



WARWICKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Warwickshire
Fire and Rescue
Service

Appendix 4
Statement of
Assurance

2019/20

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1. Joint Foreword from Councillor Andy Crump and Chief Fire Officer Kieran Amos

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) is a County Council Fire and Rescue service, which discharges fire and rescue functions on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) - which is the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority (WFRA).

WFRS is integrated within the portfolio of services delivered to the community by WCC, and as such this brings a range of benefits to the performance and statutory compliance of the Fire and Rescue Service.

We are pleased to provide our local communities with this Statement of Assurance on financial, governance and operational matters, and confirm that WFRA continues to meet the statutory duties of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, Civil Contingencies Act and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.

The Statement of Assurance has due regard to the expectations set out in the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2017 - 2020 and its annual action plans.

We are currently developing our proposals for the IRMP 2020 – 2025, which will support WCC's 2020 - 2025 Council Plan and will be subject to an 8-week consultation process in September 2020.

We are proud of our achievements in the last 12 months, and in particular our response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the way in which we supported the most vulnerable members of our community by being there when they needed us most. This has been achieved alongside the ongoing delivery of our key strategic projects.



Andy Crump
Cabinet Member for Fire and Community
Safety



Kieran Amos
Chief Fire Officer

2. Introduction

We are required to publish an annual 'Statement of Assurance' as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The Framework states that for the relevant year, the Authority must provide assurances to their community and to government on financial, governance and operational matters, and must have had regard to the National Framework and its IRMP.

3. Legal and Statutory Responsibilities

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 sets out the duties and powers of fire authorities. The Fire and Rescue Authority has a number of core functions:

- To promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on steps to be taken to prevent fires, and to give advice on fire prevention and escape planning from buildings in case of fire
- Extinguishing fires and protecting life and property in the event of fires
- Responding to, and rescue of people from road traffic collisions (RTCs) and protecting people from serious harm in the event of RTCs
- To deal with emergencies, other than fires and road traffic accidents

Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) places duties on Category 1 Responders – WFRS is a Category 1 responder. The Act calls for a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to be established of which WFRS is a member. The Forum ensures that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on communities.

The LRF is a partnership consisting of representatives from Police, Local Authorities, Fire, Ambulance, Environment Agency, Health, Military, Utility companies and Transport companies. The Act requires Category 1 Responders to maintain plans for:

- Preventing emergencies
- Reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies
- Taking other action in the event of emergencies

These plans are drawn from risk assessments and have regard for the arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public at the time of an emergency.

Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005

WFRS enforces the following fire safety legislation on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Authority:

- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Dangerous Substances (Notification and Marking of Sites) Regulations 1990
- The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007

Fire & Rescue National Framework for England

Integrated Risk Management Plan:

The IRMP fulfils the requirements of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, which sets out the government's expectations for all fire and rescue services. The framework recognises that fire and rescue services are best placed to identify, plan, prepare for and address the risks within the communities they serve. The IRMP 2017-2020 is the strategic document that informs the 2019-20 Statement of Assurance and can be viewed by clicking on the link below:

[Warwickshire Fire and Rescue IRMP 2017-2020](#)

The IRMP demonstrates how we assess and manage foreseeable risks within all our communities. It allows us to ensure that Warwickshire remains a safe place to live and work and describes what additional actions we intend to take to keep our communities safe.

We are currently developing the IRMP 2020-2025 which sets out our proposals for the next five years and will be subject to a public consultation process beginning in September 2020.

4. Financial Assurance

We place a great deal of emphasis on ensuring that our financial management arrangements meet the highest standards.

This is discharged through a number of key processes as follows:

- The annual statement of accounts is produced in line with the accounting codes of practice, it is scrutinised by independent governance, audit and scrutiny committee, approved by WCC and audited by auditors prior to publication.
- Monthly management team accounts are produced and reported back to the corporate finance and management teams.
- Independent external audit review is given annually to ascertain whether the Service is providing value for money.

Link to WCC's annual statement of accounts:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/directory-record/6071/2019-20>

5. Governance Assurance

The Fire and Rescue Authority has an approved code of governance in accordance with WCC governance arrangements.

Links to the constitutions of WCC:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/constitution>

An annual governance statement is produced by WCC explaining how WCC has complied with the code of corporate governance and also meets the requirements of the regulation 4(3) of the accounts and audit (England) regulations 2011.

Link to the annual governance statement:

<https://i.warwickshire.gov.uk/annual-governance-statement-2017-18>

6. Operational Assurance

We are a key member of the Local Resilience Forum and have been instrumental in co-ordinating and implementing a countywide response to Covid-19, including working closely with partners to protect the NHS and Social Care.

Mutual aid arrangements are in place with other services to provide resilience for large scale or complex incidents where additional resources need to be called on. We actively contribute to national resilience and make our assets available to support national emergencies where required.

Performance reports are presented to and scrutinised by the WCC Resources and Fire Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC). The final 2019/20 performance report will be presented at the September 2020 OSC meeting.

We continue to strive to achieve a high level of performance against key community safety indicators and have experienced a long-term reduction in fires compared to a decade ago. In the short term, the number of accidental house fires in 2019 has reduced when compared to the previous year, however these incidents remain a focus for us.

There is a mixed picture when looking at fire related deaths and injury. In 2019/20 there was a reduction in the number of fire related deaths but an increase in the number of injuries when compared to the previous year. Historically levels of fire related injuries in Warwickshire have remained low and when compared nationally we are one of the best performers for this measure.

We investigate every single fire death and monitor levels and types of fire related injury to better understand any underlying factors to prevent further deaths and injuries.

The percentage of time the first appliance arrived at life risk or property incidents within 10 minutes has improved compared to the previous year, however it remains below the target. We continue to deploy staff flexibly in order to provide optimum

crewing and provide targeted prevention activity in those communities where it is difficult to reach within 10 minutes.

The IRMP 2020 - 2025 will build on the progress we have made to ensure our staff and fire stations are in the right locations at the right times to improve our emergency response times and to deliver targeted prevention activities.

7. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

We were inspected during July 2018 and were graded as good in two out of the three areas reviewed by HMICFRS. The inspection focused on three main areas; how effective and how efficient we are and how well we look after our people.

The report, which was published on 20th December 2018, acknowledged that our overall efficiency and effectiveness is good. This means that we assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue risks our community face, prevent fires well, and respond promptly to emergencies, with the right skills and equipment to deal with the incident effectively.

We take our responsibility for staff wellbeing seriously and demonstrate a willingness to learn and improve. The role of our Arson Reduction Officer, and our close working with the Police and colleagues in Adult Social Care and Public Health are particularly successful elements of our community safety strategy. We conduct regular fire safety checks and work with local businesses to make sure they meet fire regulations. Enforcement activity is undertaken when necessary.

A second inspection by HMICFRS was planned for March 2020 however due to the Covid-19 pandemic the inspection will now take place in 2021.

The full HMICFRS 2019 inspection report is available via the following link:

<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/warwickshire-fire-and-rescue-service-report-2018-19.pdf>

An annual customer service excellence audit was conducted in January 2020 and we were highly commended.

Links to the WCC One Organisational Plan and customer service audit report:

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/businessplan>

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/audit>

8. Conclusion

Over the last 12 months we have met and in some areas exceeded our legal responsibilities through the Fire and Rescue National Framework, striving for

continuous improvement to meet the changing risk and vulnerability and the needs and expectations of the communities we serve.

Signed

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Andy Crump
Cabinet Member
for Fire and Community Safety

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Kieran Amos
Chief Fire Officer