

ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



COMMITTEE	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
DATE OF MEETING	4 NOVEMBER 2019
SUBJECT	ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
LEAD OFFICER	KATIE MILLS, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES
LEAD MEMBER	N/A
EXEMPT INFORMATION	NONE
ACTION	FOR DECISION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (the Authority) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with relevant legislation and standards and that public money is both safeguarded and properly accounted for. It also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Authority is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions including arrangements for the management of risk.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **AGREE** the publication of the Annual Governance Statement 2018/19.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Authority has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework' (2016 edition) (The Framework). The Annual Governance Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the Framework and also meets the requirements of Regulation 6(1) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement.

- 3.2 Local authorities are required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code of governance, which in turn is consistent with the good governance principles in the Framework. This includes how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period.
- 3.3 The draft Annual Governance Statement is attached as Appendix A to this covering report.

4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

- 4.1 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Annual Governance Statement enables the Authority to explain to the community, service users, tax payers and other stakeholders its governance arrangements and how the controls it has in place manage risks of failure in delivering its outcomes. It underpins the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

In 2019/20, a review of the CIPFA/SOLACE ‘Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework’ is planned to ensure continued compliance with updated regulations and this will inform the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is a legal requirement to produce an Annual Governance Statement and publish it in draft format by 31 May 2019, pending agreement by this Committee. At the request of the external auditors, a conclusion was added to the draft Statement in June 2019.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None for the purpose of this report.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are substantial risks both financial and reputational to the Authority of not meeting the requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE

- 9.1 None for the purpose of this report.

10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Fire Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Senior Leadership Team were consulted in the compilation of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 **Appendix A** - Draft Annual Governance Statement

13. CONTACT DETAILS

13.1 Katie Mills, Head of Corporate Services, 0118 938 4610