

STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2020/21



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Introduction

Welcome to our annual Statement of Assurance for April 2020 to April 2021.

This Fire and Rescue Authority 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 the arrangements in place to deliver activities safely and effectively. We will reference other useful documents that 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 diversity in our community 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 assurance of our commitment to provide a fire and rescue service that meets the demands of Surrey.



Mark Nuti
Cabinet Member for Communities



Steve Owen-Hughes
Chief Fire Officer
Head of Community Protection Group

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 are refocusing our resources to increase our work with communities and businesses to prevent emergencies from happening, whilst also responding more efficiently when they do.

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



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 the demand for our response services.
- Sustain revenue and increase capital investment.
- Realign our 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 our 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 more 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.

Surrey – the context we work in

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



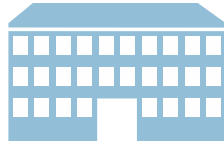
Population

- Surrey has a population of 1.19 million residents, made up of approximately 473,000 households. This 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 while there are expected to be more residents aged over 65, and a 29% increase the number of over 85s.



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%.



Education and skills

- Nearly 262,000 children and young people live in Surrey.
- More than half of pupils achieve a strong pass (9-5) grade in English and Maths, compared to 43.4% nationally and 46.5% in the South East.
- The county has a highly qualified workforce with over 50% of the working age population holding a degree-level qualification.



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 traffic flow and make it the slowest county to drive around.



Health and wellbeing

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



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 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.

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

Our Service

We employ 670 members of staff across Surrey. There are many diverse options when it comes to working for SFRS, from working with 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 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:



13% support roles

Project and business managers, business support, diversity and inclusion lead, organisational development, digital, data and communications roles.



13% community resilience roles

Including Fire Investigators, Youth Engagement Instructor, Education Officer and Wildfire & Rural Affairs Partnership Officer.



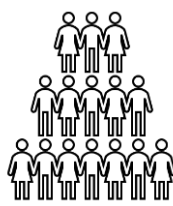
6% mobilising roles

Our state-of-the-art Joint Fire Control delivered in collaboration with West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.



68% response roles

We have two different types of firefighters, wholtime firefighters, and on-call firefighters.



Recruitment

We are actively recruiting. From April 20 - April 21 we recruited:
34 support roles
15 community resilience and business fire safety roles
8 control room roles
64 response roles



72 volunteers

We are extremely grateful to our volunteers who help us keep communities safe. Read more about our volunteers on page 12.

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

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's Making Surrey Safer Plan

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 more safe and resilient communities by prevention and protection. This supports SCC'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 four core safety areas:



People



Places



Premises



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 all based around a 'lifelong learning' pathway. This 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 successful Safe Drive Stay Alive presentations to equip our young, learner and novice drivers and passengers to travel safely on the busy road networks throughout the county. Between April 2020 and April 2021, through our new online digital version of Safe Drive Stay Alive we engaged with an estimated 15,000 plus students aged 16-19 years old from over 80 schools and colleges to educate them 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 protection 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 are safe too.

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 and protection 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.
- 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 2020 to March 2021 our average time to arrive at critical incidents was 7 minutes 9 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 2020/21.

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



We carried out 2,057 Home Fire Safety Checks.



The number of fires where no smoke detector was present has reduced by 21% (104 to 82).



Accidental dwelling fires increased by 21% (423 to 512). However, the number of injuries from them declined by 16% (31 to 26).



We attended 4,542 false alarms; this is a 10% reduction. Our Business Safety Team is working to reduce this further.



We undertook 18 rescues from water.



The number of road traffic collisions we attended has reduced by 42% (1,062 to 615).

Since 2019 and in line with the National Fire Chief Councils recommendations, the Service has moved away from Home Safety Checks and now offers all residents a more in-depth Safe and Well Visit. These cover a broader 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 663 deliberate fires in 2020/21, a decrease of 11% (743). We have enhanced our partnership working with others to tackle root causes and reduce behaviour which lead to the outbreak of fire. 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 & Rural Affairs Partnership Officers liaising with land owners to manage their site access and growth of potential fuel sources.

In total the Service responded to 2,524 fire calls in 2020/21. Sadly, five of these incidents resulted in fatalities. All five were accidental (some of which are pending an outcome of Coroner's inquest and may not be fire related). All the fatalities involved adults who had traits making them more vulnerable to fire: disability, reduced mobility, cognitive impairment, hearing loss or blindness etc.

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.



the benefits we have seen with communities coming together to help themselves and their neighbours. Although we are in unprecedented times, it is essential that we also continue our normal duties as an LRF. This guarantees that the LRF can operate effectively as a collective body, managing an agreed programme of work, ensuring that staff are trained and that plans tested and reviewed periodically.

Activities:

- Staff and Volunteers supported the temporary mortuary facilities, including facilities established at the Service headquarters. All new volunteers were pre-screened by Occupational Health and undertook manual handling training as well as induction training at the Surrey University and Headley Court sites.
- Service Business Support staff were trained at the back up Control Centre to give additional resource, if required, to the Service's Joint Fire Control.
- Staff and Volunteers were key members of the LRF response cells such as the Personal Protective Equipment and Logistics cell where we proved vital in the initial response and delivery.
- We also supported the Vulnerable People Cell by reaching out to the vulnerable people in our community and providing food parcels and medicines where required.
- The Service's Incident Management Team (IMT) has provided support to the testing cell by collating information on our staff who either had Covid-19 symptoms, were self-isolating or shielding as per NHS guidance. They also provided returns for the National Fire Chiefs Council, to help the national response.
- The IMT are the single point of contact for Test and Trace if a frontline member of staff has been identified as being in contact with a positive case.
- The Service was one of the first fire and rescue services in the country to enable staff access to key worker testing and are supporting the lessons learnt work being conducted by the National Fire Chiefs Council and partners.
- Members of staff completed training delivered by South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb) and have assisted SECamb by crewing ambulances.
- Service staff have completed training and volunteered to support the mass vaccination programme in various roles, including administering the vaccine.
- Led Surge Testing in the boroughs of Woking and Runnymede, in relation to identifying and managing the impact of COVID-19 variants.

The impact of the terrible and far reaching Covid-19 pandemic on our Service is continuing to be assessed as part of our transformation programme on an ongoing basis. As we move through recovery, we will ensure that all impacts from Covid-19 are continually reviewed through business-as-usual activity.

We are very proud of our response during this national crisis and how it demonstrates what we can achieve when we work in partnership with others.

Our people

Our people are our greatest asset and they are at the heart of what we do. Particularly during Covid-19 and our response to the pandemic, our people in all departments have shown their adaptability and willingness to go the extra mile for our county.

We want the Service to continue to be a great place to work and to help our workforce 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 vital. 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.

Therefore, 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 and 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.

Operational firefighters are required to undergo annual fitness testing. Fitness testing results are monitored by the Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing Working Group.

Volunteers

We have, for several years, recruited and developed volunteers to help deliver services particularly around delivery of Home Fire Safety Visits and now Safe and Well Visits. They have and continue to provide targeted interventions to vulnerable people in their own homes to ensure they can continue to enjoy living safely in Surrey.

No greater example of volunteering can be found than during the Covid-19 pandemic where our volunteers went above and beyond in leading and supporting the management, distribution and delivery of Personal Protective Equipment and food parcels to care homes and people shielding during the most contagious stages.

Our volunteers also help at fire station open days and can be found promoting safety with Surrey Police at both the Surrey County Show and the Oxted and Edenbridge Show. They play a significant part in delivering the Junior Citizen Scheme. Our Community Safety Team will be expanding volunteering further into local communities engaging with farmers and land managers to become first responders when environmental impacts such as flooding, and wildfires occur. These volunteers will work with us to plan, prevent and prepare for these major impacts and build back better when they do occur. As a Service, we are very proud of the community service undertaken by our volunteers.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We want our workforce to represent the diverse communities 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 to wide-ranging positive action initiatives, aiming to attract candidates from diverse groups to join and stay with our Service. These include: our weekly #SurreyFireFit session which supports individuals from all backgrounds to participate in increasing their fitness levels, introduction of a mentoring scheme to provide invaluable information and guidance for those interested in joining the Service and building stronger links with community groups in Surrey to raise awareness of the career opportunities available in our Service. All of these will help us work towards having a diverse workforce better equipped 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 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

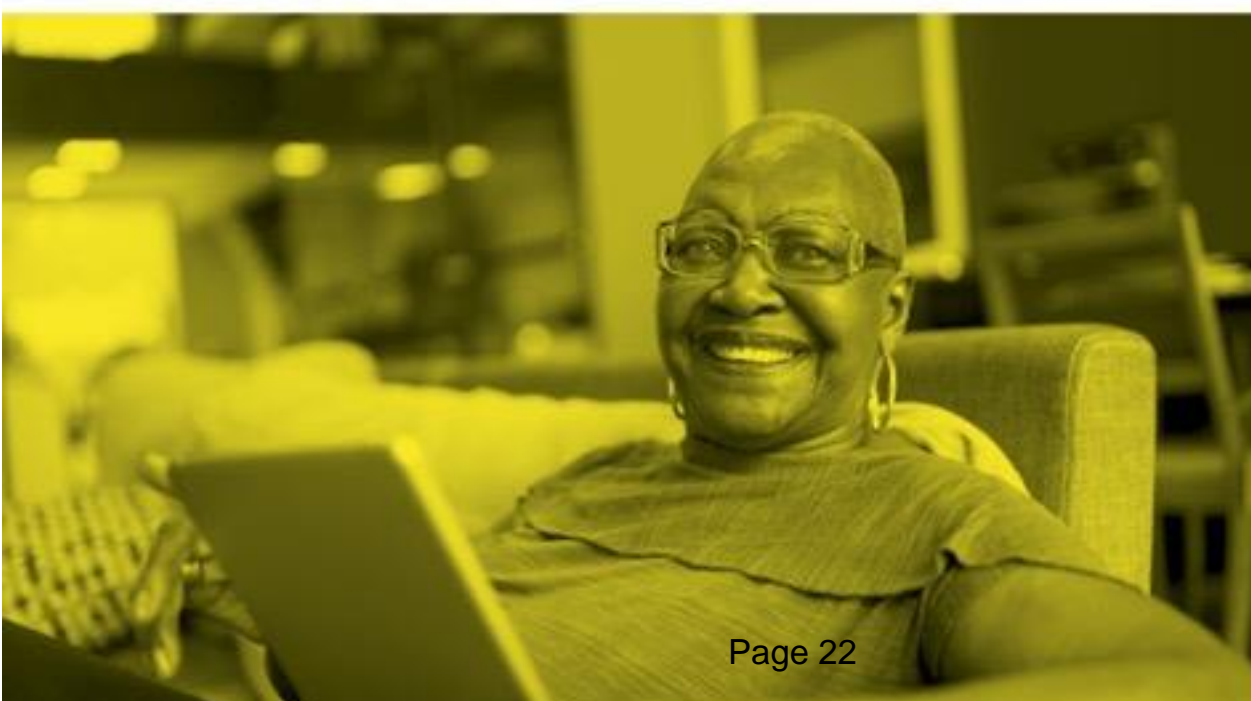
The Health and Safety Team ensure the Service takes due care of the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and people who may be affected by its operations. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Performance Plan includes key performance indicators and targets which are monitored by the Occupational Health, 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 a value for money.

Leadership development

The development of outstanding leadership skills, knowledge and capacity across all levels, is supported by training that includes mentoring, talent management, people development programmes, e-learning 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.



Assurance and improvement

Each fire and rescue authority must provide assurance that they are meeting their statutory responsibilities and are delivering the strategies set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan.

Our Making Surrey Safer Plan has been 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 transforming the Service to meet the needs and manage the risks that we will face throughout the county, now and in the future. We are one year into that journey and want to make sure 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. You can also find out more about [how we developed our plan](#) and [how we respond to emergencies](#).

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. They 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. These will continue to be reviewed as the Service recovers and returns to business as usual.

We are continually assess our progress to improve our services to the residents and businesses of Surrey. We approached the College of Business, Arts and Social Science 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 for more information and the full [Brunel University London reports](#)

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. When HMICFRS revisited in September 2019 to check our progress, they found "significant progress" had been made in several areas. Their findings are outlined the [Surrey Fire and Rescue Service 2018/19 revisit letter](#).



They praised the Making Surrey Safer Plan and described it as a *"comprehensive and evidence-based assessment of risk, with considered options"*.

They *"found appropriate governance structures both within the Service and through Surrey County Council which provide scrutiny of progress."* They also commended the Service on setting up an advisory group to provide assurance to and challenge the Service Leadership Team throughout the implementation of the plan.

Further development

During their revisit in September 2019, HMICFRS also recognised several areas for continued focus and development which included:

- Proactive external communications, which we deliver through our Customer Interface Project and our social media platforms.
- Working to attract and recruit a more diverse workforce to ensure our workforce represents the communities we serve.
- Delivering an On-call Project which focuses on recruitment and retention of on-call staff, taking into account the national recommendations within the HMICFRS State of Fire & Rescue Report 2019.

HMICFRS also carried out a virtual inspection focusing on our response to Covid-19 and the impacts it has had on our Service. Outcomes of this inspection were [published](#) in January 2021.

Future Inspections

HMICFRS was due to return in the Summer of 2020 to carry out another full inspection but due to Covid-19 this inspection was delayed until Spring 2021 of this year.

HMICFRS commenced their second full inspection at the end of March which was carried out virtually and took place over a 10-week period. The Chief Fire Officer provided the HMICFRS inspection team with a Strategic Briefing, highlighting the key changes since round one of inspection and outlining the Service's response to any causes of concern or areas for improvement previously identified. A report detailing the outcomes of this inspection will be published towards the end of 2021, once a full moderation and benchmarking exercise has taken place by HMICFRS.

Summary

All improvements areas highlighted by HMICFRS have appropriate and positive actions incorporated into the Service's improvement plans to drive forward our transformation. We also publish progress on these improvement areas on a quarterly basis on our [website](#).



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.

Operational policy and assurance

The Operational Policy and Assurance 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 Chief 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.

Collaboration and partnerships

Fire control projects

In January 2020 the transfer of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS) mobilising arrangements to Surrey was approved at a meeting of East Sussex's Fire Authority. This follows the successful transfer of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service's 999 calls to Surrey's state of the art, tried and tested mobilising system in December 2019.

Control Operators will despatch firefighters and fire engines from ESFRS to emergencies in their county from the joint control room as of November 2021. The arrangement will further increase resilience and staffing numbers and is also likely to result in efficiency savings for the Service.

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

Other successful collaborations include a joint Occupational Health and Wellbeing service being delivered across Surrey/Sussex Police forces and ESFRS and the future Integrated Transport function that will see the combined partnership with Surrey/Sussex Police which will provide new and advanced joint vehicle workshop facilities to support our increasing range of vehicle and equipment needs for the future.

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; in addition to those mentioned above we have worked with:



Financial assurance

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

The CPG was initially allocated £33.8 million in the county council's [2020/21 budget](#), of which £31.4 million was allocated to the fire and rescue service. The CPG budget was later increased to £36.2m to reflect the expanded group including the inclusion of the Coronial 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 the 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](#) includes 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.

SCC'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 [Localism and Transparency 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](#).



Governance assurance

How the fire and rescue service is governed and managed

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

Cabinet Member for Communities

The Cabinet Member for Community Protection Group 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 it 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 SCC 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 the council makes decisions](#).

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. A principal objective of this service is to ensure SCC's processes are robust, and that it 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 on occasion. Any issues would be raised with the Service Leadership Team (SLT). Audit reports and agreed actions arising from these audits are reported to the Audit and Governance Committee and may be called in by the relevant Select Committee if necessary. Ownership of 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's 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 a 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 and acts

We have statutory responsibilities laid down in legislation to provide an effective, economic and efficient fire and rescue service. These are:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Local Government Act 1999
- 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 localism and transparency page](#) of the SCC website provides a range of documents relating to pay, including Pay Policy Statement, Equal Pay Policy Statement and transparency data

How the Service manages risk and business continuity

[Surrey's Local Resilience Forum \(LRF\)](#) brings together all partners with a significant role to play in responding to and recovering from 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 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 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 all fire and rescue authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any emergency outside their area. We have arrangements in place for mutual aid with all neighbouring fire and rescue authorities to improve resilience and capacity in bordering areas.



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 Cockshott 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.

