:
12. "Fire and rescue authorities must provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Community Risk Management Plan (previously Integrated Risk Management Plan) and the requirements included in this Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance."
13. There are no legal implications associated with the publication of the SFRS Statement of Assurance.

Equalities and Diversity

14. There are no equality implications associated with the content of this report. One of the principal aims of the Statement of Assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, public sector authorities and partners may make a valid assessment of our performance. The information presented in the report will be reviewed continuously to ensure that it reflects and adheres to any changes or developments in equalities legislation.
15. The Statement of Assurance is an overall assurance document and as such explains the use of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's people impact assessments and the Community Risk Profile. It also outlines the objectives in promoting equality, tackling discrimination and meeting legal obligations.

Other Implications:

16. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report.
Environmental sustainability	No significant implications arising from this report.
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

17. The Statement of Assurance will be made available on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's webpages.
18. The Statement of Assurance will continue to be refreshed and kept up to date to maintain the transparency of data.

Contact Officer:

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Consulted:

Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, and Resilience

Annexes:

Annex A – Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Statement of Assurance

Sources/background papers:

- [Fire and Rescue National Framework for England May 2018](#)
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Introduction

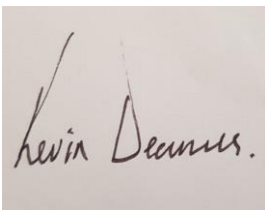
Welcome to our Annual Statement of Assurance for 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

This Fire and Rescue Statement of Assurance provides our communities with clear and transparent information about Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) financial, governance and operational matters. It is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework for England (2018) and sets out arrangements in place to deliver activities safely and effectively. We will refer to other useful documents you may wish to read and have provided links to these.

The fire and rescue service plays a crucial role in making communities safer, whether it be preventing and protecting people from fire and other risks or responding swiftly to the emergencies that occur. We have continued to introduce fundamental changes to the Service and the way it operates over the past year. These have been designed to deliver our vision of making Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business – as well as continuing to ensure we meet our statutory responsibilities.

We are doing more to keep people safe from risk, especially the most vulnerable in our communities. We also need to continue to respond and adapt to the Government's fire and rescue reform agenda. This includes the statutory inspection regime by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) which monitors and reports on our performance on behalf of the Home Office; and responding to the outcomes of the White Paper – Reforming our Fire and Rescue Service. We will ensure that we are providing an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent service, reflective of the differing needs of the communities we serve. We will be flexible and adaptable, with a diverse workforce that is proud to serve and protect our communities.

The main aim of this document is to be open and transparent about how we are keeping you safe and provide assurance of our commitment to provide a fire and rescue service that meets the demands of Surrey.



Kevin Deanus
Cabinet Member – Fire and Rescue,
and Resilience



Dan Quin
Chief Fire Officer

Surrey – the context we work in

As a place, Surrey has a range of unique features and qualities that can create different challenges and opportunities. The statistics below set these in context*.

Population

- The 2021 Census records a population of 1,203,100 for Surrey made up of approximately 481,000 households. The population is expected to grow to 1.21 million by 2030.
- Ageing population – by 2030 the proportion of working age residents (16-64) and of younger people is expected to decrease. There are expected to be more residents aged over 65, and a 29% increase in the number of over 85s.

Education and skills

- Nearly 286,000 children and young people were living in Surrey in 2021 according to the 2021 Census. In 2023 73% of pupils achieved a pass in English and Maths compared with 65% nationally.
- In 2021 around 42% of the working-age population hold Level 4 or above qualification (including Bachelor's degrees or higher, Higher National Certificate or Higher National Diploma) compared with 34% in England as a whole

Health and wellbeing

- An ageing population is likely to lead to increasing demands on services for vulnerable adults and those with long-term and age-related medical conditions.
- Surrey is affluent with pockets of social deprivation.

Crime

- Surrey is one of the safest places in England and Wales, with the 4th lowest recorded crime rate of the 43 police forces in year ending June 2024, and lower than the average rates of victim-based crime.
- Possession of weapons offences has increased by 22% on the previous year.

Environment and Infrastructure

- Surrey's road network is a high priority topic for residents.
- Surrey has one of the busiest road networks in the country, which carry double the national average and make it the slowest county to drive around.

Economy

- The county has a strong economy worth £51.3 billion in 2022. Over a three-year period to 2022, it was sixth in the list of upper tier authorities for businesses with an average growth in employment of greater than 20% per year.
- There is a low unemployment rate ranging from 2.5% to 3.1% in Surrey districts/boroughs in 2023, compared with 3.7% in England as a whole.

*Information taken from the [Organisation Strategy 2023 to 2028](#).

Our vision

Our Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), Surrey County Council (SCC), has set out a [Community Vision for Surrey](#) placing greater emphasis on prevention, services for vulnerable people, and the need for greater collaboration with partners.

By 2030 we all want Surrey to be a:

“Uniquely special place where everyone has a great start to life, people live healthy and fulfilling lives, are enabled to achieve their full potential and contribute to their community, and no one is left behind.”

Our Fire and Rescue Service [Making Surrey Safer Plan](#) sets out how we will continue to refocus our resources to increase our work with communities and businesses to prevent emergencies from happening, whilst also responding more efficiently when they do.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan

Each FRA must provide assurance that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities and are delivering the strategies set out in their Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

Our Making Surrey Safer Plan (our CRMP) was created to meet the risks of the community, and to transform the Service to meet HMICFRS recommendations.

The plan was created from a detailed risk analysis, using a range of information for fire and rescue cover in Surrey, including:

- Data about 999 calls over the past five years.
- Predictive data which shows us where those at highest risk are in Surrey.
- Local and national statistics about fires and other emergencies.

The plan is our long-term, risk-based business strategy which outlines our future aims and priorities. It is our response to the risks in Surrey that we have identified and analysed in our Community Risk Profile. It sets out our understanding and analysis of risks in relation to the fire and rescue service's activity, enabling us to establish our expected operational response standard and plan our response to a predicted level and type of incident. Importantly, it shows where we need to undertake prevention (Community Safety) and protection (Business Safety) activities to prevent incidents from happening in the first place.

We are continuing to transform the Service to meet the needs and manage the risks that we will face throughout the county, now and in the future. We are three years into that journey, and we ensure that we position firefighters and resources where they can have the greatest impact in an emergency and use our expertise in prevention to stop incidents in the first place. As we move forward on our transformation journey, our organisational design is focused on the following three priorities which are underpinned by intelligence and assurance:

- Investment in our People and our Culture Programme.
- Improving the effectiveness of our Prevention and Protection services and measuring community outcomes.
- Enhancing efficiency through the provision of fit for purpose assets.

Under the Equality Act 2010, all public sector organisations must consider the impact of each of their policy decisions on different 'protected characteristic' groups. To help us do this, we undertake People Impact Assessments (PIAs). The purpose of a PIA is to ensure that the policies and services we deliver do not discriminate against anyone, and that where possible, we promote equality of opportunity. We assessed the impact of the policies set out in our Making Surrey Safer Plan using this process. We reviewed and revised our PIAs following the impacts of COVID-19. We will continue to review and revise our PIAs to reflect the

impacts to our communities, including the cost of living in Surrey and how this affects our residents.

Community resilience

We have recognised that the demographics of Surrey are changing, as well as how people work and live their lives. The increase in population in Surrey over the last five years is a trend we expect to see continue.

In our Making Surrey Safer Plan, we have refocused our priorities from responding to emergencies to creating safer and more resilient communities through our prevention and protection work. This supports [Surrey County Council's 2030 vision](#) which is aimed at ensuring wellbeing and prosperity for the county and our residents through positive interventions and support for those most in need.

Our approach to Community Resilience focuses on our four core safety areas:

- People
- Places
- Premises
- Products.

The Service offers residents at greatest risk of harm from fire a Safe and Well Visit, which covers a range of subjects to support independent living in addition to fire and general safety in the home. During a visit, the Service can signpost to additional sources of advice and support to promote health and wellbeing. These include social activities, meal services, mental health support, disability, smoking, drugs or alcohol dependency, flooding and severe weather, alarms, scams and cold calling.

The Prevention and Protection teams are now well established and active in Surrey's communities. The focus remains on keeping the community safe, particularly those who are most vulnerable. To this end we have seen the number of Safe and Well Visits (SAWV) increase year on year, targeted at the vulnerable, with over 86% of visits in 2023-2024 being to the vulnerable. Partnership working has seen referrals for SAWV double over the last year with SFRS teams following up concerns and ensuring they are part of changing lives. As well as keeping people safe from fire in their homes, the partnerships include working with the NHS, Domestic Abuse outreach, homeless initiatives and care providers.

The lifelong learning pathway continues to educate all young people in fire, water and road safety. We also support young people who have vulnerabilities in life or are at risk of exclusion from school. This is through the Youth Engagement Scheme and other schemes where we work with partners to help young people be the best person they can.

There have been major changes in fire safety legislation following Grenfell Tower and SFRS Protection teams have remained at the forefront of delivery of these changes. Our inspectors and advisors have undertaken a rigorous training regime and are delivering increasing numbers of audits within the business environment. SFRS has received confirmation from the Home Office that all aspects of the Grenfell Tower Phase 1 recommendations have been met and SFRS are now focussing on Phase 2 recommendations.

While this work involves ensuring safety regulations are followed, we equally want to engage in business forums, such as the Chambers of Commerce, to promote simple measures that ensure the Surrey economy remains strong and productive. We also visit businesses to carry out a Business Safe and Well Visit using a specialist team (Business Education Officers) and response crews to start those safety conversations. This supports safe living and the investment in our business communities where we shop and spend time relaxing and socialising.

By having the right allocation of resources to meet the needs of Surrey, we can continue to invest in prevention and protection activities. As part of this work our firefighters undertake prevention and protection activities as well as providing a highly professional operational response when an emergency occurs.

This approach forms part of the Making Surrey Safer Plan and is the standard offered to all Surrey residents post lifting of lockdown restrictions. The Service uses a national virtual product, Safelincs, to provide initial home fire safety advice to all who need it. Safelincs will refer those who are vulnerable to the Service for a Safe and Well Visit. The Service also works in partnership with other agencies, such as Surrey County Council Adult Social Care, for direct referrals for those who are vulnerable.

During this period, we carried out 5,655 Safe and Well Visits or Home Fire Safety Checks. This was a 26.2% improvement on the previous year.

Response

In accordance with the Fire and Rescue Services Act of 2004, there are four key responsibilities we must ensure we provide for, which are:

- Protecting life and property in the event of fires in our area.
- Extinguishing fires in our area.
- Rescuing and protecting people in the event of a road traffic collision.
- Rescuing and protecting people in the event of other emergencies.

Other emergencies can include, but are not limited to, natural disasters such as flooding, incidents arising from acts of terrorism, hazardous materials incidents, transportation incidents, and in times of declared National Emergencies (such as the COVID-19 pandemic), where we may support our Local Resilience Forum (LRF) as a Category 1 Responder, in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004.

Response data

Between April 2023 to March 2024 our average time to arrive at critical incidents was 7 minutes 36 seconds. This is against a target of the first fire engine attending a critical incident, on average, within 10 minutes.

The number of fires where no smoke detector was present remains low and is down on the previous year (18% to 17%). Significant accidental dwelling fires increased slightly by 1% (from 417 to 421). The number of non-fatal injuries from these incidents stayed the same (28). We attended 669 false fire alarms caused by apparatus in non-domestic premises; this is a decrease of 36%. We changed our response to unwanted fire signals for non-domestic premises (commercial Industrial and Retail/Public Assembly) in October 2022. A review in March 2024 demonstrated a reduction of attendances to this type of incident, along with the reduced pressure on front line appliances,

Our Business Safety Team continues to work with premises to reduce this figure further.

We undertook 53 rescues from water (an increase from 40 the previous year).

The number of road traffic collisions we attended increased by 4% (from 942 to 984).

The Service responded to 414 deliberate fires in 2023/24, a decrease of 25% (from 552). We have enhanced our partnership working with others to tackle root causes and reduce this behaviour. This includes:

- The Fire Investigation Team working with Surrey Police Anti-Social Behaviour Team to help reduce the instances of arson and domestic illegal burning.
- Partnering with the Local Authority Environmental Health team to tackle commercial illegal burning.

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- Working with Surrey Police Serious Organised Crime Teams to reduce instances of stolen vehicles being set on fire.
- Our Wildfire and Rural Affairs Partnership Officers liaising with landowners to manage their site access and growth of potential fuel sources.

In total the Service responded to 1,931 calls to fires in 2023/24. There was one fire related fatality from these incidents.

When fire fatalities occur our Fire Investigation Team ensures that they are investigated thoroughly in partnership with Surrey Police and wider partners. We have a Serious Incident Process to collate and understand the incident information and key risks and ensure that any potential prevention work is highlighted. The main factor in reducing fire deaths in Surrey is the vulnerability of the individual to fire. The key intervention strategy is to reduce the risk of accidental fires occurring in the first place through prevention work such as Safe and Well Visits. We continue to work closely with Adult Social Care and others to help us identify vulnerable people in Surrey.

Our strategy

Meet customer needs and expectations:

- Prevent emergencies before they happen.
- Provide more accessible services that better support businesses and communities.
- Protect communities by responding to emergencies when they occur.

Resources:

- Decrease demand for our response services.
- Sustain revenue and increase capital investment.
- Realign resources based upon community needs.
- Use our resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively.

Provide customer-focused services:

- Support the independence of individuals and businesses.
- Better promote and target our services.
- Learn more about communities, improve outcomes and evaluate services.

Manage the business:

- Improve the use of technology and infrastructure.
- Continually develop and sustain our operating models.
- Produce, analyse and act upon performance data.
- Improve our communications with staff and trade unions.

Improve partnerships and collaboration:

- Improve partnerships with community stakeholders.
- Improve blue light interoperability and intelligence sharing.
- Establish more effective partnership with Borough/District Councils.
- Improve partnerships with county council stakeholders.

Establish a reputation of quality:

- Attract, recruit and retain a diverse workforce.
- Improve the confidence in our services.
- Make evidence and intelligence-led decisions.
- Assure and review all service changes.

Culture:

- Be ethical, transparent and accountable.
- Develop a customer focus throughout the Service.
- Recognise and reward our staff who exemplify our Core Code of Ethics.
- Develop an inclusive Service culture with zero tolerance of bullying and harassment.
- Ensure we have the right people, at the right time and place, with the right skills.
- Develop a Service culture that is agile and flexible, which embraces change.

Our Service

We employ 728 members of staff across Surrey. There are many different options when it comes to working for SFRS, from working within the community and local businesses to responding to emergency incidents.

- We provide information and advice on community issues affecting public safety and enforce fire safety legislation.
- We focus our efforts on education – raising awareness amongst the most vulnerable and young people to prevent fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies.
- Our firefighters are trained to deal with a wide range of emergency situations.

We are proud to have:

- 18% support roles – including, logistics, project and business managers, business support, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), IT and data, people and organisational development and communications roles.
- 7% community resilience roles including Fire Investigators, Youth Engagement Instructors, Education Officers and Wildfire and Rural Affairs Partnership Officers.
- 7% mobilising roles – our state-of-the-art Joint Fire Control delivered in collaboration with East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services.
- 68% response roles – we employ firefighters on Wholetime and On-Call contracts.
- 22 volunteers – we are extremely grateful to our volunteers who help us keep communities safe. Read more about our volunteers on page 13.

If you would like to find out more about what happens at our fire stations, please visit [our fire stations web page](#).

Our People

Our people are our greatest asset, and they are at the heart of what we do. They work across numerous departments always showing their adaptability and willingness to go the extra mile for our residents.

We want the Service to continue to be a great place to work and to help our workforce to become more resilient and diverse. We are continuously working to improve the culture of our Service and the way we work. This is exemplified through our recent focus on cultural transformation in collaboration with 31Ten.

We recognise that health and wellbeing is not an optional extra. Supporting our staff to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy not only forms part of our legal responsibilities, but it is also the right thing to do for our people who are working to protect our communities.

We offer a range of services to support all employees to maintain healthy lifestyles. These include access to a comprehensive Occupational Health Service, Employee Assistance Programme, The Fire Fighters Charity and the MIND Blue Light Programme.

We have an established Peer Support Network which includes Wellbeing Champions, Mental Health First Aiders and a Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Service. The Peer Support Network plays a pivotal role in supporting the SFRS workforce at a local peer level, supporting our mission to empower SFRS staff to maintain their health, fitness and wellbeing.

The SFRS Health, Fitness and Wellbeing Hub, on the Service's intranet site, gives staff access to interactive tools, resources, information and support, including 24/7 support lines and crisis support. We have developed a policy on fitness that requires operational firefighters to undergo annual fitness testing by the Service Fitness Co-ordinator. The Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group monitors the fitness testing results. The Service has begun to develop a network of physical training instructors (PTIs) accredited to Level 2 of the National Framework. This network will support all staff to access information on physical exercise and empower colleagues to maintain and improve their physical wellbeing as well as supporting the Service in its robust approach to compliance with occupational fitness standards. The Service will work to provide PTIs across the organisation to further complement the investment in the provision of fitness equipment across the Surrey Fire and Rescue estate.

Volunteers

We have, for several years, recruited and developed our volunteers to deliver Safe and Well Visits. These visits provide tailored advice to vulnerable people in their own homes, helping to ensure they can continue to enjoy living independently and safely.

Our volunteers support various activities and initiatives, many of which are generated by the team. These include but are not limited to fire station open days, fundraising promotions, campaign support and specialist wildfire prevention.

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Additionally, the team are a valuable resource for crews to consider requesting when completing operational training exercises. Volunteers can assist as exercise participants or act as live casualties, providing crews with a realistic environment to enhance their learning.

Our volunteers provide welfare for operational staff at large or protracted incidents too. This includes cordoning off areas and communicating with residents.

Our Community Safety and Partnership Team aim to expand volunteering further into local communities, engaging with both internal and external stakeholders to help when required. This includes environmental impacts such as flooding, and wildfires. These volunteers will work with us to plan, prevent and prepare for these major impacts and feedback opportunities when they do occur.

As a Service we are immensely proud of the community service undertaken by our volunteers.

EDI

Our ambition is for our workforce to be more representative of the diverse communities we serve within Surrey. We are passionate in our belief that a diverse workforce will enable us to deliver a better service and make Surrey even safer. We have therefore committed ourselves to wide-ranging positive action initiatives, aiming to attract candidates from diverse groups to join and stay with our Service. We hope this will better equip us to meet the specific needs of the communities we serve.

The Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#) requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, but our vision is that everyone representing the Service will be an ambassador of EDI.

As part of our EDI Strategy we will focus on creating a highly inclusive culture that will meet the needs of all our colleagues, members and communities. It is a declaration of our commitment to develop an organisation that is fully inclusive, recruiting, selecting and retaining staff from all sectors of society.

Health and safety

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is committed to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all employees and people who may be affected by our work. This commitment underpins all aspects of our operational and non-operational activities, in alignment with our statutory obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and associated regulations.

Our priority is to provide a safe working environment, supported by robust systems, processes, and training that minimise risk and promote a culture of safety, accountability and continuous improvement.

We will ensure the following:

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1. Leadership and Responsibility – The Service Leadership Team are accountable for health and safety performance, embedding it as a fundamental principle across the service.
2. Risk Management – Suitable and sufficient risk assessments are conducted and regularly reviewed to identify and control hazards, ensuring safe systems of work are embedded.
3. Training – All staff receive appropriate training, resources and equipment to perform their duties safely and effectively.
4. Continuous Improvement – We monitor health and safety performance through audits, inspection, investigation outcomes, near miss reporting and feedback, to foster a culture of learning and proactive risk management.
5. Compliance – We will adhere to relevant statutory requirements, industry standards and sector best practice as identified in our legal compliance register.

Leadership development

We want our Service to be a professional and well-led organisation, exemplifying the Fire and Rescue Service Core Code of Ethics.

The development of outstanding leadership skills, knowledge and abilities across all levels and teams is supported by our Talent Management Framework. This includes clear career pathways and development opportunities for individuals across all our teams and is underpinned by a blended approach through coaching, mentoring, people development programmes, e-learning, secondments and joint training.

Collaboration, Partnership and Cross Organisational Working

National Operational Guidance 3Fs Project

National Operational Guidance (NOG) is the foundation for developing operational policies, procedures and training for firefighters to deal with incidents effectively and safely. It is 'industry good practice' for everybody in fire and rescue services to draw on.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS), Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (WSFRS) (the 3Fs) have agreed to work in partnership to implement NOG across all three services in a structured and systematic way. It is an equal partnership for the mutual benefit of all the fire and rescue services involved. The aims and objectives are to adopt common working practices across the three services by:

- Adoption of common documentation templates, terminology and concepts of operations.
- Sharing of electronic training packages, lesson plans, and equipment information.
- Adoption of a common approach to the provision of risk information to the incident ground, identification of hazards and controls for Site Specific Risks, and sharing of temporary risk information.

The project will assist in future joint procurement projects by harmonising procedures across the 3Fs partnership, allowing better cross-border working.

The plan is for the 3Fs to have agreed and introduced all the NOG policies, using a phased approach. This work is now underway and due for completion September 2025.

Joint Fire Control Project

On 17 November 2021 the successful onboarding of ESFRS took place creating a tri-service emergency control room for the fire and rescue services for Surrey, East Sussex and West Sussex.

Control Room Operators despatch firefighters and fire engines from each of the three fire and rescue services to emergencies in their county from the joint fire control room. This arrangement increases resilience and staffing numbers. We have upgraded the primary control room and have established a high-tech secondary control room for fallback.

This is an example of the Service putting the duty to collaborate within the Policing and Crime Act 2017 into practice, by collaborating with others for the benefit of residents.

Other projects

We work with partners across multiple sectors to seek improved efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration and integration. We are proud to collaborate with many other groups and charities to support our staff and the wider community including those on this list, which is by no means exhaustive:

- Rapid Relief Team
- Surrey Search and Rescue (SAR)
- United Kingdom Rescue Organisation (UKRO)
- British Red Cross
- Road Safety GB
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI)
- Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS)
- White Ribbon
- Friends Against Scams
- Surrey Police
- National Health Service (NHS)
- Surrey LRF
- South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb)
- Asian Fire Services Association (AFSA)
- Surrey Ethnic Minority Association (SMEF)
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC)
- Binti
- Southern Gas Network
- Salvation Army

4F collaboration projects

We are working closely with our neighbouring fire and rescue services in support of some major projects. The 4F collaboration is made up of Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex and Surrey Fire and Rescue Services. Two key projects we are working on are the replacement of breathing apparatus equipment and our incident command vehicles. Both projects link into the joint working and the NOG 3Fs project in creating more joined up policies, procedures and ways of working to enable more borderless mobilising and support our Joint Fire Control.

Surrey County Council

We are liaising with the county council's fleet team to devise joint ways of working in relation to developing a greener fleet and to use vehicles more effectively to perform our role. This includes telematics, fleet management and electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Telematics is the tracking of our fleet enabling us to monitor driving standards, fleet use and fuel usage so that we can become more effective and efficient.

Cleared within service on:	9th January 2025
Legal cleared on:	10th January 2025
Section 151 Finance cleared on:	14th January 2025
Cabinet Member consultation completed:	28 January 2025

Service performance

We produce a performance highlight report each year which gives information on, amongst other things, the number and types of incidents that we attend, how quickly we respond and the number of Safe and Well Visits we complete. You can view these reports here – [Surrey Fire and Rescue Tableau](#).

In addition to the data we collect on response to incidents and safety activities (for both businesses and the community), we gather information about our performance from a range of other sources.

Benchmarking – County Services (no coastline)

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have developed new ‘family groups’ of fire and rescue services (FRS), based on sharing similar characteristics. Surrey FRS is part of the County Services family group (18 FRS in total) where there is no coastline bordering the County. Where possible it is the averages from this family group which is used to benchmark performance.

The Service is a member of an older informal benchmarking group, Family Group 4, made up of 14 FRAs in England and Wales. Every quarter, each member FRA submits data on performance. This is then fed back in the form of a benchmarking report which enables us to see how we are performing compared with the other authorities.

Station assurance visits

Station assurance visits are one of the ways in which we can highlight areas of operational best practice and learning by introducing a standard and consistent approach to measuring performance. The outcomes are used to show evidence of improvement, to implement corrective action and to reduce/limit operational risk.

The Service completed 51 station assurance visits during 2023-24. The station assurance visits are the responsibility of the borough and station commanders. The Operational Policy, Assurance and Learning (OPAL) team collects and analyses the data they submit to look for any trends. The station assurance visits also provide another layer of learning confirmation, following communication of identified learning through the post event review process and or the publication of procedural alerts, urgent safety notices and operational assurance alerts. The communication of National Operational

Learning (NOL) and Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) publications are also assured during the station assurance visits.

The OPAL team undertakes dip sampling of the assurance visits completed by the borough and station commanders. This ensures that the station assurance process is being carried out in a standard way and provides confirmation that the learning and development identified locally, regionally and nationally has been communicated and understood. The team also completed unannounced audits at three stations following assurance visits.

During 2023/24 several topical areas formed part of the assurance process:

- Rapid Deployment
- Highrise procedures
- Steps 1/2/3
- IOR procedures
- Major Incidents
- Command Support
- Operational Incident Management
- HAZMAT procedures
- Water rescue and flooding
- Analytical Risk Assessments
- Dry/Wet risers
- Survey Meters

In addition to these areas, general questions were asked of the teams. These included the standardised message format as a common trend and questions on National Operational Guidance. Further to this, teams with specialist equipment such as high-volume pumps or aerial vehicles also had their knowledge and understanding assessed.

OPAL

The OPAL team collates examples of best practice and identified learning to improve the operational knowledge, understanding and procedures of the Service. This is done through gathering and monitoring operational performance information from local and national sources. The Service supports the NFCC's Central Programme Office. Where learning has been identified locally that may be of interest to other fire and rescue services, the NOL platform is utilised.

Reality Testing

Whereas Operational Assurance looks at assessing and improving the operational knowledge of staff, Reality Testing is about understanding and improving the non-operational knowledge of all staff within the organisation on subjects deemed to be of sufficient importance. Some Reality Testing will be specific to certain areas of the organisation, but others will cover all departments. Outcomes of Reality Testing will allow the Service to improve communications and assure the Service that staff have a good situational awareness of current affairs. Examples of Reality Testing carried out so far include awareness of NFCC Core Code of Ethics, CRMP development and the introduction of new IT system used for pay and expenses for all staff, as well as sickness and leave for staff employed on SCC terms and conditions.

Assurance and improvement

We continually assess our progress and improve our services to the residents and businesses of Surrey

Please see the [Making Surrey Safer Plan 2020-2024](#) for more information

We are now developing our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) which will supersede the Making Surrey Safer Plan in 2025. We commissioned an external independent body, Nottingham Trent University, to review our activity and quality assure that our plans meet the risk identified in the development process.

Nottingham Trent University offers a unique set of expertise to review CRMPs and is the leading university in the UK in this area. With expertise across the blue light services, they have insight and research profiles across community needs analysis and risk perception, profiling, mapping and management.

The report from Nottingham Trent University stated that the:

“CRP delivers a high-quality evidence base that can be effectively used both to shape long-term strategic thinking and planning, and to suitably inform operational resource allocation and management to provide an appropriate response to the concentrated fire, flood and road traffic collision risks faced by SFRS”.

HMICFRS

In July 2017, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service (HMICFRS) extended its remit to include inspections of England's Fire and Rescue Services and in 2023, Surrey Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) had its third inspection, assessing the service's effectiveness, efficiency and how well we look after our people.

The 2023 inspection assessed us against the characteristics of good performance and increased the graded judgements from 4 to 5, including an 'adequate' grading.

The report of findings was published in September 2023 and raised 24 areas for improvement, and a cause of concern regarding our risk-based inspection programme (RBIP).

An action plan to address the Cause of Concern was produced and submitted back to the HMICFRS within 28 days and the Service actively progressed the actions.

In February 2024, the HMICFRS carried out a revisit to review progress against our action plan and concluded:

"We were pleased to see the significant steps the service had taken in response to the cause of concern we issued.

We are pleased that the service has improved its RBIP and the way in which it is managed.

We recognise the considerable work that the service has carried out to support these improvements. As a result, we now consider this cause of concern to be discharged.

We will continue to monitor the service's progress as part of our next scheduled inspection of the service."

A new Inspection Improvement Plan was also developed, taking each area for improvement and identifying what actions need to be implemented to address them.

We continue to progress these actions, and this is robustly monitored and reported on monthly, via our Service governance structure. The plan is scrutinised quarterly by the HMICFRS and the Portfolio Holder for SFRS, and by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on a bi-annual basis. The HMICFRS are scheduled to carry out their next inspection of our Service in 2025.

How the Service manages risk and business continuity

The [Surrey LRF](#) brings together all agencies with a significant role to play in responding to and recovery from the effect of emergencies and was formed to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The LRF has the responsibility of planning and preparing for local incidents and large-scale emergencies as well as identifying potential risks.

To prevent or mitigate the impact of any incident within our communities, the LRF produces emergency plans and ensures that these are reviewed and exercised throughout the year. The LRF delivers a compilation of agreed risk profiles for the area through a Community Risk Register (see below), as well as encouraging a systematic, planned and co-ordinated approach for the agencies that need to respond. This addresses all aspects of policy in relation to:

- Risk
- Planning for emergencies and business continuity management
- Publishing information about risk assessments and plans
- Arrangements to warn and inform the public
- Other aspects of civil protection duty (including the promotion of business continuity management by local authorities).

Using the UK Government's Resilience Framework as its guide, the LRF and its constituent partners look to build resilience across society by creating a shared understanding of risks, focusing on prevention, and providing the information which will both inform the public and enable them to stay safe.

[Surrey Community Risk Register \(PDF\)](#) provides public information about the hazards that exist within Surrey and the control measures that are in place to mitigate their impact. The register has been published in response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Further information is available through the UK resilience website and the Surrey County Council website.

Emergency management and business continuity policy

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on the Service to put in place business continuity arrangements to enable core functions to be maintained in the face of a serious and/or widespread disruptive event, including disruption to services during an emergency. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service has adopted Organisational Resilience principles to manage its Business Continuity Management, in alignment with Surrey County Council. Organisational Resilience enables the Service to take its next steps in a journey to anticipate, prepare, respond and adapt to disruptions and continue to prosper as a service to support its communities.

Emergency planning

FRA's are 'category 1 responders' under the [Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#). This means they are subject to the full set of civil protection duties, including assessing the risk of emergencies happening (ranging from widespread flooding to terrorist attacks) and using this to inform contingency planning. FRA's must ensure that emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements are in place, exercised and able to be initiated, when required, to maintain business critical functions, such as our support to vulnerable residents and our ability to handle 999 calls.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards

[The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#) requires FRA's, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents, both within and outside the authority area, involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear hazards and urban search and rescue to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to prevent or limit serious harm to the environment.

National Mutual Assistance Protocol and the Fire and Rescue Act 2004, Section 13 and 16 Agreements

These require FRA's to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside their area. We have arrangements in place for mutual assistance with all neighbouring FRA's to improve resilience and capacity in bordering areas.

Governance assurance

Good corporate governance underpins confidence in public services and should be transparent to all stakeholders.

Cabinet member

The Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, and Resilience has overall responsibility for the policy direction of the Service and acts as the Surrey County Council (SCC) lead.

Select Committees

Select Committees are made up of elected members and have three specific roles:

- Scrutiny
- Overview, policy review and development
- Performance management.

The Service falls within the remit of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Constitution of the council

SCC has a constitution that sets out how the council conducts its business, how decisions are made and the procedures to be followed to make sure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the council to determine itself. The constitution is updated at meetings of full council to ensure that it reflects changes in legislation and stays relevant to local needs. For more information and the latest version see [the council's constitution](#).

Code of corporate governance

SCC's Code of Corporate Governance (found in the Constitution of the Council) sets out the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the corporate governance arrangements, which enables the council to identify good governance practice and areas for improvement. For more information see [how decisions are made](#).

Annual governance statement and statement of accounts

SCC annually reviews the effectiveness of its governance arrangements and produces an Annual Governance Statement (AGS), which summarises the governance framework and environment in place during the year. The AGS is signed by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council and is included within the [statement of accounts](#), as required by statute.

Audit and Governance Committee

The remit of the [Audit and Governance Committee](#) includes responsibility for corporate governance, risk management, the statement of accounts as well as internal and external audits.

Internal audit

The Internal Audit function of SCC is undertaken by Orbis Internal Audit, which is a shared services partnership between Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and SCC. The aim of this service is to ensure SCC's processes are robust, and that the council appropriately uses public money to achieve its objectives. Audits of key financial systems cover all directorates and services including SFRS.

Additionally, audits of specific fire and rescue service functions and activities are undertaken periodically based on an assessment of risk and in agreement with management. Any issues would be raised with the Service Leadership Team (SLT). Audit reports and agreed actions arising from these audits are reported in summary to the Audit and Governance Committee and may be referred to the relevant Select Committee if necessary. Ownership of agreed actions arising from audits remains in the remit of officers.

Service governance framework

The Service's governance framework includes the following.

- The governance operating model.
- The organisational design, strategy and business planning processes.
- SLT members' oversight and responsibilities broken down by role.
- Working Groups with clear terms of reference.
- A means by which any individual in the Service can raise an idea, propose a change to an existing policy, etc. via the Generic Business Case, and receive a formal response.

Annex A Statement of Assurance

- Improved provision of data, as per recipients' needs, and the monitoring of performance and risk across all areas/teams within the Service.
- Supporting frameworks, such as the Performance Management Framework, Risk Management Framework and Service Documentation Framework.

Fire legislation

We have statutory responsibilities laid down in legislation to provide an effective, economic and efficient fire and rescue service. At 31 March 2023 these were:

- Local Government Act 1999
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Localism Act 2011
- Policing and Crime Act 2017
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018
- Fire Safety Act 2021
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022
- Serious Violence Duty 2022.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to:

- Promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their members and co-opted members. In response SCC has drawn up a [Member Code of Conduct](#) that is both clear and relevant.

Financial assurance

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is part of Surrey County Council (the FRA) and therefore receives its funding as part of the county council's budget planning process. During the period 2023/24 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service was a standalone Directorate in Surrey County Council.

Surrey County Council (SCC) produces a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which it reviews every year. The MTFS sets out revenue and capital budgets for the next five years.. The budget includes known pressures, including assumed inflationary increases for staffing, supplies and services, and planned efficiency savings.

In 2023/24 SFRS, including the Emergency Management Team, has an annual revenue budget of £39m. SFRS currently has a Capital Programme of £21m across the 5-year MTFS period which includes replacement of fire appliances, other vehicles and equipment. In addition, there were Fire and Rescue-related capital budgets within Property, which the Service does not directly manage.

Financial governance

Each year SCC publishes a set of accounts for public consumption. The [statement of accounts](#) include the financial performance of SFRS over a given financial year, which always runs from 1 April to 31 March.

External audit

SCC has external auditors appointed by central government to assess their financial standing.

The authority's appointed auditor, Ernst & Young, undertakes an annual audit of the financial standing of the county council. They are required, under the Code of Audit Practice, to highlight all issues of significance arising from an audit, in the form of an annual audit opinion. Recent audit opinions can be found on the SCC's website along with the [statement of accounts](#).

Financial transparency

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish their remuneration policies. The [Pay policy statements page](#) of the SCC's website provides several documents relating to pay. These include the Pay Policy Statement and the Equal Pay Policy Statement. SCC publishes information about its [procurement strategy and governance](#).

Your views matter

Your views are very important to us, we want to know what you think about us, our services and the way we deliver them.

We work hard to deliver quality services, and we welcome feedback which enables us to improve our performance.

Feedback

You can contact us as follows:

- **Email:** sfcontactqueries@surreycc.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 03456 009 009 (8.45am-4.30pm weekdays, excluding bank holidays).
- **Write to us:** Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Woodhatch Place 11 Cockshot Hill Reigate Surrey RH2 8EF.
- **Textphone (via Text Relay):** 18001 03456 009 009.
- **Telephone from overseas:** +44 20 8541 9944 (9am-5pm weekdays, excluding bank holidays).
- **SMS:** 07860 053 465 for deaf and hearing-impaired residents only (Monday to Friday: 9am-5pm).
- **Emergency SMS:** The [emergency SMS service](#) lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service.
- **VRS:** [Sign Language Video Relay Service](#).
- **Fax:** 020 8541 9575.

Surrey County Council has a process in place designed to help residents to make a comment on our service or register a compliment or complaint. We collect information on complaints and compliments so that we can identify any themes or trends in what people are telling us.

Please contact us if you require this document in a different format or language.