

# ROYAL BERKSHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>11 DECEMBER 2018</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE 2017/18</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	<b>KATIE MILLS, HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES</b>
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>EXEMPT INFORMATION</b>	<b>NONE</b>
<b>ACTION</b>	<b>NOTE AND AGREE</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, “*all Fire and Rescue Services are required to provide assurance to their communities and to Government, on financial, governance and operational matters and on national resilience capability.*”
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement of Assurance is for Royal Berkshire Fire Authority to formally confirm the adequacy of arrangements for the effective management of financial, governance and operational matters in Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS).
- 1.3 This is the sixth annual Statement of Assurance the RBFA has issued. This year the preparation of the Statement of Assurance has been aligned to the self-assessment process for Her Majesty’s Inspection of Fire and Rescue Services, to ensure consistency of approach.
- 1.4 The internal assessment that was conducted by RBFRS officers against the Framework criteria and produced the following summary judgements;  
**FINANCIAL** – requirements associated with the appropriate management of financial matters were **fully met**. Evidence to support this is set out in **Appendix B**.
- 1.5 **GOVERNANCE** – requirements associated with appropriate business practice, high standards of conduct and sound governance were **fully met**. Evidence to support this judgement and information on identified areas for improvement are set out in **Appendix C**.
- 1.6 **OPERATIONAL** – requirements associated with operational matters were **fully met**. Evidence to support this judgement and information on identified areas for improvement are set out in **Appendix D**.

- 1.7 **NATIONAL FRAMEWORK** – requirements associated with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (July 2012) have been **fully met** as set out in **Appendix E**. This assessment was based on the judgements set out in **Appendices B-D**.
- 1.8 Further assurance is provided via audit activities. These are completed by an external company. See **Appendix F** for a list of audits carried out in 2017/18.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **NOTE** the summary judgements within the Statement of Assurance for each of the four key areas of Finance, Governance, Operations and delivering the National Framework.
- 2.2 **AGREE** that the RBFA Statement of Assurance 2017/18 be approved for signature by the Chairman of the Authority and the Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee for publication.

## **3. REPORT**

- 3.1 The Annual Statement of Assurance report is attached.

## **4. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 Commitment 1 – We will educate people on how to prevent fires and other emergencies, and what to do when they happen.
- 4.2 Commitment 2 – We will ensure a swift and effective response when called to emergencies
- 4.3 Commitment 3 – We will ensure appropriate fire safety standards in buildings
- 4.4 Commitment 4 – We will seek opportunities to contribute to a broader safety, health and wellbeing agenda
- 4.5 Commitment 5 – We will ensure that Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provides good value for money.
- 4.6 Commitment 6 – We will work with Central Government to ensure a fair deal for Royal Berkshire.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework, published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in July 2012, introduced the requirement for fire and rescue authorities in England to produce a ‘Statement of Assurance’ on an annual basis. An updated National Framework was published in May 2018. This maintained the requirement.

- 6.2 Section 21 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004) requires Fire and Rescue Authorities to 'have regard' to the National Framework in carrying out their functions.
- 6.3 The Statement of Assurance is used as a source of information on which to base the Secretary of State's biennial report under section 25 of the FRA 2004.
- 6.4 The 'Guidance on statements of assurance for fire and rescue authorities in England' published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in May 2013 provides as follows:
- 6.5 "It is for fire and rescue authorities to decide when they should publish depending on individual reporting arrangements"; and that,
- 6.6 "The statement of assurance should be signed off by an elected member of the relevant authority who is able to take responsibility for its contents. It is up to the individual authority to ensure that this is done by an appropriate person (or persons) who can approve it on behalf of the authority."

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

## **8. RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Statement of Assurance demonstrates that a Fire and Rescue Service has identified the risks it faces and where appropriate are taking the necessary steps to mitigate them.

## **9. CONSISTENCY WITH DUTY TO COLLABORATE**

- 9.1 The judgement decisions within the report demonstrate RBFRS are delivering collaborative projects and are exploring further opportunities to collaborate.

## **10. PRINCIPAL CONSULTATION**

- 10.1 The Chief Fire Officer was consulted during preparation of this report
- 10.2 The Head of Finance and Procurement was consulted on the content of this report.
- 10.3 The Monitoring Officer was consulted on the content.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 There are a large number of background documents referenced in the Statement, some of which are available as hyperlinks. Associated documents are not attached with this paper, but can be made available in hard copy or electronic format on request.

**12. APPENDICES**

12.1 Appendix A – Statement of Assurance

**13. CONTACT DETAILS**

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