

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**Date:** 11th December 2017**Subject:** Annual Report, Statement of Assurance and Annual Equality Report 2016-17**Report by:** The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer**Author:** Chris Moir (Planning Manager)**For:** Decision

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the draft combined annual report, statement of assurance and annual equality report for 2016-17.

2. Recommendations

Members of the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) are requested to approve the draft combined annual report, statement of assurance and annual equality report for 2016-17 for publication, with delegated powers to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to make any necessary minor amendments prior to publication.

3. Executive Summary

3.1. The content of the draft combined annual report, statement of assurance and annual equality report for 2016-17 presents a review of the levels of performance that have been achieved during the previous year.

The publication of the annual statement of assurance is a statutory requirement required in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework.

3.2. The draft combined annual report, statement of assurance and annual equality report for 2016-17 is attached to this covering report marked as Appendix.

4. Report Detail

4.1. The Fire and Rescue Framework for England requires that a statement of assurance is published annually by all fire and rescue services. Its purpose is to provide assurance on financial, operational and governance matters, in particular in meeting the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework. The CFA publishes an annual report every year, highlighting previous year's performance and providing information on how it is meeting agreed aims and objectives.

4.2. The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 and the new Public Sector Equality Duty followed in April 2011. The Act strengthens equality

legislation while the duty requires all public sector bodies to publish equality objectives and provide updates on progress at least once a year.

- 4.3. For the first time, the Annual Equality Report has been combined with the Annual Report and Statement of Assurance. This follows the move to combine the Corporate Plan with the Integrated Risk Management Plan so that the number of CFA relates annual publications is reduced. The aim being to improve access and demonstrate high levels of transparency.
- 4.4. The report also contains a number of links to other documents or areas and these include the combined Corporate and Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Annual Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement. There are also links to various Operational Assurance Acts that the CFA complies with in order to discharge all statutory duties.

5. Report Implications / Impact

5.1. *Legal (including crime and disorder)*

- a) The production of an annual statement of assurance is a statutory requirement as detailed in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. It must be signed off by an elected member on behalf of the CFA.
The statement has been viewed and checked by central government in previous years to ensure its currency.
- b) The publication of performance information demonstrates compliance with good practice to be open and transparent.
- c) The equalities annual report is a requirement as part of the CFAs duty to promote equality of opportunity. If the CFA does not review its activities and policies regularly there is a risk that it will be judged as failing to meet its obligations and may be subject to enforcement action from the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

5.2. *Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)*

The draft combined annual report, statement of assurance and annual equality report for 2016-17 incorporates a section on financial assurance.

5.3. *Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of service delivery)*

- a) Failure to publish a statement of assurance would represent a non-compliance with the requirements of the National Framework.
- b) Publication of annual performance figures mitigates any organisational reputational risk associated with not meeting the transparency agenda.

5.4. *Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)*

- a) Any actions arising from performance or assurance will be dealt with by the relevant departments.
- b) The purpose of the annual equalities report and associated discussions is to ensure that CFA demonstrates progress in delivering service aims, values and beliefs.

5.5. ***Environmental***

The document will only be available in an electronic format unless hard copies are specifically requested.

5.6. ***Impact upon Our Plan Objectives***

- a) Publication of this document meets the aim of providing 'effective governance and openness to the community'.
- b) Progress in equality and diversity will positively impact on 'improved safety for our communities' using 'staff who are skilled, equipped and motivated to deliver our vision' of 'a proud and inspirational fire and rescue service'.

6. **Background Papers**

None.

7. **Appendix**

Draft Combined Annual Report, Statement of Assurance and Annual Equalities Report 2016/17.