

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No. 6**

**MEETING: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 24 SEPTEMBER 2018**

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**SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND ANNUAL REPORT (SOAAR)**

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

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the Statement of Assurance and Annual Report 2017/18 (Appendix A) to members for information. The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report was approved by Fire Authority on 10 September 2018.

**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 2017/18, 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.
- 2.3 The revised Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018 came into effect on 1 June 2018, and will be fully considered and embedded into the 2018/19 SOAAR.

### **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 Services 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 TWFRA 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 Executive Leadership Team and by the Policy and Performance Committee. The Service Delivery Performance Action Group keeps performance under constant review.
- 4.2 The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report contains a summary of our performance for 2017/18. Over 17,000 incidents were attended in 2017/18 with an average response time of 5 minutes 22 seconds. Based on the latest Home Office figures (2016/17) we responded to dwelling fires faster than any other Metropolitan Authority and were second fastest compared to all FRS in the country. Comparator figures are not yet available for 2017/18 but with a quicker response time for 2017/18 we expect to be amongst the fastest again for 2017/18.
- 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 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 2017/18.

## **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.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

- 30 July 2018 - Governance Committee Audited Statement of Accounts
- 18 June 2018 - Fire Authority Annual Governance Review 2017/2018

