

Meeting: Combined Fire Authority**Date: 24th September 2015****Subject: Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2014/15****Report by: The Chief Fire and Rescue Officer****Author: Naomi Orme (Planning Manager)****For: Decision**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance for 2014/15 to the Combined Fire Authority (CFA) for approval.

2. Recommendations

The CFA is asked to:

- a) Approve the draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2014/15.
- b) Authorise the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer to make any minor amendments necessary prior to publication.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1. In 2014 it was agreed that for 2014/15, the Annual Report would be combined with the Statement of Assurance and published as one document rather than the previous two. This reduces the number of published documents, and provides a link between performance and statutory requirements when looking back at the previous year.
- 3.2. The Annual Report looks at previous year's performance and the annual Statement of Assurance is a statutory publication that 'must be signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents'.

4. Report Detail

- 4.1. The National Framework requires an annual Statement of Assurance is published each year by all fire and rescue authorities. Its purpose is to provide assurance on financial, operational and governance matters in particular in meeting the requirements of the National Framework. The CFA also publishes its Annual Report each year to highlight performance and link to full performance information.
- 4.2. In recent years the Annual Report has been shortened in order to make it more accessible to the CFA's communities. Headline summaries are now provided for each of our three areas of response, prevention and protection, and links are then

provided to the website where the full performance information can be found.

- 4.3. The document also provides a link to the Annual Statement of Accounts that will be published on the website, and to the equalities web pages, that contain all details of our equalities achievements and performance. Details of capital project outcomes and achievements are also covered.
- 4.4. In order to keep the documents succinct, there are a number of links to other areas or documents. These links are not yet enabled within this report, but will be actioned following the meeting. They will all be substantiated and checked prior to publication. In the final proofing process some corrections may be necessary and the usual practice of delegating to the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer authority for any minor amendments is requested.
- 4.5. Attached at the **Appendix** is the draft document for 2014/15. It is intended to be published in October 2015 following approval, and publicised in the usual manner, including via social media.

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 National Framework. It must be signed off by an elected member on behalf of the authority. It has been reviewed by DCLG in previous years to ensure its currency.
- b) The publication of our performance sits within the good practice of open and transparent data for public services.

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

The Appendix provides 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 not meet with the statutory requirements of the National Framework.
- b) Publication of our annual performance figures mitigates any organisational reputational risk and that of not meeting the transparency agenda.

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

Any actions arising from performance or assurance will be dealt with by the relevant departments.

5.5. *Environmental*

This document will be electronic unless hard copies are specifically requested.

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

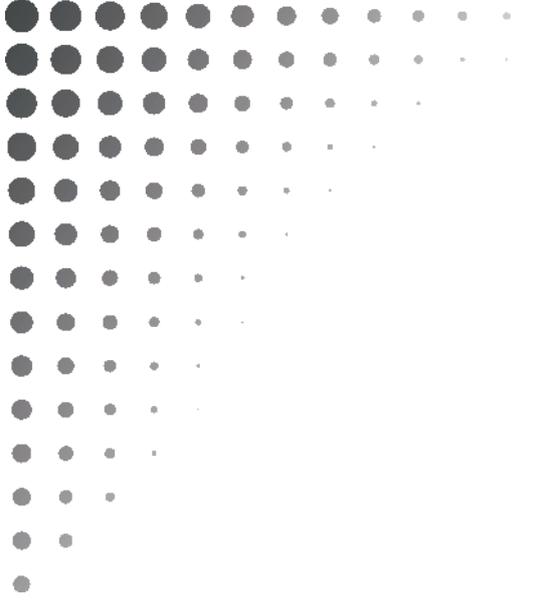
This report meets all of our objectives.

6. Background Papers

- a) Annual Report (CFA Report – 25th September 2014)
- b) Annual Statement of Assurance (CFA Report – 10th December 2014)

7. Appendix

Draft Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2014/15



ANNUAL REPORT AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

// 2014-2015



LEICESTERSHIRE
FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE

www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk



Annual Report and Statement of Assurance 2014-15

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1. Introduction

Welcome to our annual report and statement of assurance. For the first time we have combined these two documents, streamlining the planning process and simplifying the number of our publications. This document looks back at the year 2014/15.

Our annual report is published every year to summarise our performance, and point you to where you can find more detail about how we are doing.

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

This document 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. It looks back at the financial year 2014-15, i.e. 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015.

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:

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www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk

2. The 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 & Bosworth, Melton Mowbray, North West Leicestershire and Oadby & Wigston.

3. Operational Assurance and Performance:

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, and to give a summary of our performance in 2014/15.

Planning and reporting (processes)

In 2014/15, we undertook a review of our planning framework, and we will produce one overall 2020 plan that is a combination of our corporate plan and Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), providing overall direction to the service. We will refresh and update our vision, mission, aims and outcomes up until 2020. The plan will deal with our future as a service, but also set out our arrangements for dealing with risk in our area; how we will deliver our response, prevention and protection services, and our community risk model. This model is used to inform the bespoke district improvement plans, produced to reduce risk and improve community safety in each community area.

Our performance targets and action plan will be revised and published each year as appendices. The plan is supported by six strategies which support our six priority areas, and inform and give more detail on how our aims will be achieved.

Actual performance against our targets and milestones for 2014-15 is summarised and signposted in this document, which is published annually.

Performance

Response and emergency incidents

Our performance in 2014/15 continued to show improvements, reflecting the hard work of our staff and partners:

- We attended a total of 7,394 emergency incidents (rescuing a total of 549 people), a reduction from the previous year by 643 (8%) and from 2004/05 by 5,355. This represents a 42% reduction in emergency incidents over 10 years.
- Of these, 2,200 were fires, of which 1,206 were primary fires and 994 were secondary fires. This represents an overall decrease in fires by 2.5% from 2013/14, and by a massive 53% from 2004/05.
- We attended 619 RTCs, 4% better than our target and a reduction of 6% from the previous year, and 27% from 2004/05. Of these, 196 involved rescuing trapped people: 61% were freed within 5 minutes, 87% within 30 minutes.
- We achieved a 4% reduction in hoax calls from the previous year; and attended 2,547 false alarm calls – a 12% reduction from the previous year. All false alarm calls are down 37% over the past 10 years.
- We met our attendance standard of 10 minutes for life threatening emergency incidents on 93.6% of occasions; and of 20 minutes for non-life threatening incidents 99.6% of the time.

We achieved our targets and performed better than the previous year in the majority of our key performance indicators. Follow this [link](#) to view our performance data in more detail.

Prevention

We work to improve the safety of our communities by raising their awareness of danger, in order to prevent fires and other emergencies from occurring. In 2014/15:

- We carried out 4,300 home fire safety checks in homes in our area. A further 520 were completed by our partners (the British Legion, Charnwood Neighbourhood Housing and Castle Donington Rotary Club). 4,336 smoke alarms were fitted.
- We organised or supported a total of 1,583 community safety events. 1,129 were general fire and/or road safety events; 313 were aimed specifically at arson and anti-social behaviour reduction. 141 were road safety specific, including our Fatal Four Roadshow.
- We completed 14 Prince's Trust Teams, delivered to 180 young people.

- Our dedicated schools programme delivered fire and road safety education to 313 schools.

The success of our prevention work can be seen in the reduction in the number of emergency incidents and their impact. Follow this [link](#) to view our performance information in more detail.

Protection

Our Fire Protection Group enforces fire safety legislation. They aim to reduce fire-risk in businesses and non-domestic properties by carrying out inspections, giving advice, and serving enforcement notices if necessary. In 2014/15 the group completed:

- 621 fire safety audits
- 892 building regulations inspections
- 369 fire safety concerns
- 126 specific inspections
- 141 desk-based assessments
- 231 licensing consultations
- Responded to 381 fire safety advice requests All

of this work resulted in:

- 4 prohibition notices being served
- 23 enforcement (formal) notices being served
- 128 action plans and 153 deficiency notices being served

Follow this [link](#) to view our performance data in much more detail.

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.

A revised Our Plan and IRMP 2020 will be presented to the CFA for approval in June 2016 which addresses local risk, and 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 both 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.

Our 2014/15 internal audit gave *“reasonable assurance... that risk is managed”*.

Consultation

Between October and December 2014 we carried out a full consultation on a number of IRMP-based proposals, and to gauge public opinion on a potential referendum for a council tax increase. The consultation was open to everyone, and we employed an external company, Opinion Research Services (ORS) to help us. We published a consultation proposals document and a formal questionnaire, to which there were 511 responses. ORS ran 11 public forums on our behalf, involving over 150 people, in each of the districts most affected by the proposals; as well as specific forums for staff, local businesses, community groups and councils. Weekly staff briefings were also held.

The results of the consultation were reported to CFA in February 2014, and decisions were made on the proposals. These included the removal of one fire engine from each of the city and Oakham stations, and the disestablishment of the resilience team. It was decided not to hold a referendum for a council tax increase.

External and internal consultation was, and is, an essential part of the development of the IRMP and our future plans. We are currently preparing to consult on proposals arising from the 2020 Our Plan and IRMP.

4. Finance and 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 statement of accounts includes a comprehensive income and expenditure statement, a balance sheet, pension fund accounts and supporting notes. Our 2014/15 internal audit report found that, "*reasonable assurance can be given that the CFA's core financial practices remain strong*".

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. The statement of accounts is subject to external audit and scrutiny.

Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) were our external auditors for 2014-15, responsible for the auditing of our 2014-15 financial statements. Their audit opinion on our accounts and value for money conclusion is not available at this time, however we are satisfied that there are no issues as we have not received any communication from them to suggest otherwise.

Follow this [link](#) to view our Annual Statement of Accounts for 2014-15, and this [link](#) to view the final auditor's report.

We continue to have one of the lowest council tax rates for fire authorities in the country, with a Band D property costing just £60.43 per year in 2015/16. Follow this [link](#) to view our Council Tax leaflet.

5. Equalities

Under the Fire and Rescue Service Equality Framework, we are currently rated as an 'achieving' service. We are currently working towards achievement of an 'excellent' rating by the end of 2016. To view all of the work we are doing, and have undertaken, and our workforce statistics, follow this [link](#) to our equalities web pages.

6. Service Development Programme

In 2014/15, our most significant project was the organisational change project, which generated proposals for managing the risk profile of incidents within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland whilst introducing efficiency savings. The proposals were subject to full public consultation and then presented to the Combined Fire Authority who decided which ones are to be implemented in the future.

We continued to invest in our front line services, and procured a new Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP). The vehicle has been registered and the staff have been trained to use it, and it is now operationally available. Its new and improved technology improves our capacity and capability at emergency incidents.

In collaboration with Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Services, we have replaced the system used to mobilise our appliances and officers. The new improved system aims to achieve quicker and more effective mobilisation, reducing our response times to incidents. Working with our neighbouring fire services has improved our resilience via the sharing of resources and infrastructure.

We now have a wholetime firefighting capability in Castle Donington. The new fire and rescue station is due to be completed in December 2015; however since August 2014 our crews have been in place at temporary accommodation, providing a 24/7 response service for our communities in the area. The new station when complete will provide modern and fit for purpose accommodation and training facilities for our firefighters.

Investment in core service systems has continued, ensuring the quality of software and infrastructure required. The SharePoint 2010 project has upgraded our information delivery portal to improve information sharing and data and document management. In addition, the provision of web-based and remote access capability to our community safety educators and operational staff has improved our risk management information. All of these changes have led to more efficient ways of working and improving the quality of data we hold and use, particularly when dealing with vulnerable people.

7. Annual Governance Statement

Each year we publish an annual governance statement (AGS). The AGS is a self-assessment of how we met our own [local code of governance](#) in 2014/15 and identifies any areas for improvement, along with associated actions. It gives assurance that proper arrangements are in place to govern spending, safeguard assets and maximise operational effectiveness.

[The annual governance statement](#) 2014-15 is 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 2014-15 will be presented for approval by the CFA in September 2015.

Internal audit reviewed our governance arrangements and found that: *"Nothing of such significance, adverse nature or character has come to the HoIAS attention. As such reasonable assurance is given that the CFA's governance arrangements during 2014-15 were robust."* Areas of particular good governance were found in an Ethics and Culture audit, and in our revised risk management procedure.

To review the full documents, follow these links:

[Annual governance statement 2014-15](#)

[Internal Audit Report 2014-15](#)

[PwC Audit Report 2014-15](#)

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 are meeting the requirements of the [Local Government Transparency Code 2015](#), and regularly publishing information on our website relating to expenditure, procurement, land and estates, organisation and salaries. Financial transparency reports from 2014-15 relating to expenditure can be found on our website [here](#).

8. 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.

Performance for 2014-15 demonstrates that we continue to reduce the number of fires and other emergencies in our area and offer an excellent service to our communities. This is in the context of reduced funding and an ongoing need to identify further savings.

We remain committed to continuing to provide this excellent service to you all, whilst still meeting our statutory requirements.

Signed:

Councillor Nicholas Rushton, Chairman of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority

Signed:

Richard Chandler, Chief Fire and Rescue Officer, on behalf of the Members and Senior Officers of Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

Date: