

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET MEMBER FOR FIRE AND RESCUE, AND
RESILIENCE****DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2022****LEAD OFFICER: DAN QUIN, ACTING 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:

- a. 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 Integrated 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 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), 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 Communities and Community Safety.

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. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 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 most of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
9. The Statement of Assurance sets out the governance and operational arrangements within which Surrey Fire and Rescue Service operates. The Section 151 Officer confirms that the Statement of Assurance is a true reflection of these arrangements, and that there are no direct business issues, risks or financial implications associated with the publication of this statement.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer

10. The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, published on 11 July 2012, sets out that:
11. "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 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."
12. There are no legal implications in the publication of the Statement.

Equalities and Diversity

13. 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.
14. 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:

15. 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:

16. The Statement of Assurance will be made available on Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's webpages.
17. 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 Communities and Community Safety

Annexes:

Annex A – Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Statement of Assurance

Sources/background papers:

- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England May 2018

ANNEX A SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2021/22

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Annual Statement of Assurance for April 2021 to April 2022.

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 introduced fundamental changes to the Service and the way it operates over the past year, these are 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 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services which monitors and reports on our performance on behalf of the Home Office. We will ensure that we are providing an efficient, effective, accountable and transparent service, reflective of the differing ethnicities in 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.



Denise Turner-Stewart
Cabinet Member – Communities and
Community Safety



Dan Quin
Acting 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

- Surrey has a population of 1.19 million residents, made up of approximately 473,000 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

- Approximately 286,000 children and young people aged 0-19 live in Surrey.
- More than half of pupils achieve a strong pass (9-5) grade in English and Maths compared with 43.4% nationally and 46.5% in the South East. The county has a highly qualified workforce with over 50% of working age population holding a degree-level qualification.

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 6th lowest recorded crime rate of the 43 police forces, and lower than average rates of victim-based crime.
- Reported knife crime among young people has increased in the previous two years by 50%.

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 which prior to Covid-19 was worth £43 billion and grew by 24% between 2010 and 2018.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

- Surrey is attractive to business with a 25% higher business density than the national average, but the rate of business births and growth in active businesses are falling in comparison to regional and national levels.

18.

19. *Information taken from the [Organisation Strategy 2021 to 2026](#)

20.

OUR VISION

Our fire and rescue authority, 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 refocus our resources to increase our work with communities and businesses to prevent emergencies from happening, whilst also responding more efficiently when they do.

21. Our vision for the service is to make Surrey a safer place to live, work, travel and do business.

SURREY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S MAKING SURREY SAFER PLAN

Each fire and rescue authority 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 was created to meet the risks of the community, which is in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council, and to transform the Service to meet Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (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 community prevention and protection 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 two 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 our services are effective, efficient and fair in the work they carry out. PIAs help us to make sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are understood and mitigated and opportunities for promoting fairness and respect are maximised. We assessed the impact on different groups of the policies set out in our Making Surrey Safer Plan using this process. Our PIAs have been reviewed and revised following impacts of Covid-19. They will continue to be reviewed as the Service recovers and returns to business as usual.

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:

1. People
2. Places
3. Premises
4. Products.

Over the last 18 months we have increased capacity by investing in our Community and Business Safety Teams. We now work in partnership with schools, businesses and community groups to support our residents. Our 'lifelong learning' pathway identifies and works with people who are dependent on others and those most vulnerable or at risk to enable them and those who look after them to enjoy safe and fulfilling lives.

We continue to focus on driver safety initiatives. This includes our Safe Drive Stay Alive initiative to equip our young, learner and novice drivers and passengers to travel safely on the busy road networks throughout the county. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 through our online digital version of Safe Drive Stay Alive we engaged with an estimated 14,000 students aged 16-19 years old from over 80 schools and colleges, on their responsibilities, the consequences of poor or inconsiderate driving and ways to keep themselves safe on the roads.

Prevention is better than responding to emergencies, therefore the more fire safety and regulatory work we do, the safer the buildings are to live and work within. 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. This also supports safe living and the investment in our business communities where we shop, spend time relaxing and socialising.

By having the right allocation of resources to meet the needs of Surrey, we can reinvest in prevention and protection activities. As part of this work our firefighters undertake prevention activities as well as ensuring they continue to respond if an emergency occurs.

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.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

- 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 LRF as a Category 1 Responder, in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act of 2004.

Response data

Between April 2021 to March 2022 our average time to arrive at incidents was 7 minutes 13 seconds. This is an excellent performance against a target of the first fire engine attending, on average, within 10 minutes. We know that Covid-19 has impacted the amount of community safety activities and the number of incidents we attended in 2021/22.

During the same period and a result of our prevention and protection work:

- We carried out 3981 Safe and Well Visits.
- The number of fires where no smoke detector was present has reduced by 2% (from 19% to 17%).
- Significant accidental dwelling fires increased by 5% (from 444 to 468). The number of fatal injuries from them increased by 8% (from 26 to 28).
- We attended 1633 false fire alarms caused by apparatus in non-domestic premises; this is an increase of 23%. Our Business Safety Team is working to reduce this figure.
- We undertook 32 rescues from water.
- The number of road traffic collisions we attended increased by 58% (from 608 to 960).

The Service offers all residents 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. The Service is now able to signpost to additional sources of advice and support to promote health and wellbeing. This includes social activities, meal services, mental health support, disability, smoking, drugs or alcohol dependency, flooding and severe weather, alarms, scams and cold calling.

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 responded to 544 deliberate fires in 2021/22, a decrease of 18% (663). 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.

- 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 2,056 fire calls in 2021/22. Sadly three of these incidents resulted in fatalities. All three victims were known to SCC teams.

When fatalities occur our Fire Investigation Team ensures that they are investigated thoroughly in partnership with Surrey Police. We have a Serious Incident Process that will collate and understand the incident information, key risks and ensure that any potential prevention work is highlighted. The most important 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:

- Preventing 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 values and behaviours.
- 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 680 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 range of emergency situations.

These activities include working with Surrey Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to respond to major incidents like widespread flooding, pandemics, acts of terrorism or dealing with emergencies that may involve hazardous materials. We are proud to have:

- 16% support roles – including project and business managers, business support, diversity and inclusion lead, IT and data roles, people and organisational development and communications roles.
- 6% community resilience roles including Fire Investigators, Youth Engagement Instructor, Education Officer and Wildfire & Rural Affairs Partnership Officer.
- 8% mobilising roles – Our state-of-the-art Joint Fire Control delivered in collaboration with East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Services.
- 70% response roles – We employ wholetime firefighters and on-call firefighters.
- 48 volunteers – We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who help us keep communities safe. Read more about our volunteers on page 12.

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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 working to develop skills and maximise wellbeing at work. We are continuously working to improve the culture of our Service and in the way we work.

We recognise that health and wellbeing is not an optional extra. Supporting our staff to be physically and mentally healthy not only forms part of our legal responsibilities, and makes good organisational sense, 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 MIND's Blue Light Programme.

We have a network of Wellbeing Champions who are all volunteers from throughout the service play a vital part in our wellbeing approach. All our Wellbeing Champions have received 'peer support' training provided by MIND's Blue Light Programme equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding of techniques that can be used to support their colleagues for those times when their wellbeing may be suffering, along with helping raise awareness and encourage people to talk about their wellbeing. We have also trained a group of staff as mental health first aiders, to ensure they can work alongside the wellbeing champions in supporting our workforce.

We have developed a policy on fitness that requires operational firefighters to undergo annual fitness testing by the Service fitness co-ordinator. Fitness testing results are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group. The Service has begun to develop a network of physical training instructors 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 implementing representation across the organisation with 26 physical training instructors to begin with.

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. They also contribute towards delivering the Junior Citizen programme.

No greater example of volunteering can be shown than was demonstrated in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our volunteers went above and beyond to coordinate and support the picking, packing and distribution of PPE and care packages to those most in need. More than 10 million items of PPE were issued during this period by our team.

Our Community Safety and Partnership Team aim to expand volunteering further into local communities, engaging with both internal and external stakeholders to provide assistance

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.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

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 equality, diversity and inclusion. As part of our People Strategy we will focus on promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, understanding our communities' requirements, delivering high quality and inclusive services. Throughout all of this we want to foster a positive, inclusive and diverse culture.

Health and safety

The Health and Safety Team ensure the Service takes due care of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and people 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 Working Group. We train our staff to a high level and pride ourselves on our high safety culture. Occupational Health Services are procured through a collaborative partnership with three other emergency services delivering an important resource and achieving value for money.

Leadership development

The development of outstanding leadership skills, knowledge and capacity across all levels and teams, is supported by holistic delivery of learning and development that includes clear career development opportunities underpinned by coaching, mentoring, talent management, people development programmes, e-learning, shadowing, secondments and joint training. We want our Service to be a professional and well-led organisation, exemplifying the Fire and Rescue Service Core Code of Ethics.

We were the first Fire and Rescue service in the UK to offer membership to all employees for the Institute for Fire Engineers. This is an acknowledgment of professional skills from an international organisation of fire professionals, recognising competence, commitment and expertise.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

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.

Fire control projects

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 Operators despatch firefighters and fire engines from each of the three fire and rescue services to emergencies in their county from the joint control room. This arrangement increases resilience and staffing numbers. We have upgraded the primary control room and completed a high-tech secondary control at our headquarters in Reigate.

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

Other projects

Other successful collaborations include joint Occupational Health services being delivered across Surrey/Sussex Police forces and ESFRS, a collaborative Integrated Transport function between Surrey/Sussex Police and SFRS to realise efficiencies in vehicle maintenance and collaborative projects between ESFRS, WSFRS, SFRS and Kent Fire and Rescue Service for core equipment needs to maximise interoperability across these partners. 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; we have worked with:

- [Whiteribbon.org.uk](https://whiteribbon.org.uk)
- [HeForShe](#)
- [Friends Against Scams](#)

- [Surrey Police](#)
- [NHS](#)
- [Surrey Local Resilience Forum](#)
- [South East Coast Ambulance Service](#)
- [Asian Fire Services Association](#)
- [Surrey Ethnic Minority Association](#)

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 responses to incidents and fire safety activities (for both businesses and the community) we gather information about our performance from a range of other sources.

Benchmarking – Family Group 4

The Service is a member of a benchmarking group, Family Group 4, made up of 14 fire and rescue authorities in England and Wales. 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 show evidence of improvement, to implement corrective action and to reduce/limit operational risk.

The Service completed 34 station assurance visits during 2021-22. The station assurance visits are the responsibility of the borough commanders. Each whole-time, day-crewed and on-call watch is programmed a visit annually. Operational policy assurance and learning collect and analyse the data submitted for the purpose of trend identification. 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 and joint organisational learning publications are also assured during the station assurance visits.

The operational policy and assurance team undertake dip sampling of the assurance visits completed by the station commander. This ensures standardisation of the station assurance process and confirmation of the communication and understanding of the learning and development identified locally, regionally and nationally. The team also completed unannounced audits at three stations following assurance visits.

During 2021-2022 several topical areas formed part of the assurance process:

- Clean person concept
- Water supplies and MDTs
- High rise procedures and provisions

In addition to these areas, general questions are asked of the watch which included M/ETHANE and analytical risk assessments as a common trend and questions on National Operational Guidance. Further to this, stations with

specialist equipment such as high-volume pumps or aerial ladder platforms also had their knowledge and understanding assessed.

Operational policy and assurance

The Operational Policy, Assurance and Learning 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 National Fire Chiefs Council's Central Programme Office. Where learning has been identified locally that may be of interest to other fire and rescue services, the National Operational Learning platform is utilised.

Assurance and improvement

We continually assess our progress and improve our services to the residents and businesses of Surrey. In 2019 we approached the College of Business, Arts and Social Science (CBASS) at Brunel University London. We asked them to review our Transformation Programme and for them, as an external body, to assure the plans to support the delivery of Making Surrey Safer Plan. They concluded:

“Overall we are very satisfied that there is a robust data model that underpins the transformation plan. The plan as presented stands on firm ground.”

Please see the [Making Surrey Safer Plan 2020-2024](#) for more information and the full Brunel University London report.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Inspection

In July 2017, HMICFRS extended its remit to include inspections of England's fire and rescue services. The [first inspection](#) of the Service took place in July 2018 and a number of recommendations were made. HMICFRS revisited in September 2019 and found "significant progress" had been made in several areas. They praised the Making Surrey Safer Plan and described it as a "comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of risk, with considered options".

HMICFRS carried out their second full inspection in the Spring of 2021 and their subsequent report stated that 'It was heartening to see the progress made by Surrey Fire and Rescue since our first inspection.'

'The service is in much better shape than at the time of our 2018/19 inspection. It is becoming more effective and efficient at keeping people safe from fire. And, on balance, it is improving how well it looks after its people. It knows that there is a great deal of work to do to change and improve its organisational culture, but it is approaching this challenge positively.'

Further development

During their last full inspection in Spring 2021, HMICFRS identified no new causes of concern but recognised several areas for continued focus and development which included:

- Evaluating our prevention work to make sure our activity is working
- Ensuring we provide our firefighters with up-to-date and useful risk information
- Learning from our operational activity, both internal and external.

Future Inspections

HMICFRS will carry out their next inspection of our service in 2023, exact timings are yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, we are committed to focusing on our areas of improvement and the recommendations provided within the HMICFRS report of 2021/22. We monitor progress against our Inspection Improvement Plan and report on it via our Service governance structure. The plan is also being scrutinised by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on a bi-annual basis.

HOW THE SERVICE MANAGES RISK AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

[Surrey Local Resilience Forum \(LRF\)](#) 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 to plan and prepare 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 assures 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).

[Surrey Community Risk Register \(PDF\)](#) has been created to provide public information about the hazards that exist within the county 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 and is reflective of the National Risk Register. Further information can be accessed through the UK resilience 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. The Service has achieved and maintains ISO 22301 in Business Continuity Management.

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, 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 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 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 fire authorities 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 fire authorities to improve resilience and capacity in bordering areas.

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Our bespoke and additional activity enabled us to effectively respond to our communities' and our staff needs during the first waves of the pandemic. In line with national guidance and central governance we have either stopped this activity or brought it within existing service governance and structures. They remain under constant review ensuring that these mechanisms can be made ready again should the need arise.

GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE

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

Cabinet Member

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety 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.
- 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 2022 these are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Local Government Act 1999

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service

- Localism Act 2011
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018.

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.
- Publish remuneration policies. The [Pay policy statements page](#) of the SCC website provides a range of documents relating to pay, including Pay Policy Statement, Equal Pay Policy Statement and transparency data.

FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is part of Surrey County Council and therefore receives its funding as part of the county council's budget planning process. It was included within a group of services called Community Protection Group (CPG) until 31 March 2022.

The CPG was allocated £37.3 million in the county council's 2021/22 budget of which £31.7 million was allocated to the fire and rescue service.

The fire and rescue authority produces a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which is reviewed annually. The MTFS sets out our revenue budget for the coming year and five-year capital programme. The budget includes assumed inflationary increases for staffing, supplies and services.

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, 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 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 a number of 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 to 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.