



Statement of Assurance

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Foreword

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (revised 2018) sets out a requirement for fire and rescue authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters. It also requires fire and rescue authorities to show that they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan and to the requirements in the National Framework. This document provides assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and sets out how you can find the information related to Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.

With the content of this document and its links to other sources (links shown **like this**), you will be able to find information relating to all aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service, our relationship with partners and how we work as part of Surrey County Council. Surrey County Council is the Fire and Rescue Authority responsible for Surrey.

Several references are made to our Public Safety Plan (2016-2025) which is our term for our Integrated Risk Management Plan. Our Public Safety Plan sets out the vision and priorities of the Service and is an excellent starting point in understanding the challenges we face and what we will do to meet them.

This is Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority's Statement of Assurance and it is designed to reassure you that we have the appropriate arrangements in place to deliver our services safely and effectively. We are determined to deliver a quality Fire and Rescue Service for the county, delivering beyond our statutory responsibilities.

Denise Turner-Stewart
Cabinet Member for
Community Safety, Fire and
Resilience

Steve Owen-Hughes
Director of Community Protection
and Emergencies (CFO)



Financial Assurance

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is part of Surrey County Council and therefore receives its funding as part of the Council's budget planning process.

The Fire and Rescue Authority produces a **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** which is reviewed annually. The MTFP sets out our current budget and savings commitments over the next three years. The annual budget includes assumed inflationary increases for staffing, supplies and services.

Financial governance

Each year the county council publishes sets of accounts for public consumption. These documents include the financial performance of the Fire Service over a given financial year which always runs from 1 April to 31 March. Recent versions of these documents are available on our [website](#).

External audit

The county council has external auditors appointed by central government to assess their financial standing.

The Authority's appointed auditor, Grant Thornton, 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 Surrey County Council [website](#).

Financial Transparency

The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to publish their remuneration policies. The [Localism and Transparency page](#) of the Surrey County Council website provides a number of documents relating to pay. These include the Pay Policy Statement and the Equal Pay Policy Statement.

Surrey County Council publishes a range of financial and procurement data under the Transparency topic on [Surreyi](#) purchases and contracts over £5000, purchase card transactions, senior salaries and pay multiple detailing the ratio between the highest paid post and the average (median) salary.



Governance Assurance

Constitution of the Council

Surrey County Council 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. The latest version of the council's constitution can be viewed [here](#).

Code of Corporate Governance

Corporate governance describes the way in which the council directs and controls its arrangements to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved. Surrey County Council's **Code of Corporate Governance** sets out the mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the corporate governance arrangements, which enables the council to identify good governance practice and also areas for improvement.

Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts

The council 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 Surrey County Council is undertaken by Orbis-Internal Audit. The principal elements of the function are to ensure the council's internal systems of control are robust, and that council objectives are achieved through the appropriate use of public money. Audits of key financial systems cover all directorates and services including SFRS. Other audit reviews test sample transactions relating to SFRS such as use of mobile phones and purchasing cards and employee expenses. Any issues would be picked up with the Service's management. Audit reports and agreed actions arising from these audits are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and may be referred to the relevant Select Committee if necessary. Ownership of actions arising from audits remains in the remit of officers.

Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire and Resilience

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



Select Committees

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

- scrutiny;
- overview, policy review and development; and
- performance management:

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service falls within the remit of the **Environment Select Committee**.

Member Code of Conduct

The **Localism Act 2011** requires local authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their members and co-opted members. The introduction of the Act presented Surrey County Council with an opportunity to draw up a **Member Code of Conduct** that is both clear and relevant.

Strategy and Vision

The **Organisation Strategy 2019-23** sets out how Surrey County Council will work to achieve the vision set out in the **Community Vision for Surrey in 2030**.



Operational Assurance

In this section we provide assurance that we are meeting our statutory responsibilities and are delivering the strategies we set out in our integrated risk management plan (IRMP) with regard to the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority's IRMP is the Public Safety Plan (PSP), our long-term, risk-based business strategy which outlines our future aims and priorities. It is our response to the risks to the residents of Surrey that we have identified and analysed in the **Community Risk Profile**.

Our PSP, which identifies our approach to 2025, was consulted on and approved in 2016. The consultation process took place over six weeks and was carried out using a mix of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and a wide range of communication channels to gather the views of our residents, partners and stakeholders. The consultation received feedback from over 600 individuals and groups, through surveys, events, briefings, emails and online platforms. Full details of the consultation process were given to the Resident Experience Board and Surrey County Council's Cabinet.

Under the **Equalities Act 2010** all public sector organisations must consider the impact of each of their policy decisions on different 'protected characteristic' groups. We assessed the impact on different groups of the policies set out in our PSP using Equality Impact Assessments. These are published on **Surrey County Council's website**.

Community Safety

The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** came into effect on 1 October 2004. It clarifies the duties and powers of fire authorities to, amongst other things, promote fire safety and to protect people and property from fires. We therefore focus effort on education and prevention work, including raising awareness of risk amongst the most vulnerable in the community. We aim to minimise and, where possible, prevent damage to property and the environment and, most of all, serious injuries and loss of life within Surrey.

We educate the public through community safety campaigns, through Safe and Well visits and through "Safe Drive Stay Alive" to drive down the numbers of accidental dwelling fires and road traffic collisions. We work with Surrey County Council Adult Social Care teams, the NHS and Public Health to tailor our Safe and Well visits to the needs of adults and families in the community.

We recognise that we have an important part to play in improving the life chances for young people and reducing the risks to the elderly. We work with partners in a number of different areas including the county's Youth Justice Service and the Educational Welfare Service, who identify young people considered at risk of falling out of education and/or becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. We co-developed and deliver the Youth Engagement Scheme to give these young people the opportunity to develop practical and social skills through a number of different activities.



Our community safety activities include:

- **Keeping YOU safe from Fire (high risk vulnerable people)**
- **Dementia Awareness**
- **Surrey One Stop**
- **Fire safety education in schools**
- **Water Safety**
- **Youth Engagement Scheme (YES)**
- **Firewise (juvenile fire setters)**
- **Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults**
- **Arson Reduction**
- **Road Safety (Drive SMART and Safe Drive Stay Alive)**



For more information on our community safety strategy, please go to our **website**.

Business Safety

We aim to minimise and, where possible, prevent damage to property, heritage, the environment and, most of all, serious injuries and loss of life within Surrey. We have dedicated staff in place to ensure businesses and commercial premises meet the requirements of current legislation fire protection.

The Business Safety team seeks to deliver advice in the workplace through initiatives and forums which provide information on fire safety, arson prevention, false alarms and sprinkler systems.

We are committed to supporting the business community and providing guidance for inspectors, businesses, organisations and the public. As part of our commitment we work in partnership with businesses through the Primary Authority Scheme providing support through the one stop approach with Surrey and Buckinghamshire Trading Standards.

We develop and maintain our working practices using information and feedback from national guidance, local consultations, peer review, and internal quality assurance systems. We are committed to good enforcement practice and we follow the principles of better regulation.

There is more information on our **business safety strategy** and on our policy with regard to **heritage property** on our website.

Response

The **Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** requires fire authorities to fight fires, rescue people from road traffic incidents and deal with other specific emergencies, such as flooding or terrorist attacks and respond to the particular needs of our communities and the risks they face. When an emergency situation arises, we need to make sure we have the



right resources in the right place, at the right time. Our **Mobilising and Response Strategy** gives more information about how we prepare to provide an effective response.

Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards

The **Fire and Rescue Service Emergencies (England) Order 2007** requires fire and rescue authorities, 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.

The Order complements the National Mutual Assistance Protocol, to which this Authority is a signatory. This requires fire authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside their area.

Section 13 and 16 Agreements

As required by the **Fire and Rescue Act 2004**, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service has arrangements in place for mutual assistance with neighbouring fire authorities. There is a list of our section 13 and 16 agreements on this **webpage**.

Collaboration

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service does not only work with others to respond to incidents. We work with partners across multiple sectors to seek improved efficiency and effectiveness through collaboration and integration.

Key achievements include integration of services such as Occupational Health, joint recruitment and training with other fire and rescue services and sharing data with partners to identify and help our most vulnerable residents.

We also continue to work with other partners to support residents of Surrey and the wider South east region.

Emergency Planning

Fire and Rescue Authorities 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. Fire and rescue authorities must ensure that emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements are in place. Details of how Surrey Fire and Rescue Service manages risk and business continuity are published on our **website**.

People

Our **People strategy** sets out a framework to engage and develop our employees to enable the cultural changes necessary to deliver our vision and strategic priorities whilst ensuring our behaviours, values and standards are adhered to.

The **Equality, Fairness and Respect Strategy 2015-20** presents Surrey County Council's objectives which show how it promotes equality, tackles discrimination and meets its legal obligations as set out in the **Equality Act 2010** and the Public Sector Equality Duty. It sets



out the Council's priorities to 2020 and shows its commitment to deliver them in partnership with the organisations and public bodies best placed to improve services for Surrey residents and local communities. Our **Inclusion strategy** explains how Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will deliver and monitor our legal duties, vision and priorities relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Health and Safety

The Health and Safety team ensure the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service takes due care of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, service users and other persons who may be affected by its operations. The **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Plan** includes key performance indicators and targets which are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Fitness

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service has developed a policy on fitness and requires operational firefighters to undergo annual fitness testing. Fitness testing results are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Committee.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Performance

We produce a performance highlight each year which gives information on, amongst other things, the number and types of incidents that we attend and how quickly we respond and the number of Safe and Well visits we complete. You can follow a link to our performance highlight report for 2017/18 by clicking on **Surrey Fire and Rescue Tableau** on **this webpage**.

In addition to the data we collect on incidents, etc we gather information about our performance from a range of other sources.

Residents Survey

The County Council and Surrey Police jointly commission **residents surveys** to regularly check public satisfaction with public services, gather views on local issues affecting quality of life and track change over time.

Family Group 4

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is a member of a benchmarking group – Family Group 4 – made up of fire and rescue authorities with similar characteristics. Every quarter, each member authority 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 implement corrective action, to show evidence of improvement and to reduce/limit operational risk. For further information please contact Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.

SFRS Freedom of Information requests

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service collects information on the **Freedom of Information** requests it receives. It is a useful way of seeing if there are any themes or trends in the type of requests that are being made. This can be helpful in identifying information that we can make more open and transparent to the public.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is committed to protecting personal data and privacy. Further information about the data we hold and how we use it can be found **here**.

Comments, complaints and compliments

Receiving feedback is welcome and helps to improve our service. 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**.

Information is collected on complaints and compliments so that any themes or trends in what people are telling us can be identified. This can then be used to make improvements.

HMICFRS Inspection

In July 2017, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services. The inspection programme includes an assessment of:

- the operational service provided to the public (including prevention, protection, resilience, and response);
- the efficiency of the service (how well it provides value for money, allocates resources to match risk, and collaborates with the police and ambulance services); and
- the organisational effectiveness of the service (how well it promotes its values and culture, trains its staff and ensures they have the necessary skills, ensures fairness and diversity for the workforce and develops leadership and service capability).

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service were part of the first tranche of inspections which took place over the summer of 2018. The results of the inspection were published in a report which you can view **here**.

The inspectors highlighted some areas where we could become more effective and efficient. We are addressing these in a refresh of our integrated risk management plan which we will be consulting on during 2019.



Fire Legislation and Acts

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is granted its powers under legislation which has replaced a number of acts of parliament dating back more than 60 years. Fire and rescue authorities have been given direct responsibility to enforce a number of Fire Safety Acts and Regulations (statutes) which have been enacted since 1961.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

This Act came into effect on 1 October 2004. It clarifies the duties and powers of fire authorities to:

- promote fire safety
- fight fires
- protect people and property from fires
- rescue people from road traffic incidents
- deal with other specific emergencies, such as flooding or terrorist attack and respond to the particular needs of our communities and the risks they face.

Fire and Rescue Service (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007

The Fire and Rescue Service Emergencies (England) Order 2007 outlines the additional statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 for fire authorities.

The duty requires authorities, 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 (CBRN) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

The Order complements the National Mutual Assistance Protocol, to which this Authority is a signatory. This requires fire authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside their area.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is a statutory instrument, applicable only in England and Wales, which places the responsibility on individuals within an organisation to carry out risk assessments to identify, manage and reduce the risk of fire.

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Fire and Rescue Authorities 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. Fire and Rescue Authorities must ensure that emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements are in place.

The Equality Act 2010

This Act is designed to reform and harmonise equality laws, to increase equality of opportunity and to have regard to the desirability of reducing socio-economic inequalities. It



is designed to legally protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

Localism Act 2011

Designed to increase transparency, this wide-ranging Act includes, amongst other things, requirements for local authorities to set out their approach towards the remuneration of chief officers, lowest-paid employees and its policy relating to the relationship between the remuneration of its chief officers and the remuneration of those employees who are not chief officers.

Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018)

The national framework sets out the government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities. The government has a duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to produce the framework and keep it current. Fire and rescue authorities must have regard to the framework in carrying out their duties.

Mission

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's main aim is to make Surrey safer. Working with others, we want to make Surrey a safer place in which to live, work, travel and do business.

Our mission statement recognises that the environment we operate in can change, posing challenges. We aim to solve these and to improve our service through innovative ways of working and use of equipment and technology. The mission statement also reflects our strategic commitment to collaboration, diversity and flexible deployment based on needs.

Our Mission:

Serving the needs of our community.

Flexibly responding to a constantly changing environment.

Recognising and embedding diversity in everything we do.

Solving challenges through intelligence-driven collaboration, innovation and improvement.