

LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

Status of Report: Public Agenda Item: 14

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority
Date: 10th December 2014
Subject: Annual Statement of Assurance 2013/14
Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
Author: Richard Chandler (Deputy Chief Fire and Rescue Officer and Director of Organisational Development)
For: Decision

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) the draft annual statement of assurance for 2013/14 for approval prior to publication.

2. Executive Summary

The draft annual statement of assurance for 2013/14 is submitted for approval. The statement is a revised version from 2012/13, and guidance states that it 'must be signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents'. The statement is a statutory publication for all fire and rescue services in England, and was subject to review by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) last year.

3. Report Detail

- 3.1 The National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services 2012 requires an annual statement of assurance is published each year 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 National Framework. A guidance document on these statements has been published by DCLG, and the draft document meets all of the requirements within this.
- 3.2 The draft statement is attached at **the Appendix**. It is a revised and updated version of the 2012/13 statement, with links to various documents where appropriate. The Statement applies to the financial year 2013/14.
- 3.3 Once approved the Statement will be published on the CFA's website.

4. Report Implications / Impact

4.1 *Legal (including crime and disorder)*

The production of an annual statement of assurance is a statutory requirement as detailed in the National Framework 2012. It is worth noting that the statement of assurance for 2012/13 was reviewed by Central Government.

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

The Statement of Assurance provides a section on financial assurance.

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

Failure to publish a Statement of Assurance would not meet with the statutory requirements of the National Framework.

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

None identified.

4.5 *Environmental*

None identified.

4.6 *Impact upon Our Plan Objectives*

The publication supports all of the objectives.

5. Recommendations

The CFA is asked to approve the annual statement of assurance for 2013-14 for publication.

6. Background Papers

- a) Annual statement of assurance for 2012/13 (CFA report – 11th December 2013)
- b) Annual statement of assurance – implication and approach (CFA report - 26th September 2013)

7. Appendix

Draft Annual Statement of Assurance 2013/14



STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

// 2013-2014



LEICESTERSHIRE

FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

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BACKGROUND

The Statement of Assurance

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) document, the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, requires all fire and rescue authorities to publish an annual statement that provides assurance on financial, governance and operational matters.

Our statement of assurance aims to provide openness and transparency to our communities, Government, local authorities and other partners and give them accessibility to, and confidence in, our performance. Our statement is updated and published annually in December. This document is published in December 2014, but looks back at the financial year 2013-14, i.e. 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014.

Many of the documents and assurances required are contained or referenced within other publications and where applicable, electronic links to these documents are provided (they can be identified by being underlined). These documents are also available on our website. However, if you have any difficulty in viewing or accessing these links, or require this or other documents in a hard copy format, please contact us at:

Service Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU

Tel: 0116 287 2241 • Fax: 0116 227 1330 • Email: info@lfrs.org • www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority (CFA)

The CFA is the governing body of your local fire and rescue service and is made up of **17 elected members** from Leicester City, Leicestershire County and Rutland County Councils. The number of elected members put forward by each of the three councils is proportionate to the number of electors that they represent in their respective area.

Currently there are five members from the city, eleven from the county council, and one from Rutland. The councillors reflect the political make-up of each authority. Their role is to ensure the provision of an efficient and effective fire and rescue service in our area in accordance with various legislative requirements. **The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004** sets out the expectations for the authority and the service.

The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority area also comprises seven district councils: Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth, Melton Mowbray, North West Leicestershire and Oadby and Wigston.

The area covered by the authority is in excess of 250,000 hectares and comprises a mixture of urban, semi-rural and rural localities. The population is growing and at present stands at just over 1 million people residing in over 415,000 domestic properties. In addition, there are over 40,000 businesses at local unit level. Our community areas comprise a diverse, multicultural society with varying degrees of affluence. Leicester City maintains high levels of ethnic minority representation and social deprivation. In total, approximately 22% of the economically active population in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are from minority ethnic communities.



FINANCIAL ASSURANCE

It is a statutory requirement under the [Accounts and Audit \(England\) Regulations 2011](#) for all authorities to publish the financial results of their activities each year. This is achieved through the publication of our statement of accounts, which shows the annual costs of providing our service. It is determined by a Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.

The Treasurer to the CFA is responsible for the approval of the draft statement of accounts prior to publication. Each year we produce the draft statement of accounts by the end of June, with the final audited statement of accounts published by the end of September. Regulations state that the accounts must be published with the audit opinion and certificate, and be approved by authority members by 30 September of each year. For 2013-14, approval was gained on 25 September 2014, at the meeting of the CFA.

The statement of accounts is subject to external audit and scrutiny. Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) were our external auditors for 2013-14, and they were responsible for the auditing of our 2013-14 financial statements; giving an opinion on our accounts; and issuing a value for money conclusion. In 2013-14, PwC issued an unqualified audit opinion on our financial statements and value for money (VFM) conclusion. This means that they found no issues. In fact the auditor's report stated under accounting issues, that, *"for the third consecutive year both the quality and timeliness of the draft financial statements presented for audit has improved significantly."*

Follow this [link](#) to view our [Annual Statement of Accounts 2013-14](#) in much more detail and this [link](#) to view the final [Auditor's Report](#) (as an appendix to the full CFA report).

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Each year we publish an annual governance statement (AGS) supporting the annual statement of accounts. The statement for 2013-14 was produced in accordance with the guidance in the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework. Via a process of self-assessment, it demonstrates the continuous review of the effectiveness of the authority's internal control, performance and risk management systems. It gives assurance that proper arrangements are in place to govern spending, safeguard assets and maximise operational effectiveness. We also produced an action plan to address any identified areas for improvement.

The [Annual Governance Statement 2013-14](#) was signed by the Chair of the CFA and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer on behalf of the members and senior officers. Our AGS for the financial year 2013-14 was approved by the Policy Committee in August 2014.

Internal audit reviewed our AGS as part of their annual review of governance arrangements. Findings were that: *"Nothing of ...significance, adverse nature or character has come to ... attention, and as such reasonable assurance is given that CFA/LFRS governance arrangements are robust"*.

External audit also reviewed the AGS: *"We reviewed the AGS to consider whether it complied with the CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework and whether it is misleading or inconsistent with other information known to us from our audit work. We found no areas of concern to report in this context"*.

To review the full documents, follow these links:

[Annual Governance Statement 2013-14](#)

[Internal Audit Report 2013-14](#)

[PwC Audit Report 2013-14](#)

We also published a [local code of governance](#) to ensure that stakeholders have confidence in the decision-making and management processes of the Combined Fire Authority, and in the conduct and professionalism of its members, officers and agents in delivering services.

We are committed to delivering transparency in order to enable the public to hold us to account for the way we spend our money. We will be meeting the requirements of the [Local Government Transparency Code 2014](#), and regularly publishing information on our website relating to expenditure, procurement, land and estates, organisation and salaries.

Financial transparency reports from 2013-14 relating to expenditure can be found on our website [here](#).

OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE

The CFA maintains key responsibilities and functions that they are bound to carry out. These are defined primarily within the following documents: :

- [The Fire and Rescue Services act 2004](#)
- [The Civil Contingencies Act 2004](#)
- [The Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue Services \(Emergencies\) \(England\) Order 2007](#)
- [The Localism Act 2011](#)
- [The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England](#)

The purpose of this section is to provide assurance that our service is delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities.

Planning and Reporting

[Our Plan 2013-16](#) sets out our service vision, aims and objectives for those three years. We revise and publish our performance targets and main milestones annually. In 2013-14 we published our [Planning Targets for 2014-15](#) with our revised targets for 2014/15. We are currently reviewing our planning framework, and will publish a five year corporate plan, combined with the Integrated Risk Management Plan in 2015. Actual performance against our targets and milestones for 2013-14 was published in our [Annual Report](#).

Our [IRMP 2013-16 \(Integrated Risk Management Plan\)](#) was published in July 2013, setting out our arrangements for dealing with risk in our area, and how we deliver our prevention, protection and response services.

In addition, we produced bespoke district improvement plans for each community area. Each plan is unique to its area and contains the actions that we have taken to reduce risk and improve community safety. The plans were informed by a community risk profile bringing together historic incident data, demographic, commercial and infrastructure risk factors.

Consultation

Consultation was carried out on the draft IRMP 2013-16 in January and February 2013. The consultation was open to all stakeholders in a primarily electronic format, but particular focus was given to the areas where change was proposed. Specific participative consultation events for affected residents were carried out in both Market Harborough and Lutterworth. The results of the consultation were [reported to CFA in July 2013](#), and the final plan then approved for publication.

External and internal consultation was, and is, an essential part of the development of the IRMP. We are currently consulting on proposals for the 2015-20 IRMP that will be combined with Our Plan to create one overall five year corporate plan.

Addressing Risk

The Fire and Rescue National Framework states that each fire and rescue authority must produce an IRMP that identifies and assesses all foreseeable fire and rescue related risks that could affect its community, including those of a cross-border, multi-authority and/or national nature. The plan must have regard to the community risk registers produced by local resilience forums and any other local risk analyses as appropriate.

Our IRMP 2013-16 addresses local risk, and also describes our responsibilities in responding to national emergencies and security issues that cut across local boundaries. As well as being members of the Local Resilience Forum, we also have arrangements in place with our regional neighbouring services for mutual assistance in the emergency response, intervention and fire investigation workstreams. In addition to working with our regional partners, work has also been undertaken with our non-regional neighbours to ensure effective mutual assistance arrangements are in place.

During 2013-14 the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) held a series of strikes. The periods of strike action took place over a period of 10 separate days, including Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve 2014 (these strike periods were continued and increased in number and duration, into 2014-15, and are still ongoing at the time of publication). In response to the strike action, the service implemented contingency plans to ensure that there were sufficient crews available to respond to fires and other emergencies – albeit at a vastly reduced level.

External Assessment / Peer Challenge

The findings from the external peer challenge that took place in 2012 remain current until such time as another challenge is undertaken. The [report](#) that was published in 2012 looked at a whole range of operational areas, and was fundamentally positive about the service as a whole.

The report also contained 'areas to explore'. Progression in these areas has continued in 2013-14. Some of these included:

- **Uncertainties on future funding** – An organisational change project has been established to investigate and implement measures to address shortfalls in our funding.
- **Risk modelling** - We have developed and received external validation of a community risk model that is being used in the development of the 2015-20 IRMP.
- **Benchmarking** – We have continued to benchmark our service performance nationally, against family group (similar) fire services, and regional fire services. Internally, we compare performance across similar stations. All incident-related performance is produced at a district/borough level and is available for comparison purposes.
- **Use of social media** – The use of both Facebook and Twitter has been developed, and we are now actively promoting the service and its messages on both sites.

Our Performance

In 2013-14 we continued to measure our set of Key Corporate Indicators (measures) to track our performance against our targets, against previous years, and to compare ourselves against other fire and rescue services throughout the UK. Quarterly performance reports were produced and discussed at the authority's Policy Committee meetings and our internal Senior Management Team meetings.

Performance for 2013-14 remained very positive, with significant reductions in the number of hoax calls, a high standard of response times and a sustained reduction in the number of fires and other emergencies. Performance against our targets, along with more detailed information on all our achievements, including embedding equality and diversity within the service, for 2013-14 can be found by viewing our [Annual Report 2013-14](#).

ASSURANCE DECLARATION

This statement of assurance is designed to inform and assure our communities and other stakeholders of the work we are doing, in meeting national governance, operational and financial requirements; and to declare that we are meeting the requirements set out in the National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services.

Whilst a lot of information within this document relates to meeting statutory legislative guidelines and requirements, it also gives a strong message about the good performance and excellent service that we provide.

2013-14 presented several challenges, with periods of industrial action impacting upon the service, and with future planning looking at meeting impending budgetary shortfalls due to reduced funding. Despite this, we have continued to sustain the reduction in the number of fires and other emergencies, and offer an excellent service at a very low cost when compared to other UK fire and rescue services.

Whilst the future remains challenging in the form of budgetary shortfalls, and ongoing industrial action, we are committed to continuing to provide this service to you all, whilst still meeting our statutory requirements.



Dave Webb

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Chief Fire and Rescue
Officer and Chief Executive
on behalf of the Members
and Senior Officers of
Leicestershire Fire and
Rescue Service



Steve Corrall

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Chair of the Leicester,
Leicestershire and Rutland
Combined Fire Authority

If you ask, we can provide the information in this document in another format such as large print, Braille, an alternative language or audio version.

If you or anyone you know would like help in reading or understanding this document please contact us, providing your name, address and explaining the type of help that you need.

આ દસ્તાવેજની કોઈપણ બાબત સમજવામાં જો આપ કોઈ મદદ ઇચ્છતાં હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી લેસ્ટરશાયર ફાયર એન્ડ રેસ્ક્યૂ સર્વિસ (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU પર સંપર્ક કરવો. મહેરબાની કરી આપનું નામ અને સરનામું પૂરું પાડવું અને કયા પ્રકારની મદદ કે જે આપને જોઈએ છે, તે વિગતવાર જણાવવું.

এই ডকুমেন্ট এর যে কোনটি বুঝতে যদি আপনার সহায়তা দরকার হয় তবে অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন: লেস্টারশায়ার ফায়ার ও রেসকিউ সার্ভিস (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester LE4 3BU দয়া করে আপনার নাম ও ঠিকানা এবং আপনার কি ধরনের সহায়তা দরকার তা উল্লেখ করবেন।

ਜੇਕਰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕੋਈ ਮਦਦ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਲੈਸਟਰਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਫ਼ਾਇਰ ਐਂਡ ਰੈਸਕਿਊ ਸਰਵਿਸ (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਦਿਉ ਅਤੇ ਦੱਸੋ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸ ਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

如需要協助理解本文件內任何資料請聯絡：里斯特郡消防及救援服務 (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester LE4 3BU 請提供閣下姓名和地址以及說明哪條文需要幫助。

Jelzeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu treści tego dokumentu, skontaktuj się z (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester LE4 3BU, podając swoje imię, nazwisko i adres i wyjaśniając, jakiej pomocy potrzebujesz.

यदि इस दस्तावेज़ के किसी विषय को समझने के लिए आप कोई मदद लेना चाहते हैं तो कृपया लैस्टरशायर फ़ायर एंड रैस्क्यू सर्विस (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters, 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU से संपर्क कीजिए। कृपया अपना नाम तथा पता साथ भेजें और बताएं कि आपको किस प्रकार की सहायता की जरूरत है।

اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کے کسی بھی حصے کو سمجھنے کیلئے کسی قسم کی مدد درکار ہے تو براہ کرم لیسٹرشائر فائر اینڈ ریسکیو سروس (Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service) Headquarters (Service Rescue), 12 Geoff Monk Way, Birstall, Leicester, LE4 3BU سے رابطہ کریں۔ براہ کرم اپنا نام اور پتہ فراہم کریں اور آپ کو جس قسم کی مدد درکار ہے اس کی وضاحت کریں۔

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