



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 25 July 2014

Purpose of Report:

To present the Annual Statement of Assurance for approval.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England requires authorities to provide assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their integrated risk management plan (IRMP).
- 1.2 The method of providing such assurance is through the publication of an Annual Statement of Assurance. This is the result of a Government led consultation process that commenced in September 2012 and concluded in May 2013 with the publication of guidance.
- 1.3 The guidance directs authorities to produce a statement of assurance, the first of which to be published to cover 2012-13 and then annually thereafter. This report presents Members of the Committee with the initial draft statement for approval or amendment.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Annual Statement of Assurance for the financial year 2012-13 is attached at Appendix A and provides an overall assessment of the Authority's compliance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework. Particular attention is given to the following areas:
 - Financial – demonstrating that public money is used economically, efficiently and effectively;
 - Governance – ensuring internal control is effective and there is appropriate transparency in place;
 - Operational – demonstrating appropriate consultation on the development and delivery of the IRMP, and that the Authority is meeting its' statutory service delivery obligations;
- 2.2 The principal aim of the statement is to provide an accessible way in which communities, government, local authorities and other partners may make a valid assessment of their local fire and rescue authority's performance.
- 2.3 The guidance requires the statement to be signed by an elected member who is able to take responsibility for its contents, and therefore it is proposed that the Chair of the Authority and Chief Fire Officer act as signatories.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no human resources or learning and development implications arising from this report.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken as this report does not change policy or service delivery functions.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Failure to produce the statement and make it publicly available could lead to Government intervention, and undermine community confidence in the Service.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The requirement to produce an Annual Statement of Assurance and make it publicly available is statutory within the National Framework Document, as enacted through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members approve the Annual Statement of Assurance.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER



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Annual Statement of Assurance 2012 - 2013



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Statement of Assurance

This Statement of Assurance sets out the financial, governance and operational arrangements that Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority had in place for the period 1st April 2012 – 31st March 2013.

This statement has been compiled in accordance with the [guidance](#) published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on Statements of Assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.

I am satisfied that Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority has ensured that its business was conducted in accordance with law and proper standards and that public money was properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. I am further satisfied that the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England have been met.

Signed



Councillor Darrell Pulk

Chair of Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire Authority

Introduction

As the Chief Fire Officer of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service I am pleased to introduce our Statement of Assurance for 2012/2013.

This statement is a requirement of the Fire and Rescue National [Framework](#) for England which was published in July 2012. I believe it is important to provide you, the members of our communities, with clear information about how we manage public funds and assure the effectiveness of our financial, governance and operational fire service activities.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service provides an emergency response to deal with fires, road traffic collisions and a wide range of other emergencies. Our staff deliver a range of activities to reduce the risk of fires and mitigate the impact of incidents, increasing community safety and enforcing fire safety legislation.

The services we provide ensure Nottinghamshire is a safe county. We will continue working to reduce fires, other incidents and injuries and drive to deliver initiatives which create safer communities.

Signed



John Buckley

Chief Fire Officer

Scope of Responsibility

Fire Authorities carry out their functions in accordance with a defined statutory and policy framework. The following documents provide definition to the Authority requirements and provide direction:

- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004;
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies)(England) Order 2007;
- Localism Act 2011;
- Fire and Rescue National Framework for England;
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is the statutory fire and rescue provider for the County of Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham and is governed by the Combined Fire Authority, formed by councillors from both the city and county councils.

The Combined Fire Authority consists of 18 members, 12 drawn from Nottinghamshire County Council and six from Nottingham City Council. The Authority members form a number of sub committees to provide scrutiny and guidance to the Service, and details of the Authority and their committee arrangements can be found on our website [here](#).

The annual Statement of Assurance must provide clear and accessible information. This statement must enable communities, local authorities, central government and other partners to make an informed assessment of their financial performance. The Statement is used as a source of information for the Secretary of State's biennial report, required by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Financial Statement

The Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for and used efficiently, economically and effectively.

It is a statutory requirement under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 for Authorities to publish the financial results of their activities for the year. This is in the format of a Statement of Accounts, which shows the annual costs of providing the service and is determined by a Code of Practice (CIPFA) which aims to give a true and fair view of the financial position and transactions of the Authority.

The Treasurer is responsible for the approval of the Statement of Accounts by 30 June, prior to the accounts being audited by an external Auditor. Once the audit is complete, the Statement of Accounts is adopted by Members of the Combined Fire Authority and published on the Service's website by 30 September, following the end of the financial year (31 March). The external Auditor's report on the Statement of Accounts is also published on the Service's website at the same time and this is referred to as the Auditor's report to those charged with governance (ISA 260).

The Auditor's report for the 2012/13 financial year gave assurances in respect of the following areas:

- The Auditor reported that the financial statements gave a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31 March 2013 and of the Authority's expenditure and income for the year;
- The Auditor reported that the 2012/13 financial statements had been prepared properly in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice.

The Auditor's ISA 260 report for the 2012/13 financial year gave assurance that the Authority had made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

A copy of the Statement of Accounts 2012/13 and the Auditor's ISA 260 report for 2012/13 can be found by following this [link](#).

CIPFA publish annual financial performance data for all English authorities, enabling comparison between Fire Authorities. Data for 2012 shows Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service performs well against its peer group, with Nottinghamshire costing £37.22 per head against the average of £37.79 with the national average of £43.50.

Annual Governance Statement

The Authority is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Authority also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvements in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, use of its resources and including arrangements for the management of risk and the maintenance of an effective internal control environment.

The Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA / SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

This statement sets out how the Authority has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulations 4(3) and 4(4) of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 in relation to the publication of an annual governance statement.

The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, cultures and values, for the direction and control of the Authority and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate and cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.

The system of internal control is part of an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Nottinghamshire Fire Authority's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

A key element of the internal control environment is the development and maintenance of strategic, corporate and departmental risk registers which are understood and managed by senior managers.

The governance framework has been in place at the Authority for a number of years; however, it is kept under regular review and modified periodically.

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement and further details can be found in our Statement of Accounts [here](#).

Performance Management

A range of indicators are used to ensure an excellent service is being delivered to create safer communities in Nottinghamshire and these allow members of the Authority and the public to scrutinise the progress that is being made towards achieving the six priorities of the IRMP.

Quarterly performance reports are produced and discussed by the Performance Monitoring committee and are publicly available on the Nottingham City Council [website](#), and performance is also analysed annually with a report being submitted to the full Fire Authority.

Measures incorporate local and national indicators to benchmark performance as well as quantitative and qualitative reporting on the Service's activities.

Operational Assurance

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service attended 9,735 calls out of 21,796 calls received in the Control room. Of these calls, 1,568 were property fires and 489 were road traffic collisions.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service employs 1,018 people; of these 810 are firefighters and these are a mixture of wholetime and retained staff. These employees currently staff 24 stations which are strategically located across the City and County. The Service also employs around 200 support staff who assist the Service in carrying out its duties.

The Fire and Rescue National Framework document outlines the requirement of Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide assurance on operational matters. It does not prescribe how this assurance is provided stating that operational matters are best determined locally by Fire and Rescue Authorities working in partnership with communities, businesses and other interested parties: The priorities in the Framework are for Authorities to:

- Identify and assess foreseeable risks making provision for prevention and protection activities and for appropriate response to operational incidents;
- Work in partnership with local communities and partners;
- Be accountable to local communities.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has considered the expectations of the National Framework and ensured these are met in an appropriate manner; many of these expectations are included in this Statement of Assurance.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service produces a periodic Integrated Risk Management Plan and this plan is published on the Service [website](#).

The plan provides a roadmap to the future of the Service and this is a dynamic plan which provides a framework for the Service to aim towards.

In addition to the Integrated Risk Management Plan, the Service develops separate departmental business plans that align to the IRMP and support the Service in working towards its priorities, and a Service Delivery departmental plan is specifically divided into district plans that ensure operational priorities are targeted towards local risk.

The Integrated Risk Management Plan was consulted on with the support of independent consultation expertise and staff, partner organisations and the entire community were given the opportunity to examine and contribute to the development of the plan. Details of the Service's consultations are available on the website [here](#) and outcomes are scrutinised by the Fire Authority and its committees.

Mutual Aid Agreements

Fire services have a legal responsibility to make provisions to respond to incidents, within their Service area, as directed by the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. These include fires, road traffic collisions, other emergencies and special service calls.

To assist and facilitate in these requirements the Service has mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring Services; the content of these arrangements allow, as far as practicable, the use of other Services' resources to assist in meeting our legal responsibilities.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service holds mutual arrangements with Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire fire and rescue services.

National Resilience

National Resilience is defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as the capacity and capability of Fire and Rescue Authorities to work together with other Category 1 and 2 responders to deliver a sustained and effective response to major incidents and disruptive challenges.

A national protocol provides support and resilience to our Service. The participation of all Fire and Rescue Authorities ensures availability and resilience.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service actively supports the national framework and deploys its staff to assist when requested and when available.

Business Continuity Management

The Service counts business continuity management as an integral part of our corporate risk management process.

An internal risk register has been compiled, is regularly maintained and highlights risks to the organisation. Plans to mitigate these risks are made wherever possible by invoking a number of internal and national protocols.

Through mechanisms of horizon scanning, structured meetings, generic and bespoke plans, training of personnel, exercises and other processes, the Authority strives to ensure an appropriate level of service is available to the communities of Nottinghamshire at all times.