



East Sussex Fire Authority

Statement of Operational Assurance 2014/15

September 2015



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government is committed to reducing red tape and eliminating bureaucracy. This freedom and flexibility comes with the requirement that we need to ensure we deliver our services in a responsible manner that provides accountability and transparency.
- 1.2 The Government requires us to provide information to our community on how your service is being provided. We must provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters and show you how we are meeting our priorities through our plans as well as the expectations set for us in our legislative framework. To do this we have written our Statement of Operational Assurance.
- 1.3 In line with the requirement to streamline, additional information about the themes covered in this document can be found in various publications on our website. So as not to duplicate information, we have provided links to the appropriate pages for reference.

2 Financial Arrangements

- 2.1 We are responsible for ensuring that our business and the service provided to you is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 2.2 By law, we must publish our financial results by 30 September every year and this is called our 'Statement of Accounts'. It shows the annual costs of providing the service to you and is produced under strict financial guidelines. This is essentially, a technical publication, which provides a true and fair view of our financial position, our income and expenditure for the year and our assets and liabilities. Our draft (unaudited) accounts for 2014/15 are available on our website via the link below.
- 2.3 The Fire Authority's accounts are subject to external audit by Ernst and Young LLP. They independently review our accounts to ensure that they give a true and fair view, have been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance and that we use the Authority's resources economically, efficiently and effectively.

- 2.4 For more information please see the financial pages of our website in the 'About us' section of our website or follow this link. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/financial-information/>

3 Governance Arrangements

- 3.1 We are also required by Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to produce an Annual Governance Statement which supports the Statement of Accounts. Good governance is about how the Authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. This statement assesses how effective our governance arrangements, risk management procedures and internal controls have been in helping us to deliver our services to the community and where they need to be improved.
- 3.2 Copies of our Annual Governance Statements for last year, together with statements from previous years can be found in the 'About us' section of our website on the 'East Sussex Fire Authority' page, under 'Corporate Governance'. Or alternatively follow this link <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/corporate-governance/>

4 Data Transparency

- 4.1 All local authorities are requested to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015. This means that certain public data must be made available to the public. The public data that should be made available includes:

- Expenditure over £500
- Details of salaries of staff paid over £50,000 per annum
- An organisational chart
- Councillor allowances and expenses
- Policies, audits and performance
- The location of public land and building assets
- Data on the democratic running of the local authority including the constitution, committee minutes, decision making processes and records of decisions.
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations over £500
- Trade union facility time
- All contracts that exceed £5,000 in value
- Procurement information and transactions
- The pay multiple

4.2 Most of this information is already provided on our website under 'local transparency' and we will be adding to this page regularly to make even more of our data freely available and accessible. For more information please see the 'Freedom of information' section under 'About us' on our website or alternatively use the following link. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/freedom-of-information/data-transparency/>

5 Operational Assurance – Legislative Framework

5.1 Statutory Duties

5.1.1 The core functions of the Fire Authority are set down in the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("the Act") as follows:

- Fire Safety – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area (Section 6 of the Act);
- Fire Fighting – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of extinguishing fires in its area and protecting life and property in the event of fires in its area (Section 7 of the Act);
- Road Traffic Collisions – a fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of rescuing people in the event of road traffic collisions in its area and protecting people from serious harm, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, in the event of road traffic collisions in its area (Section 8 of the Act); and
- Other Emergencies – the Secretary of State may, by Order, confer on fire and rescue authorities' functions relating to emergencies other than fires and road traffic collisions. These may include chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear incidents, major transport incidents, search and rescue incidents and rescues from flooding.

5.1.2 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 fire and rescue authorities, through local and regional resilience forums where appropriate, must work in co-operation with other emergency services and agencies to ensure an effective response to a full range of emergencies from localised incidents to catastrophic emergencies. The Act imposes a range of duties on resilience forums that include:

- to have in place appropriate information sharing mechanism between responders;
- to develop and implement business continuity plans;

- to produce and publish emergency plans as appropriate; and
- to agree arrangements for public awareness and information provision.

5.1.3 Our Business Continuity Management structure was formalised following the legal requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This required that we have in place procedures to ensure that critical services, as a minimum, would continue to be available whilst the Service itself was subject to an emergency.

5.1.4 The structure is designed to provide immediate response and subsequent recovery from any unplanned business interruptions, such as loss of utility service, building evacuation or catastrophic event such as a major fire.

5.1.5 The Business Continuity Management programme has been developed to supplement existing emergency response plans and daily operating procedures. It acts as a link between the initial response and Business Recovery.

5.1.6 Within the Business Continuity structure three levels of document are produced.

5.1.7 Policy, this as with other similar documents identifies the aim, scope and methodology that will be applied.

5.1.8 Guidance, two specific documents have been produced that go into detail regarding the structures, procedures and processes that are to be followed in case of a Business Continuity incident. The two documents referred to are Business Recovery Guidance, that details the elements for typically HQ based departments and the Service Recovery Guidance that covers elements that are specific to Service provision.

5.1.9 Plans, several types of plan exist. The two major types are Department specific plans and Generic Risk plans eg Pandemic. Department plans remain the responsibility of the unit involved.

5.1.10 Ideally, we would be able to continue all our functions at ordinary service levels. In practice, this may not prove possible, and therefore our focus is on ensuring that our critical functions can be delivered so far as is reasonably practicable. These are:

- Responding to 999 emergencies;
- Delivering community & statutory fire safety;
- Supporting national resilience;
- All support functions that enable the above.

5.2 National Framework

5.2.1 Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act requires a fire and rescue authority to have regard to the National Fire and Rescue Framework, produced by the Secretary of State, when carrying out its functions. The Framework:

- must set out priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions;
- may contain guidance for fire and rescue authorities in connection with the discharge of their functions; and
- may contain any other matters relating to fire and rescue authorities and their functions as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

5.2.2 The Fire and Rescue Services Act also makes it a statutory requirement for us to produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Our Integrated Risk Management Plan process forms a key component of our strategic programme and significantly contributes toward achievement of our vision and strategic aims. The process enables us to identify the risk from fire and other emergencies to our communities and direct our resources to the areas of greatest need, based upon local risk analysis.

5.2.3 We incorporate Integrated Risk Management within our Medium Term Financial Plan to show the public the extent of the resources provided by East Sussex Fire Authority; the type of work we undertake; and where the future direction lies in terms of a reducing budget and the possibility of more demands being placed on services. In order to meet the savings target a number of proposals were agreed by the Fire Authority in 2014 in order to meet budget constraints as part of our Changing the Service, Shaping our Future programme. The proposals were divided into three phases with only Phase 2 requiring public consultation. Work on the proposals within Phase 3 are underway and will be subject to appropriate consultation prior to any final decision by the Authority.

5.2.4 **Phase 1** contained six main proposals as follows:

- Proposal 1 - We endorsed five key prevention activities namely, Home Safety, leading on Road Safety Co-ordination, Schools Education, Intervention and Incident Reduction and the promotion of sprinklers in domestic and commercial properties. We introduced a scheme to match-fund, with Brighton & Hove City Council the retrofitting of sprinklers in existing high risk/high rise residential properties.
- Proposal 2 - We reviewed the number of Home Safety visits carried out annually, and as incidents are reducing a greater proportion were to be undertaken by operational personnel. This meant a reduction in the number of Community Safety Advisors through redeployment and/or natural turnover. This will be implemented April 2016.

- Proposal 3 - Remove the Arson & Incident Reduction Manager reducing establishment by one Station Manager. This has been completed.
- Proposal 4 – Combine the existing 6 Borough Fire Safety offices to form three larger Business Safety Hubs, reducing the establishment by 4 flexible duty Station Managers . This structure is now in place.
- Proposal 5 - Introduction of Locality Managers in Hastings and Brighton. This was introduced in Hastings on 1st July 2015 and will be reviewed before introducing in the City.
- Proposal 6 - Amend the current two-watch duty system on day crewed duty system fire stations to a one-watch system across a seven day week. Following local consultation a new two watch duty system with reduced establishment and resilient staffing arrangements was introduced on the 1st Jan 2015.

5.2.5 **Phase 2** contained the following proposals:

- Proposal 1 - To remove a fire engine from Hove. To be implemented April 2016.
- Proposal 2 - Provide a limited number of competent retained personnel at Battle Fire Station to make up a full crew of firefighters or Junior Officers at Battle. This was implemented in June 2015.
- Proposal 3 - Introduce "Day Crewed Plus" at Roedean fire station in Brighton and The Ridge fire station in Hastings, both currently Wholetime stations. This is in the consultation phase with staff representatives.

5.2.6 **Phase 3** involves fourteen reviews to investigate options to create savings that contribute towards the remaining £1.4m funding gap identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan. These are both operational and non-operational reviews. The reviews identified for 2015/16 are:

- Review 1 - Undertake a full review of Retained Establishment and Duty System and payments. In progress.
- Review 2 - Review of the Aerial Capability for the City of Brighton and Hove and Hastings. This is complete.
- Review 4 - Investigate the introduction of smaller appliances, where appropriate, with the correct personnel and equipment. This is complete.
- Review 5 - Review the Technical Rescue Unit capability and usage with a view to reducing to one unit at an optimum location with consequential savings on the capital

programme and some revenue savings from reduced running costs. This is in progress.

- Review 6 - Review the number of Flexible Duty System Management Posts through the introduction of Retained Support Managers at Watch Manager Level. Due to be completed by December 2015.
- Review 7 - Demand-led rostering - consider optimum resource levels which provide adequate response capability for the highest average daily demand, whilst considering where and when we are potentially over-resourced, thereby presenting an opportunity for improvement and potential savings. This is in progress.
- Review 8 - Carry out a full review of our Schools Education programme. Due to be completed by December 2015.
- Review 9 - Review current call challenge policy and attendance to automatic fire detection systems to reduce the number of unwanted calls and mobilisations and, at the same time, consider recovering costs from owners/operators of the premises where the number of false alarm calls is high. Due to be completed by December 2015.
- Review 12 - Review the provision of offshore Maritime Response. Complete.
- Review 13 - Review the provision of Large Animal Rescue Capability to Kent Fire and Rescue Service. Complete.
- Review 14 – Continuing reviews of all non operational services to identify future savings and future service delivery options.

5.2.6.1 The following reviews will be completed in 2016/17:

- Review 10 - Investigate the impact of providing a new Day Crewed Plus Station in the Uckfield area and making Crowborough Station a Retained Station, reducing the establishment by 14 posts.
- Review 11 - Investigate the impact of providing a new one pump Day Crewed Plus Station in Lewes.
- Review 3 - Revisit the results of the Rural Review in the light of the Sussex Control Centre and dynamic mobilising to consider the future of the retained fire stations at Herstmonceux, Mayfield and Forest Row.

More information can be found on our website follow the link in the 'About us' section to 'Changing the Service'. The following link provides all of the relevant information

regarding 'Changing the Service' proposals. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/changing-the-service/>

5.2.7 The Fire Authority is satisfied that it has met all the requirements in the National Framework document in terms of producing its Integrated Risk Management Plan.

5.2.8 **Framework Report**

5.2.8.1 The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to lay a report before Parliament every two years, the next one being due in July 2016, on the extent to which fire and rescue authorities are acting in accordance with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

5.2.8.2 The report, laid on the 3 July 2014, reported full compliance with the Framework by all 46 authorities. The report confirms that all fire and rescue authorities have:

- Complied with the publication of their annual statement of assurance;
- Complied with the publication of their updated Integrated Risk Management Plan; and
- Complied with the national resilience assurance elements.

5.2.9 More information on IRMP can be on our website www.esfrs.org/about-us/community-risk-management/integrated-risk-management-planning/

5.3 **Mutual Aid**

5.3.1 Section 13 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act requires fire and rescue authorities to enter into reinforcement schemes with other fire and rescue authorities, so far as practicable, for securing mutual assistance. Section 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act enables fire and rescue authorities to enter into arrangements for the discharge of their functions by others.

5.3.2 Under a section 16 Agreement with West Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire Authority provides a mobilising function in order for West Sussex County Council to discharge their functions under the Fire & Rescue Services Act.

5.3.3 The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007 outlines the additional statutory duties enabled by section 9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. The new duty requires authorities, where provision of resources has been made by central government, to respond to incidents, both within and outside the

authority area, involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear hazards and Urban Search and Rescue.

- 5.3.4 The Order complements the National Mutual Assistance Protocol, to which we are a signatory. This requires fire authorities to make a reasonable response to requests for assistance in relation to any large-scale emergency outside of their area. During the term of this plan, resources from ESFRS were mobilised to Surrey FRS to assist with high volume pumping of water at a large wildfire. This mobilisation had no adverse effect on the service provided to the residents of East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove.
- 5.3.5 To meet our responsibilities from the above legislation, we prepare emergency plans, train our staff in preparing those plans, and we undertake exercises to make sure they work. We also undertake operational debriefs of any large scale incidents that we attend within the East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove as well as fully engaging with any national level debriefs for incidents that we have attended under the National Mutual Assistance Protocol. Lessons learnt from these debriefing events are fed back into the planning process as part of the review of our emergency plans.
- 5.3.6 We sponsor, organise and facilitate events which bring together key organisations from across the public, private and voluntary sectors to increase awareness about emergency planning issues, to make sure all of those agencies understand their responsibilities in the event of a major emergency. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles, JESIP, is a program that has delivered joint command training to commanders from the three emergency services in order to improve the way we work together at operational incidents with the aim of improving the outcomes for the general public and the organisation. Further work is ongoing to fully embed the principles into all our systems and procedures and to test and exercise jointly in realistic environments.
- 5.3.7 We have also trained our front line staff on a new multi-agency procedure known as the Initial Operational Response (IOR). This procedure provides staff with details on how to deal with a deliberate chemical attack resulting in multiple casualties. This procedure will go live within the region once all services and agencies have completed the training of their staff.
- 5.3.8 We provide a supporting response to specialist risks over the border such as Gatwick Airport and Shoreham Harbour in West Sussex and Dungeness Power Station in

Kent. We also continue to support Kent FRS in assisting with the rescue of large animals. A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and allows for a charging process that ensures cost recovery for such incidents over the border. We also assist other emergency services at any other incident where additional resources are required. This aspect of our work has recently been extended with the introduction of a Memorandum of Understanding with Sussex Police that enables our crews to assist the police with search activities.

5.3.9 We also consider the risk to heritage sites, the environment and the continuing risk from terrorism. The National Risk Assessment is given careful consideration by the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) and the Service to monitor any new risks identified through these processes. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the blue-light emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and other partners. These risks can affect the economy, cause disruption and impact on the day to day lives of our community and therefore understanding these risks within the County and the City provides a clearly defined baseline for us to develop our provision of service to the community we serve.

5.3.10 We also consider the wider risk assessments included within the SRF's Community Risk Register (CRR) to ensure that proposed changes to our service delivery complement, as far as possible, the strategies of other local responders and central government agencies. We make significant contributions to the preparation, pre planning and response to a wide range of events that are considered as part of the CRR. This analysis has enabled us to enhance our flooding capability by introducing a boat and swift water rescue team for responding to water rescues based at Crowborough Fire Station. This team is a declared asset and is available for response to local, regional or national flooding incidents. As well as being utilised in East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove this team can be mobilised to any national flooding incidents. The team has not been mobilised out of county during the term of this report.

5.3.11 We also plan for, and occasionally respond to, incidents of such scale and/or complexity that local resources may be insufficient even when taking into account mutual aid agreements. As part of the National Resilience New Dimensions Capability Programme, the Government has provided Incident Response Units (IRUs) and High Volume Pumps, (HVPs) into the UK Fire & Rescue Service. The

national capability consists of 72 operational IRU's, with 9 being located in the South East region, one of which has been allocated to us and is based at Eastbourne Fire Station and 46 HVPs, with seven being located in the South East region. One has been allocated to us and is based at Hove Fire Station. As well as being utilised in East Sussex and the City of Brighton and Hove the HVP and crews can be mobilised to national flooding incidents. The team has not been mobilised out of county during the term of this report.

5.3.12 Section 7(2) (d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires fire authorities to make arrangements for inspection of certain premises to obtain information. These inspections are known as 7(2) (d) visits. These visits assist in the maintenance of knowledge of the site, equipment and any particular hazards associated with the building. We use the 7(2) (d) visits together with any relevant data collection methods to assist in dealing with an incident, informing command decision making and ensuring public and fire-fighter safety. National guidance has been reviewed and incorporated into our current system to ensure that we continue to provide our fire-fighters with the most appropriate information to enable them to undertake their role in as safe a manner as possible.

5.3.13 For more information please see the 'Planning for Emergencies section of our website. <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-for-emergencies/>

5.4 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

5.4.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order requires that responsible persons in all premises, other than single private dwellings, carry out fire risk assessments. The auditing and enforcement of this activity is the responsibility of fire and rescue authorities to ensure people are protected from fire in places such as hotels, hospitals, entertainment venues and similar premises.

5.4.2 Our Business Safety Department ensures that fire safety legislation is enforced and work to promote fire protection systems and safe practices in the workplace. They work with business and industry to make sure that the owners and occupiers understand their responsibilities under the fire safety laws. They also try to influence those responsible for designing buildings so that fire safety measures such as sprinklers are installed where appropriate.

5.4.3 The Department has a targeted programme for auditing all non-domestic premises in our area, based on the level of fire risk that each property presents. Fires in non-

domestic premises not only have the potential to do harm to their occupants but also have a devastating effect on business. For more information please see the Business safety section of our website www.esfrs.org/business-safety/.

5.5 Prevention of Future Death Reports, The Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.

5.6 The Coroner has a duty to write a report about a case following an inquest. This is known as a 'Prevention of future Death Report' (also known as a Regulation 28 Letter). This occurs when the coroner feels that there is a risk of other deaths occurring in similar circumstances. The report is sent to the people or organisations that are in a position to take action to reduce this risk. They then must reply within 56 days to say what action they plan to take. The response must give details of any action which has been or is proposed will be taken, or provide an explanation when no action is proposed.

5.6.1 The Ministry of Justice's website is monitored for all prevention of future death reports that may have implications for the FRS and any required action is taken as necessary. In the term of this report there have been no matters that required detailed action plans to be drawn up.

5.7 Crime and Disorder Act 1998

5.7.1 As a "responsible authority" under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the fire and rescue authority has a statutory duty to work in partnership with key agencies in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. These are required to carry out annual strategic assessments to identify current and possible future crime, disorder and substance misuse issues from sound evidence and analysis.

5.7.2 We believe that partnership working between local agencies is key to providing 'joined up' public services for local people and to ensuring successful outcomes at the lowest cost for taxpayers. Our structure is based on a borough command geographical arrangement with specific officers responsible for community safety partnerships in their area.

5.8 The Localism Act 2011

5.8.1 The Localism Act takes as its starting point the existing statutory powers of fire and rescue authorities and then gives the Fire Authority the power to do:

- Anything they consider appropriate for the purposes of carrying out their functions.
- Anything they consider appropriate for purposes incidental to carrying out their functions.
- Anything they consider appropriate for purposes indirectly incidental to carrying out their functions.

5.8.2 It also added three new sections to the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, which allows Fire and Rescue Authorities to place a charging policy in support of its strategy to deal with unwanted fire signals received from automatic fire detection systems.

5.8.3 The charging power allows us a level of discretion in that we may decide not to charge at all, as is the case now, or we may charge different amounts to different groups of recipients when we respond to specific categories of calls. In May 2014, the Fire Authority's Policy & Resources Panel endorsed an amendment to the existing policy for attendance to automatic fire detection systems. This allows for a standardised pre-determined attendance across Sussex in line with the regional ways of working. This change to policy went live on 1st July 2015. The change will be monitored for a period of time to determine if this action has had any significant effect and a review will be completed. This review will include the feasibility of introducing a charge for such calls in the future.

5.8.5 Work has also begun to examine the opportunities to reduce the number of emergency responses we make to people shut in defective lifts that require releasing. The premises owner is responsible for the management of all utilities within premises and this includes lifts. Sufficient maintenance and servicing programmes should be in place so as to limit the number of breakdowns and thus the number of responses we get called to. The piece of work will include educational input with owners and if this is not successful consideration will be given to introducing a charge for responding.

5.8.6 Under section 38(1) of the Act we are required to prepare a Pay Policy Statement. The Fire Authority is responsible for ensuring that that the pay policy statement sets out the issues relating to the pay of the workforce and in particular the senior officers and the lowest paid employees. This ensures that there is the appropriate accountability and transparency of the salaries of our senior staff. The purpose of the statement is to provide greater transparency on how taxpayers' money is used in relation to the pay and rewards for public sector staff. . For more information please

see the 'data transparency' web page under the 'Freedom of information' section under 'About us' on our website or alternatively use the following link.

<http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/freedom-of-information/data-transparency/>

6 Improvements to service delivery during this year

- 6.1.1 Two Retained Duty System, (RDS), Support Officers roles have been created to support the RDS stations/sections across the Rother and Wealden Boroughs. The roles are utilised to undertake a full audit of all operational training and, with the assistance of other managers, identify and implement a plan to coordinate training and development across each Borough. This will ensure Fire fighters are equipped with the right skills and training for the two large mainly rural Boroughs. They will also provide support to the Borough Management Team in the delivery of the Borough Action Plans as well as supporting RDS stations supervisory managers and staff in areas such as community safety activity and personal development.
- 6.1.2 We also introduced the role of Locality Manager in the Hastings Borough. This is a new role for the organisation and takes the Service forward in terms of operational assurance, training, and local delivery of prevention and protection. It is expected that the role will grow and evolve as lessons are learnt during the initial review period, starting with how the different approach to Watch management is embedded. This means that the local Borough Management Team will work closely with the four Locality Managers, who will provide operational response to incidents in Hastings, assessing operational activity in the workplace, junior officer support and mentoring and incident command duties relevant to a Level One commander. They will be developing and working with crew managers to implement individual Watch action plans in line with the Station and Borough objectives. This will involve closely overseeing Watch activities and ensuring a first class service delivery across the Hastings Borough. Locality Managers have specific individual references including operational exercise planning, station based training, community engagement and intervention, planning and coordinating risk information, road safety engagement and community event planning. On occasions, the locality manager will ride an appliance to maintain their own operational command competence and assist in assessing others.
- 6.1.3 From September 2015 we will be conducting our emergency planning work in partnership with East Sussex County Council (ESCC). ESCC previously commissioned the East Sussex Resilience and Emergencies Partnership (ESREP), where County emergency planners conduct work for all districts and boroughs (other than Rother) in East Sussex. We will join this partnership and in doing so it will assist

us in meeting our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act, and deliver this work more efficiently with additional resilience.

- 6.1.4 The National Operation Guidance (NOG) team provides the FRS with operational guidance across a range of activities. Each individual FRS then embeds this guidance into their own procedures. Recent such guidance included Breathing Apparatus (BA) Command and Control and Incident Command. We are currently delivering Service wide training on the new BA procedures and this will deliver changes to both practical and theoretical aspects of BA use as well as the introduction of new equipment to support the procedures. In addition NOG also provide Tactical Operational Guidance, (TOG), and these pieces of guidance are reviewed and made available to operational crews through our in cab mobile data terminals. Crews use this guidance to bring operational incidents to a safe and satisfactory conclusion.
- 6.1.5 We have reviewed, and subsequently updated, our procedure for providing feedback following operational events. The Incident Feedback and Review procedure provides a robust process to capture both operational good practice and instances where performance could be improved. All operational incidents and exercises are debriefed. The College of Policing Structured Debrief Methodology is the new model adopted and this is currently used by Sussex Police, West Sussex FRS and Kent FRS. The fact that we all use the same process will facilitate more effective joint service debriefs. The key feature of the process is a clear partnership between Response & Resilience and Learning & Organisational Development, adoption of a best practice methodology, and better mechanisms for sharing and acting on outcomes, and for evidencing that we have done so.

7 Internal Audits and Assessments

- 7.1.1 East Sussex County Council's Internal Audit provides our internal audit service, independently assessing the effectiveness of our governance, risk management and internal control arrangements. Internal Audit reports to the Scrutiny & Audit Panel. An annual internal audit plan is agreed by the Scrutiny & Audit Panel following consultation between the Corporate Management Team and Internal Audit about the risk priorities and the results of this work is then reported back to the Panel. Individual reports on our systems are evaluated by internal audit and include

recommendations to enhance controls, and then action plans are developed to address and implement audit recommendations.

7.1.2 During 2014/15, a programme of audits, based on an assessment of risk, was carried out across East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service. The areas audited that relate to our operational effectiveness included:

- Business risk management arrangements
- Station audit and inspection arrangements
- Contracting and procurement
- IMD internal controls
- Devolved financial management
- Fundamental accounting systems
- IMD procurement investigation

7.1.3 The East Sussex County Council's Head of Assurance and Head of Internal Audit for the Fire Authority, stated, *'no assurance can ever be absolute; however, based on the internal audit work completed, I can provide reasonable assurance that East Sussex Fire Authority has in place an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and internal control for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.* The programme also included audits on our financial, governance and other internal arrangements included:

- Audit of Fundamental Accounting Systems including the general ledger, pensions, accounts payable, accounts receivable, and Human Resources Payroll function
- National Fraud Initiative
- Anti-fraud and corruption improvements

7.1.4 For the full report please see the Scrutiny & Audit Agenda pages on our website.

www.esfrs.org/about-us/east-sussex-fire-authority/scrutiny-audit-panel/

7.2 Operational Assessment

7.2.1 The Fire and Rescue sector has a strong and long standing commitment to sector led improvement. As part of this, the Chief Fire Officers Association developed the concept of Operational Assessment (OpA) in 2009, in partnership with the Local Government Association and the Chief Fire & Rescue Adviser. This process, which has a strong operational focus, comprises a self -assessment and external peer challenge and is designed to allow a "whole system" look at how a Fire & Rescue

Authority (FRA) leads, prioritises and delivers the interrelated functions of prevention, protection and response.

7.2.2 The assessment takes place every three years and our next assessment will take place in 2017. Information on our last assessment undertaken in January 2014 can be found in the 'About us' section of our website on the 'East Sussex Fire Authority' page, under 'Planning and Performance/ Operational Assessment and Fire Peer Challenge'. Or alternatively follow this link <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-performance/operational-assessment-fire-peer-challenge/>

7.3 **Station Audits**

7.3.1 The Station Audit programme is designed to support the continual performance improvement of our front line delivery services in terms of effectiveness, compliance with service operational and administrative procedures but above all, to ensure that the operational preparedness and safety of crews remains a priority. The Audit process provides assurance that published internal guidance and adopted National Operational Guidance has been delivered, understood and implemented as well as ensuring compliance with Service policy on a range of managerial matters. Evidence is gathered through:

- A review of station documents and records on Health & Safety, risk critical and business critical issues.
- A practical drill session to observe basic core skills application.
- A question and answers session to confirm underpinning knowledge and understanding on core safety related issues.

7.3.2 A completed report is handed to the Borough or Station Commander on the day of the audit unless the performance is poor and a detailed training needs report is required. Immediate feedback is provided to duty managers and if any significant notices of improvement are issued, copies are provided to the Station Manager and Borough Commander who take direct responsibility for the implementation of improvement actions.

7.3.3 As part of the Internal Audit programme this year the current approach to station inspection identified a number of areas of improvement. Whilst individually none of these findings were of a high risk nature, it was the auditors' view that collectively they do not deliver a sufficiently robust or cost effective framework of assurance. As a result, they were unable to provide anything more than partial assurance that the

current station assurance framework is achieving the required objectives in an efficient and effective manner.

7.3.4 A business process improvement review is ongoing in order to address the concerns raised by the auditors and forms part of the Service's phase 3 programme of work.

8 Performance Management

8.1 To help us improve in the right areas and demonstrate progress, we use performance management. This helps us to:

- Focus on our priorities.
- Set targets aimed at improving services and measure progress.
- Identify and tackle poor performance.
- Be accountable to our communities.
- Help ensure we provide value for money.

8.2 The Corporate Management Team (CMT), of four Principal Officers, the Treasurer and two Directors meet at least once a month to discuss strategic and policy issues and to monitor and determine service and financial plans into the future to ensure that we meet our statutory duties.

8.3 The Service to the public is then delivered by four directorates, Service Delivery Directorate, Service Support Directorate, People & Organisational Development Directorate and Corporate Services Directorate and their main responsibilities are:

- Service Delivery - operational response and resilience, new dimensions, community and legislative fire safety, and emergency planning;
- Support Services - Health, Safety and Welfare, Engineering Services, Estates Management, and Information Management;
- People and Organisational Development - development of staff, focusing particularly on personal leadership, developing managerial capability and embedding core values;
- Corporate Services - business planning, financial planning and governance, strategic procurement development, support and review of performance.

8.4 The Authority's priorities are articulated in our aims and objectives and contained in our planning documents. We produce a number of separate plans, all of which outline how we intend to deliver our services:

- Our Medium-Term Plan sets our longer-term direction and sets out how we intend to deliver our services based on community risk and needs and the resources available to us.
- Our Annual Plan summarises what we've done over the last year, as well as what we intend to do over the following year
- Each Directorate, Borough and Station has a more detailed local Action Plan that sets out their activities against our aims and objectives.
- All of our staff have their own Personal Development Plans - which aid individual career development whilst, at the same time, providing a focus as to how their particular role helps deliver the overall aims of the Service.

8.5 The start to effective performance management is business planning which translates high-level objectives into management actions linked to performance measures. Staff are able to see where their work area fits into the overall strategic direction of the Authority, what the targets are to be achieved in the year ahead and how their contribution fits into vision, aims and objectives.

8.6 We also have clearly defined priority areas in which we concentrate our efforts. Each year we revisit them to ensure the targets remain appropriate. Our priority areas for 2015/16 are:

- Of the 10,000 Home Safety Visits undertaken at least 90% should be delivered to our vulnerable community.
- Number of accidental fires in dwellings should reduce by 5% over the period from 2011/12 to 2015/16 (from 562 fires to 534).
- Ensuring accidental dwelling fires are confined to the room they started in on 94% of occasions.
- A 20% reduction in automatic fire alarms.
- Expenditure per head of the population should not exceed original budget.
- The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence for all staff should not exceed 7.5 days.

8.7 The Government set all Fire Authorities 10 year targets from 2001/02. We have been measuring our progress ever since against this benchmark year. The following table shows our performance over the thirteen years from 2001/02 to 2014/15 and our performance from last year, 2013/14.

Table 1 – Performance results 2014/15

Summary	2001/02 Actual	2013/14 Actual	2014/15 Actual	Reduction since 2001/02 + / - %	Reduction from 2013/14 to 2014/15 + / - %
All fires, including chimney fires	5,352	2,112	2,061	-61%	-2%
Accidental Dwelling Fires	783	525	538	-31%	+2%
Primary Fires (fires in properties of value or involve more than 5 fire engines)	2,821	1,191	1,152	-59%	-3%
Secondary Fires (fires in derelict buildings, grass, heath, railway, straw, fence, bins etc.)	2,321	748	751	-68%	+0.4%
Deliberate Primary Fires	1,393	272	222	-84%	-18%
Deliberate Road Vehicle Primary Fires	924	123	97	-90%	-21%
Deliberate Primary Fires other than road vehicles	469	149	125	-73%	-16%
Deliberate Secondary Fires	1,984	473	429	-78%	-9%
All Non-Fatal Casualties	222	103	71	-68%	-31%
Non-Fatal Casualties excluding precautionary checks	152	37	40	-74%	+8%
False Alarms	5,962	4,651	4,446	-25%	-4%
False Alarms due to Apparatus	-	3,309	3,042	-	-8%
Malicious False Alarms	564	133	121	-79%	-9%

- 8.8 These impressive statistics have been achieved through the hard work and dedication of all our staff. From our targeted community safety work achieved by our fire-fighters on stations and our Community Safety Department, to our Business Safety Teams delivering important advice and enforcing fire safety regulations, to all our staff in the back offices who all play a part in making our communities safer.
- 8.9 Further information on performance can be found in the 'About us' section of our website under 'Planning and Performance. Or alternatively follow this link <http://www.esfrs.org/about-us/planning-performance/annual-plan/>

9 Assurance Statement by the Fire Authority

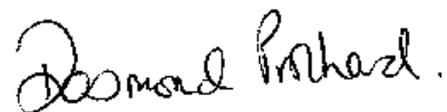
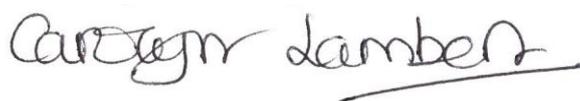
Good governance is about running things properly. It is the means by which the Fire Authority shows it is taking decisions for the good of the communities we serve, in a fair, equitable and open way. It also requires standards of behaviour that support good decision making - collective and individual integrity, openness and honesty. It is the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet all local people's needs. It is fundamental to showing public money is well spent. Without good governance Fire Authorities will struggle to improve services.

From the review, assessment and on-going monitoring work undertaken and supported by the on-going work undertaken by both Internal and External Audit and other external assessments, we have reached the opinion that, overall, key systems are operating soundly and that there are no fundamental control weaknesses.

We can confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, that this statement provides an accurate and fair view.

Date 17th September 2015

Date 17th September 2015



Councillor Carolyn Lambert

Des Prichard

Chair of the Scrutiny and Audit Panel

Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive

