

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Item No 6

MEETING: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 26th SEPTEMBER 2016

SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE AND ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE
FINANCE OFFICER AND PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the draft Statement of Assurance and Annual Report 2015/16 (Appendix A) to members for approval.

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 did during 2015/16, how much was spent and what it was spent on. This document also meets a new requirement 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 in Tyne and Wear.

4 HOW TWFRA PERFORMED

4.1 The Authority sets targets to allow performance management, enabling 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 in 2015/16. A total of 14,375 incidents were attended in 2015/16 with an average response time of 5 minutes 14 seconds. There were no accidental fire deaths during this period. There was also 15% reduction in injuries from accidental dwelling fires and a 28.2% reduction in false alarm calls from non-domestic premises.

4.3 Under the Government's Spending Review the Authority continues to face significant reductions in the grant received from the Government. This creates a huge challenge in continuing to tackle community risk with fewer resources. Although this will be difficult, the committed workforce will continue to focus upon positive outcomes for the communities that TWFRA serve.

5 LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The first Statement of Assurance was required to be produced and published in the financial year 2013/14. The Authority complied with this and this report is the fourth Statement of Assurance and Annual Report.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report contains a retrospective picture of expenditure in 2015/16. This report has no direct financial implications.

7 STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

7.1 The Statement of Assurance and Annual Report directly relates to goal four; 'to deliver a modern, effective service, ensuring value for money with staff who reflect the communities we serve'. It provides information to help provide public assurance that the organisation is financially viable and continuing to produce results which help deliver the safest community.

8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The report provides information that is accessible to all.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no Health and Safety implications associated with this report.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This report has been prepared to provide assurance on our finances, governance and operations throughout 2015/16.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

- a) Review the content of this report
- b) Approve the draft document subject to format and design and the insertion of the approved statement of accounts.

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

