Statement of Assurance
2017 - 2018
Introduction

The revised Fire and Rescue National Framework Document (known hereafter as the Framework) was published in July 2018. The Framework sets out the requirement for all English Fire and Rescue Authorities to provide an annual assurance statement on financial, governance and operational matters and to demonstrate how they have had due regard to the expectations set out in their Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Scope of responsibility

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) is the statutory Fire and Rescue Service for the county of Cumbria, and is part of Cumbria County Council which is also the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). The purpose of this Statement of Assurance is to provide information to enable individuals, communities, partners and Government to make a valid, informed assessment of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Authority’s (known as the Authority) performance for the financial year 2017 - 2018. The Statement also demonstrates how the Authority has had due regard to the expectations set out in its IRMP and the requirements placed upon Fire and Rescue Authorities by Government in the Framework.

Background

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 ("the Act") is the core legislation for Fire and Rescue Services in England and Wales and details the statutory responsibilities of FRA's. Under the Act, FRA's have a statutory duty to:

- Provide a Fire and Rescue Service that is equipped to extinguish fires,
- Protect life and property from fires,
- Rescue people from road traffic collisions and respond to other emergencies.

FRA's must also ensure that services are able to:

- Receive and respond to calls for assistance,
- Provide staff that are properly trained and equipped
- Use available information to target its resources in the right place at the right time

The Act also includes a statutory duty for FRA's to provide communities with fire safety education and advice with the aim of reducing deaths and injuries from fire.

In 2017, the Policing and Crime Act came into force, which places a number of statutory requirements on FRAs. These are predominantly around blue light collaboration, and the Statement of Assurance demonstrates how the Fire Authority is meeting these obligations.

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service

CFRS provides a 24 hour emergency response service for fires, road traffic collisions and other emergency incidents, both within Cumbria and when required through mutual aid to neighbouring Services and nationally as part of National Resilience arrangements. It also delivers a range of prevention and protection activities aimed at reducing fires and other incidents, including enforcement of Fire Safety legislation in order to help keep the people and businesses of Cumbria safe. A community profile of the county is provided in the Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016 - 2020.

Financial

CFRS carries out its duties, as part of Cumbria County Council, under section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999, in respect of ensuring that public money is properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

CFRS adheres to Cumbria County Council financial procedures, budget setting, monthly budget monitoring and forecasting, resulting in the production of annual final statutory audited accounts.

The Council's Section 151 Officer, Director of Finance is responsible for the preparation of the Council’s Annual Statement of Accounts, including the accounts for CFRS. This is used to present the Council’s financial performance in accordance with proper practices as set out in the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom. The draft Statement of Accounts are authorised for issue by the Director of Finance on or before 31 May each year and are then presented for audit. The accounts for 2017 - 2018 are presented here:

Link to Statement of Accounts
The annual Statement of Accounts is also subject to robust examination by external auditors who provide an independent assessment and report as to whether or not Cumbria County Council’s Statement of Accounts present a true and fair view and that they have appropriate accounting systems in place. This report also includes a review of and comment on arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources.

The report is available here:

**Link to External Audit Assessment**

The financial statements of Cumbria County Council for the year ended 31st March 2018 were audited externally by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

**Link to Statement of Accounts**

### Benchmarking against other services

The table below highlights how CFRS performs in comparison to other services, based on the latest CIPFA statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>CFRS</th>
<th>Average of all county Fire and Rescue Services</th>
<th>CFRS Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Net Expenditure per head of population</td>
<td>£40.29</td>
<td>£32.90</td>
<td>13th out of 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Net Expenditure (£ Million)</td>
<td>£20.08</td>
<td>£22.9</td>
<td>4th out of 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net cost per hectare</td>
<td>£29.43</td>
<td>£70.08</td>
<td>2nd out of 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the sparse nature of the population in Cumbria, CFRS benchmarks poorly when compared to other services. However when the total area the service covers is taken into account, it can be shown that CFRS is one of the most efficient county run services in the Country.

### Governance

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

As a component part of Cumbria County Council, the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Authority has a duty under the **Local Government Act 1999** to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In 2014 Cumbria County Council adopted a new local ‘Code of Corporate Governance’. This Code has been developed in consideration of the governance principles set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) document: “**Delivering Good Governance in Local Government**”. This document was last updated in 2016. The Code sets out the Council’s commitment to good governance and describes the Council’s Governance Framework and processes.

**Link to Code of Corporate Governance**

The Council produces an Annual Governance Statement which, following a corporate review, provides an assessment of the Council’s compliance with the Code and includes any proposed measures to ensure appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance are maintained.

**Link to Annual Governance Statement**

The Head of Internal Audit is required under the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards to prepare an annual report containing the annual opinion on the Council’s arrangements for risk, governance and internal control. The report is available here:

**Link to Head of Internal Audit Report**

The Chief Fire Officer and the Service Leadership Team have been involved in the review of the Council’s Internal Controls to ensure governance is robust. Significant governance issues for the Council corporately are included within an annual document, and if anything is relevant to CFRS within the Service Action Plan.

The Area Manager with responsibility for Risk Management is a member of the Council’s Corporate Governance group which has responsibility for overseeing corporate governance matters for the Council.
**Operational**

CFRS has carried out its functions in accordance with the defined statutory and policy framework in which it is required to operate. The key legislative arrangements setting this out are:

- 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 (Updated 2018)
- Health and Safety Act at Work Act 1974

CFRS has an IRMP in place which details locally agreed attendance standards to property fires and other incidents.

A fire risk model is used to support the IRMP and draws information from the previous 5 years of dwelling and other building fires, along with fire casualty data and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to categorise each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) into either high, medium or low fire risk. To identify the wider risks within our communities, CFRS has also paid cognisance to road traffic collision data, heritage, environment, site specific risks, flooding and rurality. The risk review update (2015/16) shows that fire risk across Cumbria has continued to fall since the baseline was established in 2008/09.

The IRMP and supporting Station Risk Profiles can be viewed on the CFRS website.

**Link to IRMP and Station Risk Profiles**

CFRS ensured that prevention activities were targeted at those at greatest risk from fire within the communities it serves. CFRS used the relationships it has with other organisations to share data and work with the most vulnerable. An example of this is the use of the ‘Exeter’ NHS data set when used to target vulnerable adults in the delivery of Safe and Well assessments. This is supplemented by referrals from adult social care to prioritise the highest risk cases.

Driven by its Prevention Strategy, CFRS delivers education and home accident reduction activity through to multi-agency solutions aimed at very high risk individuals and families. Innovative methods were used to promote the fire safety message which contributed to continuing year on year reductions in the number of house fires and other emergencies. CFRS also delivers road awareness training to young people in secondary and further education.

In a similar way to other services CFRS has introduced Safe and Well visits which incorporates a home fire safety visit and explores wider health issues with the person. CFRS is taking this concept further and in March 2018 met with local GPs to agree to pilot atrial fibrillation (abnormal heart rhythm) diagnostic work as part of the visit.

CFRS continued to run and participate in a number of targeted initiatives designed to prevent fires, reduce anti-social behaviour and improve life chances. These included working with Young Firefighters, Fire Cadets, and Junior Citizens as well as working with the Police and approved driving instructors to deliver road safety initiatives specifically targeted at young drivers.

Other examples of community safety work which demonstrate the holistic approach CFRS takes include working with food banks, drug and alcohol service providers and different charities to deliver tailored messages around fire safety, road safety and other health messages, for example smoking cessation or obesity where appropriate.

As well as preventing fires, the Service is committed to the protection of buildings, assets and the unique heritage within Cumbria. To achieve this it has developed a comprehensive Protection Strategy that seeks to reduce the level of risk in Cumbria.

CFRS has developed a risk based inspection programme which provides important data to assist in the development and evaluation of the Service’s IRMP. The risk based inspection programme forms part of the Service’s overall integrated approach to risk management by prioritising the inspection of premises across the County.
Grenfell Tower Fire

Following the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in London CFRS has continued to provide reassurance to residents of Cumbria. This included:

- A review of all buildings in Cumbria over 18 metres high, none of which were found to have Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding.
- Additional Fire Safety Audits of other blocks of flats to ensure Fire Safety standards were being adhered to and that any cladding installed had a minimum risk to members of the public.
- Provided support to NHS premises through their internal audit and identified building stock incorporating cladding within their construction.
- Worked with housing providers, District and County Council officers and attended residents’ meetings to answer specific questions relating to Fire Safety.

Partnership working and interoperability

CFRS is currently exploring collaborative opportunities with partners to improve the services it provides to communities across the county.

Managers at tactical and operational level have undertaken Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) training. The impact of JESIP will be to provide a consistent joint emergency services response to incidents. CFRS, Cumbria Constabulary and North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) have been trained in the application of joint command decision and assessment models.

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty on blue light services to collaborate where there are real opportunities to improve efficiency, effectiveness and improve public safety. The Service has embraced this concept, and has been instrumental in the establishment of a Blue Light Executive Leaders Board. Several collaboration projects have already been implemented including the introduction of Joint Incident Command Units and the Joint Emergency Services Officer roles.

The Service also has an arrangement with Cumbria Constabulary where training facilities are shared. The facility is at the Penrith site and is used by Fire staff for fire behaviour training and police staff for civil disturbance training.

As a “responsible authority” within the context of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, CFRS has worked with other responsible authorities, i.e. local authorities; the Police; Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Probation Service, to reduce reoffending, tackle crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour and other behaviour damaging to the local environment as well as the misuse of substances in their area. In Cumbria we have three Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) reporting into ‘Safer Cumbria’, a county wide strategy group.

CFRS is regularly represented at a local level as part of the three CSPs. The Chief Fire Officer attends the Safer Cumbria Direction Board which is responsible for driving forward the strategic community safety priorities for Cumbria. As well as geographic representation, the service is represented on cross cutting thematic groups such as Safeguarding, MAPPA and Hate Crime, fulfilling its statutory responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act.

CFRS has taken the lead in overseeing the delivery of the Government’s PREVENT agenda within the County Council and acts as a conduit between the Council and Safer Cumbria for wider issues such as County Lines and Modern Slavery.

CFRS continued to work with the Government, other FRAs and Fire and Rescue professionals in order to ensure continued national resilience. CFRS has signed up to the National Mutual Aid Protocol. This agreement establishes the terms under which an Authority may expect to request assistance from, or provide assistance to, another Authority in the event of a serious national incident. Additionally, in sections 13 and 16 of the Fire Services Act 2004, there is a legal requirement for neighbouring FRAs to enter into formal reinforcement arrangements. CFRS has formal mutual aid arrangements in place with its neighbouring FRAs to provide mutual cross border support and assistance in the event of a fire or other emergency incident.

To ensure operational preparedness and to satisfy local and national assurance processes CFRS took a leading role in the design, delivery and participation of local, regional and national exercises to test all stages of command within Fire and Rescue Service operations.
CFRS is a key member within the County’s Local Resilience Forum (LRF), a multi-agency partnership consisting of the emergency services and all other organisations and agencies involved with emergency response in communities. The LRF partnership develops civil resilience capacity and capability by preparing multi-agency, major incident response plans and organising training and exercises. The LRF is currently chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.

**Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service within the broader County Council**

As part of a County Council the Chief Fire Officer is a member of the Corporate Management Team and works closely alongside colleagues in the People directorate, Economy and Infrastructure and Corporate, Customer and Community Services; this approach supports and encourages joint working.

The Service maintains excellent relationships with colleagues across the Council to help to achieve efficiencies and draw on broader resources and capacity where appropriate. Fire and Rescue Service staff carry out equipment checks on behalf of the People directorate.

Council’s support services have been extensively involved in the development of a range of blue light collaboration initiatives and in improving both the Service website and public engagement with regard to the IRMP development. Fire Stations are now occupied by other Council staff as part of broader efficiencies delivered under the property rationalisation programme.

Links to the performance management department within the Council have resulted in a wide variety of accurate data being made available to inform decision making, and the anticipated production of a comprehensive Risk Based Evidence Profile which will complement a refreshed IRMP.

In Cumbria 1 in 3 people volunteer compared with 1 in 4 nationally, so this means that there is real opportunity for local government including Fire and Rescue Services to work with volunteers and third sector organisations to deliver local services.

CFRS Volunteer Scheme aims to promote community cohesion and wellbeing by assisting in the development of important communication links between local Fire Stations, representative groups, other volunteer organisations and individuals with similar ideals in the community.

CFRS volunteers help to deliver Home Accident Reduction Interventions and support their local Fire and Rescue Service crews with all types of community engagement, including those targeted at young people and positive action events. Some of our volunteers are trained to crew reception centres on behalf of Cumbria’s Resilience department in the event of a major incident.

**Review of effectiveness and commitment to continuous improvement**

In accordance with its commitment to ensure a safe and competent workforce, CFRS has conducted a thorough review of policies, procedures and training programs in response to tragic events nationally. The learning has come from the Services directly affected, information notices (Coroner Reports to Prevent Future Deaths, formally known as ‘Rule 43’ reports) issued as a result of inquests, and recommendations to all FRS’ by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

CFRS has reviewed all existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that it is compliant with the advice given in the National Operational Guidance (NOG) program.

CFRS is committed to the new inspection programme being rolled out by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). A benchmarking exercise has taken place against the published key lines of enquiry and action is being taken to address any areas of concern. The service is committed to taking on board any learning from its own inspection, but also to reviewing the learning from the inspections of other services.

Through the Council’s governance mechanisms, a number of core performance objectives are tracked through quarterly reporting on key ‘Council Plan Delivery Plan’ objectives.
Business Continuity

CFRS has robust business continuity plans in place. In addition the Council’s Resilience Unit sits within the Fire and Rescue Service Directorate who work in close collaboration with fire officers. A business continuity assurance statement has been added as an appendix and an ongoing programme is in place to test our plans.
Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service
Statement of Assurance 2017-18 Addendum
Operational Response - Business Continuity Arrangements

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 place a legal duty for all Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to write and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the Authority is able to continue its core functions.

Nationally the Fire and Rescue Service is undergoing a prolonged and sustained period of change. The change agenda has several drivers, such as central government policy, increased inter-service collaboration, development of common policies and procedures, innovative local Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs), as well as responses to the wider financial climate, public spending cuts and the drive for effectiveness and business efficiencies. Coupled to this are other ongoing threats across the UK, particularly from terrorism, extreme weather and other unforeseen events.

Cumbria County Council (CCC) as the FRA and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) recognise that during any period of change there is also an increased potential of staff groups taking lawful industrial action to try to influence the pace or direction of the change process.

The FRA and CFRS work hard to ensure good industrial relations with all staff groups and trade unions. The organisation’s intent would be to always try to resolve any issue through local dialogue and by being as inclusive as possible. The intent would be to avoid industrial action. Our aim is for staff, elected members and trade union representatives from all areas of the organisation to be party to the development of organisational priorities, objectives and plans so as to protect the public, minimise staff uncertainty and potential for industrial unrest. Having an effective Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) is an important part of the Authority’s strategy and a robust programme is well established. Business Continuity plans are maintained and tested, with the plans being owned by the CFRS Service Management Team.

BCMS within CFRS consist of a number of plans and processes which identify risk and develop resilience across the Service. These are developed, regularly reviewed and exercised to ensure that adverse events cause minimal disruption to the services provided and that critical services are maintained.

Find below examples of BC plans in place:

- Withdrawal of Labour Plan
- Fuel Shortage Plan
- Pandemic Flu Plan
- Departmental BC Plans

During 2014-15 there were a number of national strikes called by the Fire Brigades Union; therefore the Withdrawal of Labour Plan has undergone ‘live testing’. Critical Incident Team meetings have been carried out prior to, and after the strikes to plan, prepare and capture any lessons learned.

During 2018 CFRS exercised the Pandemic Flu Plan during a 7 week long multi-agency exercise hosted by the FRA. These incidents and exercises continually inform on the robustness of Business Continuity plans in place within CFRS.
The FRA carry out their functions within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. A list of key legislation/guidance appears below:

- 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

Also, Sections 13 and 16 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow for mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Services to improve resilience and capacity in border areas. CFRS has in place agreements with all bordering Fire Authorities for response to life risk incidents.

CFRS’s 999 calls are handled by North West Fire Control, and as a result the Service is well positioned in terms of interoperability and shared services across the four FRA’s involved (Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cheshire). BC is also regularly tested with NWFC as a supplier of one of our critical functions.

In summary:

The Business Continuity plans are comprehensive, robust and tested to ensure they are current and fit for purpose. Our BCMS will also undergo an internal audit and inspection during autumn 2018. The plans provide clear and defined strategies to be adopted to aid achievement of the following objectives:

- Provide a response to events that threaten the delivery of services to the communities across Cumbria
- Protect the Service from service interruptions;
- In the event of service interruptions to provide a co-ordinated recovery;
- Facilitate a risk management culture embedded into the Service to enable risks to be identified and managed effectively.

Steve Healey
Chief Fire Officer
If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 01768 812612.