

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 4

MEETING: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 25 SEPTEMBER 2017

SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND ANNUAL REPORT

**JOINT REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER AND THE ASSISTANT
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report 2016/17 (Appendix A) to members for information. The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report was approved by Fire Authority on 11 September 2017.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The purpose of the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report is to inform the Authority's stakeholders how Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority performed during 2016/17, how much was spent and what it was spent on. This document also meets the requirements placed on us by Government as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2012, to prepare an annual Statement of Assurance:

'Fire and rescue authorities must provide annual 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 and the requirements included in the Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance'.

- 2.2 One of the principal aims of the statement of assurance is to provide an accessible way in which communities, Government, local authorities and our partners may make a valid assessment of the Authority's performance.

3 STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

- 3.1 The guidance states that "the Statement of Assurance will be used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the Fire and Rescue Act 2004".

- 3.2 The contents of the document should include as a minimum;
- the statement of accounts
 - an annual governance statement
 - details of how the Authority meets the requirements of the National Framework
 - details of consultation on strategic plans including the IRMP
 - assurance regarding operational competence
 - consideration to the principles of transparency (set out in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency)

- 3.3 Where relevant information is already set out in a clear, accessible and user friendly way within existing documents, it is acceptable to include extracts or links to these documents within the Statement of Assurance. This is the approach the Authority have taken.

4 HOW TWFR A PERFORMED

- 4.1 The Authority sets targets to enable performance management, helping us to achieve our vision of 'creating the safest community'. By monitoring performance, the Authority is able to see how it is progressing towards achieving the organisation's strategic goals. The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report notes that performance is monitored quarterly by the Strategic Management Team and the Policy and Performance Committee. The Service Delivery Performance Action Group also keeps performance under constant review.
- 4.2 The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report contains a summary of our performance for 2016/17. A total of 15459 incidents were attended in 2016/17 with an average response time of 5 minutes 24 seconds. In 2015/16 we responded to dwelling fires faster than any other Metropolitan Authority and were second fastest compared to all fire and rescue services in the country. Comparator figures are not yet available for 2016/17 but with only a minor change in our response times for 2016/17 we expect to be amongst the fastest again for 2016/17.
- 4.3 Under the Government's Spending Review the Authority continues to face financial pressures which creates a huge challenge in continuing to tackle community risk. Notwithstanding these pressures, the committed workforce will continue to work jointly with our partners to deliver positive outcomes for the communities of Tyne and Wear.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The draft Statement of Assurance and Annual Report was shared with Mazars, the Authority's external auditor, who provided positive comment and raised no significant issues. Mazars will attend when the Committee considers the report.
- 5.2 The Authority's internal auditors, will also attend committee and similarly, did not raise any significant issues.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 There are no risks associated with publishing the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report. We have worked closely with internal and external audit throughout the year on our financial and governance positions.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This report has no direct financial implications. The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report contains a retrospective picture of expenditure in 2016/17.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

8.1 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee is recommended to
- a) Note the content of this report and the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England – DCLG May 2013
- CFOA Circular 2013-10: Annual Statement of Assurance

