

Annual Review 2022/23

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

For further information about this report please contact Simon Hardiman Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260201 or Guy Williams, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer, on 01743 260196.

1 Executive Summary

This report presents the draft Annual Review (also known as the Annual Statement of Assurance) for 2022/23 and gives the Committee an opportunity to make comment on the draft, prior to its going forward to the full Fire Authority for consideration and approval.

2 Recommendation

The Fire Authority is asked to

- a) Consider the Annual Review 2022/23, and
- b) Approve the Annual Review for publication.

3 Background

A National Framework for the Fire and Rescue Service has been in existence since 2004 and has been regularly revised. During 2012 the Coalition Government published a new Fire and Rescue National Framework, which placed particular requirements on the Fire Authority regarding the development and publication of an Annual Review.

With Fire and Rescue Authorities ultimately accountable to their local communities, the Framework states that they need to be transparent about decisions and actions taken, and engage with communities, so local people can scrutinise and influence service delivery. They should also ensure that local communities can access information to compare the performance of their Authority with that of others.

The Annual Review when approved by the Fire Authority will also support the four strategic objectives of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to make our communities safer by

- Being more proactive;
- Focusing on outcomes;
- Driving sustainable improvement; and
- Promoting smarter systems.

The Annual Review is the means by which the Authority is required to communicate such information clearly. It is in effect a report, which looks back at the last financial year and explains the Fire Authority's objectives, performance, risks and initiatives, along with its plans for the future.

It also acts as a signposting document to other information, which may be of interest to the audience.

4 Electronic Document - Annual Review 2022/23

In 2017, for the first time the Service realised its ambition of creating this as an electronic document, rather than being produced on paper, and this was made available via our website.

As this proved successful, this year's Annual Review has also been produced using the same industry standard software available to us as a result of our systems investments and will once again be available via our public website.

The Standards, Audit and Performance Committee reviewed the Annual Review at its meeting on 28 September 2023 and agreed to recommend the draft document to the Fire Authority for its approval.

Members can view the 2022/23 Draft Annual Review via the link in Section 9 of this report.

5 Conclusions

The Fire Authority is asked to consider the draft Annual Review 2022/23 and approve it for publication.

6 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides the statutory authority for the Fire Service National Framework and requires fire authorities to have regard to the Framework in carrying out their functions.

The proposed Annual Review addresses the requirements of the Framework (and associated Government guidance) but should not be considered as representing a 'qualified' statement or opinion regarding the Authority's or Service's performance.

Although the HMICFRS regularly audits all FRS there are currently no Government arrangements in place to verify formally Annual Reviews / Annual Statements of Assurance.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report. An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendix

<https://sway.office.com/TiTP19fooRWDLd3?ref=Link>

As the Annual Review is in excess of 60 pages a hard copy has not been included with the meeting papers but can be accessed on the Fire Authority's website via the above link.

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.