



**Report to the Police Fire and Crime Panel**

**15<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

**Statement of Assurance**

Report of the Staffordshire Commissioner

**INTRODUCTION**

This Statement of Assurance sets out the financial, governance and response arrangements that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority had in place for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 and relates to a period prior to the change in governance for the Authority.

As detailed within the National Framework for England “Fire and rescue authorities must provide 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 this Framework. To provide assurance, fire and rescue authorities must publish an annual statement of assurance.”

This report was presented to the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority’s Strategic Governance Board on 1 February 2019 and the Board accepted the content and context of the document and the Service Communications and Marketing Team are now developing the final design of the document ready for publication.

**RECCOMENDATIONS**

- a) That the Panel note the content of this Statement of Assurance for 2017/18
- b) That the Panel note that this Statement of Assurance covers the 2017/18 period prior to the change in governance relating to the Staffordshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority. Work is now underway to develop the SOA for 2018/19 encompassing the transition to the new governance arrangements

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## **Foreword**

Welcome to our annual Statement of Assurance for 2017/2018. The aim of producing this statement is to provide our communities with clear information regarding the performance of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (the Service). The document has been written in accordance with the guidance published by the Department for Communities and Local Government on statements of assurance for Fire and Rescue Authorities in England.

This Statement of Assurance sets out the financial, governance and response arrangements that Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) had in place for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 prior to the change in governance to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire (Fire and Rescue Authority) that took place on 1 August 2018. Going forward the 2018/2019 (and subsequent) Statements of Assurance will set out performance of these new governance arrangements.

The Service continues to be committed to prioritising risk reduction and improving community safety through prevention, and innovative protection, which are both underpinned with a highly effective and efficient emergency response capability.

Working collaboratively with all of our partners continues to be a priority for the Service to improve the health, safety and wellbeing of our communities. The Policing and Crime Act 2017 placed a legal duty to collaborate on Emergency Services in respect of improvements to efficiency, effectiveness and public safety which will further develop the already established collaborations within Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire.

The Service is continually transforming the way in which it delivers services in order to meet new and emerging challenges. These challenges are becoming more difficult as the impact of continued budget reductions is felt. The Statement of Assurance also provides a progress update against the required £4m savings target incorporated into the published Efficiency Plan covering the four-year period from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

## **Financial Overview & Governance Statement**

The Service's annual Statement of Accounts has been published, providing comprehensive details on the FRA's financial performance for the year ending 31 March 2018, explaining how funding was spent in order to deliver the three priority areas, as set out within the FRA's Integrated Risk Management Plan (Corporate Safety Plan) 2017-2020.

The Statement of Accounts sets out the financial activities of the FRA for the year ended 31 March 2018 and includes comparative figures for the previous year. The Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting principles contained within the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2017/18, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). The Code of Practice and relevant guidance notes specifies the principles and practices of accounting required to give a "true and fair" view of the financial position and transactions of the FRA.

## **Governance Arrangements**

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 which came into effect on 3rd April 2017 gave the opportunity for Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to make a local case to take on the responsibility for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service. A business case commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire was submitted to the Home Office for approval in October 2017 and following a Home Office commissioned independent review of the business case undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), approval

by the Home Secretary was granted on 26 March 2018. The Statutory Instrument that enabled the legislative change is cited as the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Staffordshire (Fire and Rescue Authority) Order 2018. This came into force on 1st August 2018.

## Background

The FRA have been responsible for the finances of the Service with a net revenue budget of £39.9 million. The FRA has been responsible for providing its Fire and Rescue Services to just over 1.1 million people in Stoke-on-Trent and the County of Staffordshire, attending over 8000 emergency incidents per year and carrying out daily interventions through engagement, prevention and protection activities to around 25,500 households including supporting businesses across the County to help maintain a vibrant economy and communities.

Affairs have been managed and scrutinised by the FRA in order to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for delivering value for money through securing financial resilience and challenging how it secures economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.

## Accounting Statements

The Statement of Accounts is published to present the financial position and transactions of the FRA in a fair and transparent manner. Its format is prescribed by CIPFA.

The main statements consist of:

- **Statement of Responsibilities for the Statement of Accounts** which sets out the responsibilities of the FRA and the Treasurer for the accounts;
- **Annual Governance Statement** which assesses the adequacy of the FRA's governance arrangements and identifies where improvements can be made;
- **Statement of Accounting Policies** which sets out the basis for recognising, measuring and disclosing transactions in the accounts;
- **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement** which summarises income and expenditure on the FRA's services during 2017/18; and presents all the recognised gains and losses of the FRA during 2017/18;
- **Movement in Reserves Statement** which reconciles the Income and Expenditure Account with General Fund Balances taking into account contributions to reserves committed for future expenditure;
- **Balance Sheet** which sets out the FRA's financial position as at 31 March 2018;
- **Cash Flow Statement** which summarises the inflows and outflows of cash in the year.

The Statement of Accounts 2017/18 is available on our website at the [Insert Link](#). Printed copies can be obtained by contacting the Service's Finance Department on 0300 330 1000.

## Our FRA Governance Framework

Our Governance Framework has enabled the FRA to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) within the Statement of Accounts publicly explains how the organisation manages its governance and internal control measures. It is an open and honest account of how we ensure financial management systems are adequate and effective and demonstrate a sound system of internal control, assuring utmost integrity in all dealings.

## **Scope of Responsibility**

The FRA has maintained responsibility for ensuring that:

- Business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards;
- Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, being used economically, efficiently, and effectively

The FRA also fully satisfied its 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.

In discharging these overall responsibilities, the FRA maintained its responsibility for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

The FRA's Governance Framework has been made up of many systems, policies, procedures, and operations with the elements identified in the following sections.

## **Scrutiny and Performance Management**

A performance management system has been in place throughout the FRA with regular performance monitoring and scrutiny being carried out by the Service's executive leadership team. As part of its corporate planning, the FRA set out the key performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, that measure the delivery of its strategic objectives.

The Service Delivery Board, the Service Management Board, the FRA and its Committees have maintained their governance by setting the budget for 2017/18 and approving the Medium Term Financial Strategy up to and including 2019/20. During the financial year they have received, reviewed and scrutinised reports. Performance outcomes and budget management have been kept under regular review and where appropriate remedial action and resource reallocation has been instigated.

The FRA held a number of Member Development Workshops throughout the year to ensure that all Members were kept fully up to date with current issues affecting the Service, therefore maximising the effectiveness of Members and importantly their contribution to development and improvement of the Service. Agendas, minutes, and reports, along with performance and incident data, are published on the Service website.

## **Internal Audit**

Throughout the year a programme of Internal Audits have taken place including a continual review of internal systems, structures and controls across the Service complementing our ongoing business transformation process. During the 2017/18 period 9 audit reviews were undertaken on areas such as Pensions, Payroll, Cyber Crime and Fleet Management. In addition, two major audits were undertaken to provide the necessary assurance following the introduction of a new Payroll and Finance system.

The outcome of these audits are contained in our Statement of Accounts and resulted in a 'Substantial' assurance opinion being given on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the FRA's governance, risk, and control framework for the 2017/18 financial year.

## **External Audit**

Grant Thornton was appointed as the FRA's external auditor following a national procurement exercise undertaken by Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited (PSAA). Its annual work

programme is set in accordance the Code of Audit Practice and includes nationally prescribed and locally determined work. The Statement of Accounts for 2017/18 was approved by the FRA on 27 July 2018 which was in line with the revised timetable for public bodies (previously 30 September). The FRA had also achieved this deadline in the two previous financial years ahead of the change and detailed within the annual report issued by PSAA as only a small number of Authorities had achieving this target.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion by Grant Thornton, based upon the work undertaken, was that the FRA had in place proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources for the year ended 31 March 2018.

## **Efficiency Plan**

As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17 single purpose Fire and Rescue Authorities were all offered firm four-year funding allocations for the period from 2016/17 to 2019/20 in return for robust and transparent efficiency plans that would be published in order to enable local residents to scrutinise these plans. In October 2016 the FRA published its Efficiency Plan and submitted the document to the Home Office to secure this funding offer.

The published Efficiency Plan includes detailed assumptions around the strategy that the FRA will adapt regarding future Council Tax increases and also the expected increases in business rates and population growth within the county during this time. In total the four year settlement includes a reduction in Revenue Support Grant of £4.8m. The Efficiency Plan included a requirement for the FRA to make savings of £4 million by 2020.

To date £2.2m of savings have been approved and fully implemented within the Service. The savings included a reduction in wholtime crews of 40 posts phased into the establishment from 1 January 2017 (28 posts) and 1 January 2018 (12 posts) which included the removal of two Targeted Response Vehicles (TRV's), in addition a new retained payment system was implemented from 1 January 2017 that also reduced the establishment by 43 posts. The executive team was also restructured during 2016 removing one post from the structure.

The balance of savings of £1.8m was reduced to £1.3m as part of the budget setting exercise for 2018/19 supported by an increase in Band D Council Tax of 2.75% which was 1% above the assumption contained within the Efficiency Plan submission. This increase in Council Tax was possible following a change in the referendum limit which allowed Fire and Rescue Authorities to increase Council tax by 3% (previously set at 2%).

The following areas are currently being reviewed in order to deliver the remaining saving of £1.3m during 2018/19 and 2019/20:

- A review of Prevention and Protection delivery within the Service
- Management reduction. This involves a review that has been undertaken with the option to reduce the number of operational management posts
- A reduction in funding costs following capital savings delivered and lower borrowing costs
- A review of community safety budgets with a more effective and targeted approach
- Recurring budget efficiency savings and procurement savings

The FRA recognises that the longer term financial stability of the Service, and the protection and safety of firefighters and the communities served by this FRA, relies upon the delivery of significant future savings and continued strong financial performance. Intelligent use of resources and reserves will ensure that the FRA is well equipped to make the important decisions that will be essential in order to ensure that the saving required within the Efficiency Plan are delivered in a timely way by 2020.

## **Planning**

The National Framework for England provides an overall strategic direction to Fire and Rescue Authorities across England but does not, however, prescribe how communities should be served, stating that Services are free to operate in a way that enables the most efficient delivery of services at a local level, working in partnership with communities, businesses, local partnerships, voluntary organisations and others.

The Service engages with the Government and partners on national resilience issues which mean that vehicles, staff and resources are often shared across the UK in response to emergency incidents. The Service hosts and manages a number of operational vehicles, equipment and capabilities which are held on a national register and deployed in accordance with national arrangements. Whilst such assets remain available to support resilience across the UK, they are also utilised at local level to enhance the response capability of our Service. Fire and Rescue Authorities function within a clearly defined statutory and policy framework. The key documents defining these responsibilities are:

- The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England
- The Policing and Crime Act 2017

The purpose of this section is to provide assurance that our services are delivered in line with our statutory responsibilities and in consideration of our Integrated Risk Management Plans and local strategies including cross-border, multi-authority and national arrangements.

## **Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)**

The Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the requirement that each Fire and Rescue Authority must produce an Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) which must demonstrate how prevention, protection, and response activities will best be used to mitigate the impact of risk on communities, through authorities working either individually or collectively, in a cost effective way. The FRA carries out this task by producing the Corporate Safety Plan (CSP) which sets out its strategic priorities and which shapes and drives the Service's vision of 'making Staffordshire the safest place to be'.

The FRA has also set its management strategy and risk based programme for enforcing provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 in accordance with the principles of better regulation set out in the Statutory Code of Compliance for Regulators, and the Enforcement Concordat.

## **Consultation – Your Contribution**

The current 2017- 2020 CSP was developed by speaking with, and listening to, our communities. This enabled us to develop an understanding of the expectations and services that are required

from their point of view. Consultation was used to help identify and shape our priorities as we looked to tackle the challenges of the future, agreed by FRA members and shared throughout the development with a wide variety of stakeholders both internally and externally.

The CSP continues to be developed in an innovative way through a broad range of engagement throughout the process, helping to build a plan which reflects what is important to our staff, our communities and our partners. Furthermore, consulting to develop the Service's priorities maximised the input of the public and stakeholders in developing a robust plan, conforming also to UK Government Consultation Principles in adopting a proportionate and targeted approach whilst promoting public ownership of the CSP. The CSP can be found on the Service website.

We are constantly striving to provide the best service we can for our communities, as such continued feedback is an integral part in our development. The Service, therefore, welcomes your ideas and queries in order to provide the best for you. If you are interested in providing your Service with feedback, thoughts, or suggestions please email:

[Corporatesafetyplan.engagement@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:Corporatesafetyplan.engagement@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

## **Our Priorities**

The CSP has 3 priorities from which the Service continues to drive innovation and improved service delivery to ensure our communities are aware of and safe in terms of fire and other emergencies and that they received the best response when they need it.

- Education & engagement
- Community safety and Wellbeing
- Planning, resilience and response

## **Priority 1 - Education and Engagement**

### **Marketing and Campaigns**

The Service delivers a number of preventative campaigns based upon road safety, reducing small fires (Flames aren't games), supporting businesses and reducing fire death and injury in accidental dwelling fires by highlighting risks associated with smoking, alcohol, age and mobility - (SAME) factors. The service also collaborates with health partners through their social media channels to promote health and wellbeing. In addition, a partnership approach to raising awareness of 'staying well during winter' and dementia has taken place through the use of fire appliances displaying safety messages and NHS livery.

### **Safe and Sound**

The Service delivers thousands of positive interventions with school children and other groups in regard to fire safety, road safety, water safety, social isolation, mental health issues, cybercrime, drugs and alcohol and first aid through a multi-agency schools education programme called Safe and Sound. The aim is to reduce pressures and demand on all public services over the long term through engagement and education by promoting safe behaviour, social inclusion and employability with both a universal and targeted offer. Local evaluation is evidencing that attendee's safety knowledge and awareness is increased as a result of the programme.

The project has accessed national transformation funding under 'Blue Light Collaboration' to provide innovative and co-produced packages for delivery and new technology to be as effective as possible in educating people through exciting interactions. The process has been underpinned by a needs based assessment of local communities completed in partnership with public health teams, Staffordshire Police, the Office of the Staffordshire Commissioner and voluntary

organisations. Its focus has been predominately in delivery to Schools although several events have been introduced to over 65 groups.

### **Princes Trust and Cadets**

The Service delivers a range of programmes in partnership with Safer Communities CIC and the Princes Trust. Over 178 young adults, many whom who have problems associated with a lack of confidence, stress, social isolation, mental ill health and alcohol/substance consumption are engaged in programmes on an annual basis. Current evidence shows that 93% go on to positive outcomes afterwards – either in full time education, employment, training or volunteering.

The Service continues to deliver its Cadets+ scheme. The focus is on delivering recognised training and skills to young people to improve their access to life opportunities. Measures are in place to monitor and inform future development of the course and its effectiveness with over 90% achieving a Duke of Edinburgh Silver award whilst gaining valuable other skills associated with teamwork and first aid.

### **Use of Community Fire Stations and facilities**

The Service hosts a number of NHS teams and services operating from their Community Fire Stations, delivering a range of, support services, voluntary group activities and exercise classes. Community groups and partner agencies using the facilities include Staffordshire Police, the DVSA and the British Red Cross. From April 2017 until the end of March 2018 the facilities were used 12,431 times providing 39,370.05 hours of free to use facilities for the communities and partners of Staffordshire.

### **Protect, Technical Fire safety and Business Support**

Our Protect and Technical Fire Safety arrangements continue to be developed and are based upon data and intelligence to ensure that enforcement and business support reduces the risk of fire to residents, businesses and emergency responders. A risk-based inspection programme is used which is continually reviewed to ensure that premises which may pose the greatest risk of fire are targeted for supportive action and for firefighters to gather information to plan for any emergency. This takes into account national developments such as the outcomes from Grenfell Tower fire inquiry.

Enforcement action is taken against those who fail to comply with fire safety regulations by utilising the national enforcement management model. There is however, a deliberate effort to support businesses to address shortfalls in fire safety. The Service works with various stakeholders and regulators such as building control officers, trading standards on firework safety and licensing, and the Environment Agency. The Service works in partnership with businesses providing support from fire safety officers at a local level to reduce the burden of unwanted fire signals with our Fire Control staff actively challenging calls to reduce the demand on operational crews from automatic fire alarms.

The Service engages in the Primary Authority Scheme for businesses having formal arrangements with BUPA Services, Busy Bees Nursery and Bromford Housing Group to provide assured fire safety advice on a national level. This scheme provides assured advice to businesses on a national scale and is a further way in which the Service supports improvements in business safety.

### **Community Sprinkler Project**

The Community Sprinkler Project has focused on the risks associated with high rise building fires and specifically the levels of safety for occupants and firefighters for buildings involved in fire. We

have focused our funding in this area over the medium to longer term with, match funding with appropriate partners as an option. This has created a local legacy and supports the broader Fire Sector's ambition with the national sprinkler agenda. With Phase 1 of the Community Sprinkler Project completed at David Garrick Gardens in Lichfield, Phase 2 continues with work continuing in other high buildings most notably in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Tamworth Borough Council.

All these buildings will have sprinklers fitted over the next 3 to 5 years and will run concurrently, with the Service's Fire Engineers providing technical support for each. We have continued to work with businesses, architects, planners and partners to promote the benefits of fitting new build suppression systems along with lobbying for legislation change for sprinkler installation nationally.

### **Business Support Team**

The Service's specialist Business Support Team continues to respond specifically to the needs of the business community of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. Support is provided through fire safety advice and support tailored to the needs of the business. A number of courses involving fire safety and health and safety are delivered in order to achieve this.

We recognise the importance of supporting business enterprises to assist in making the County a more prosperous place to live and work.

The team is part of the Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, allowing us to influence businesses at both a local and national level; as was recently shown by the Team visiting the House of Commons, influencing business support at a national political level.

Alongside the proactive education programmes offered by this team, when a business is involved in fire, support is provided both during and after the incident in order to give the best chance of a full and effective recovery. We recognise the importance of supporting business enterprises to assist in making the County a more prosperous place to live and work and this prompt intervention mitigates the impact on employees and the local economy.

### **Priority 2 - Community Safety and Wellbeing**

#### **Reducing the risk of fire, reducing the pressure in the health and social care systems and making people safer**

Evidence from fire investigations and fatal fire reviews have identified that the cohort of people which drives the interventions from SFRS are of a very similar profile to those who affect health and social care services. It has been established that individual risk factors are holistic. They can include risk of falling, hypothermia, malnutrition, excess winter death, carbon monoxide poisoning, alcohol abuse, smoking related illness, diet and poor activity related illness, those inclined to become repeat hospital admissions or destined for long term residential care, those in isolation and suffering loneliness, mental ill health and many more. Smoking, alcohol, mobility and elderly (SAME) are the most prominent factors (often combined) in accidental dwelling fire deaths. (Stats below are taken from Staffordshire FRS Business Intelligence Team).

#### **Safe and Well visits**

FRS's have long understood the importance of prevention work and the need to keep people safe within their own homes and this has been reflected by carrying out circa 25-30,000 home visits a year across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. These home visits have been developed into Safe and Well visits with an expanded scope which focuses on health as well as fire, presenting a real opportunity to make positive changes to people's health, wellbeing and safety from fire by

reducing risk and making interventions during the initial visit or pulling in support from other agencies as necessary. A person-centred, integrated approach to providing services is fundamental to delivering high-quality care to people who may be vulnerable to the risks from fire. The most common risks associated with fire death and injury are smoking, alcohol, being older, having mobility issues, being socially isolated or at the risk of a fall.

The Service has developed a process through the Community Advice Team (contact centre) to measure the outcomes from these referrals which informs the evaluation of the activity and captures the difference made to people's lives, feeding back to staff to highlight the difference made through their interventions.

Where Safe and Well visits take place is determined by the analysis of our data, referrals from partners and direct requests from and contact with our communities. Visits are carried out by operational crews, Technicians and Community Safety Officers with approximately 25 to 30,000 home visits resulting in approximately 300,000 smoke detectors being fitted over the last 10 years.

The direct intervention within people's home setting enables an assessment to be completed with the occupier to develop a greater understanding of their vulnerabilities and therefore potential support pathways, referrals and actions to be undertaken. Some individuals and families with numerous vulnerabilities and needs often require an extended Safe and Well visit and support from partner agencies. Evidence of success from this collaborative approach continues to demonstrate a return on investment and reduced demand on services of £2.52 for every £1 spent.

### **Data and Intelligence**

As part of an effective approach to risk management, the Service uses data to identify the people, areas, and groups that are more likely to be at risk from fire and other emergencies. This allows the Service to use its resources as efficiently as possible to reduce risk in the community. In particular, data relating to deprivation, age, and lifestyles are used through Mosaic Software. This helps the Service to deliver intervention, provide help and the support where it is needed the most.

The Service has continued to take great strides in sharing data and intelligence with partners including the NHS to deliver prevention in a more targeted and cost effective manner to where it will have the greatest impact in improving the quality of people's lives, particularly those who are at the greatest risk from fire. The sharing of GP data has allowed FRS's to locally stratify (prioritise) the risk and target their engagement with people who are over 65, with a number of physical vulnerabilities and who are much more likely to sustain an injury or worse as a result of fire. The local stratification of risk continues to develop through the integrated data and research project with the National Fire Chief's Council.

### **Referral pathways**

Domiciliary care, health and social care practitioners are trained to identify the signs and symptoms of an increased fire risk and refer into the service via a contact centre – this can be for people smoking in bed at home, where there is evidence of scorch marks on clothing or carpets either from smoking or open fires, where there is unsafe cooking practices or as a result of medication and a person's overall health condition.

## **Safer Communities CIC**

Safer Communities Community Interest Company (CIC) is an independent, not for profit partnership between the Service and the private/voluntary sector with the purpose of providing opportunities to improve the health, safety, social and economic wellbeing of our communities.

The CIC delivers projects and generates income to reinvest in prevention, protection and road safety activities within the local community. This approach has allowed the CIC to transform the lives of hundreds of young people through several Princes' Trust Programmes, deliver hours of respite to young carers and fund many community projects.

## **Priority 3 Planning Resilience and Response**

The Service develops its CSP using a variety of data sources and tools to identify foreseeable risks within the county and determine how it will allocate resources to deal with these risks. This ensures plans are robust and based on sound data with resources targeted effectively and efficiently across prevention, protection, and response activities.

The Service maintains a system for gathering, validating and updating local risk information, (Provision of Risk Information System - PORIS) together with a method of providing this information to all personnel at the scene of an incident. All high and very high risks identified within 7.5km of the County boundary are shared with the appropriate neighbouring Fire and Rescue Service. This provides timely and accurate information to secure the health and safety of our staff when dealing with operational incidents.

The Service has 33 Community Fire Stations across the County, their locations being based on risk evidence and intelligence, to ensure that our stations are effectively located and crewed. We have 23 retained stations, 2 day duty stations and 8 twenty-four hour shift stations. This combination provides 39 frontline appliances and a variety of special appliances which support both local response and national resilience.

## **National Resilience**

The Service can call upon and has been involved in a number of external audits which identify a satisfactory level of capability to ensure that we are delivering against National Resilience requirements to respond to any areas of the country that are experiencing wide scale effects which are beyond the capacity of the local FRS. These arrangements have been successfully delivered on a number of occasions. All of these mobilisations have been co-ordinated by the National Resilience Fire Control in Merseyside via our own shared fire control.

## **Interoperability and Shared Learning**

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) are fully embedded and continue to drive our internal and multi-agency response to emergency incidents and we utilise a range of de-briefing approaches to capture learning and best practice. In support of multi-agency debriefs, the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) has conducted independent debriefs that provided a number of lessons learnt that are shared on the Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) website to allow shared learning by other Fire and Rescue Services and partners.

A significant piece of learning for the emergency services was the publication on 27<sup>th</sup> March of Lord Kerslakes' investigation report following the Manchester Arena bombing. The Service has reviewed the issues raised within the report and an action plan has been produced and shared with partner organisations. The outcomes from this action plan seek to provide assurance that the lessons learned in Manchester have led to appropriate, embedded procedural and capability change in Staffordshire.

We satisfy the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 working alongside neighbouring authorities and nationally to achieve effective interoperability. We participate in joint exercises to ensure that we are well prepared to deal with larger scale emergencies through the provision of trained staff and fire appliances.

Through our commitment to learning and operational assurance, we will continue to work with and learn from our colleagues in other Fire and Rescue Services to improve our operational response to incidents. Through the National Operational Learning (NOL) website we share, receive and act upon lessons identified, notable practice and action notes linked to the National Operational Guidance (NOG) programme and through innovation and greater collaboration, we continue to invest in people, training, fire appliances and equipment to ensure the provision of the most efficient response options to our communities.

### **Fires involving waste**

The Service continues to play a lead role locally and nationally in addressing the issue faced by a significant increase in waste fires in terms of emergency response and impact on local communities. Following a number of significant waste fire incidents within the County the Service has set up a multi-agency Risk and Response Group within the Local Resilience Forum. This group has evolved over time, meeting bi-monthly to discuss the issues of a large number of waste sites across the county, bringing together key partners including the Environment Agency, County and District Councils, the Water Authorities, the Police, and the CCU.

The purpose of the group is to identify, classify and then plan both the emergency response, as well as the exploring legislative powers of each organisation to coordinate enforcement activities, and explore options for the removal of waste at certain sites.

The advantages of such a group is that it gives a single point of contact into each organisation, who then coordinates activities within their given remit, and also allows for the simplified planning of multi-agency enforcement, and emergency planning visits.

The work of the group has been instrumental in the removal of waste at 8 illicit waste sites across the county, as well as preventing a significant fire at another site where the waste had been separated prior to a fire, leading to a more manageable incident that was resolved in days rather than weeks.

### **Fire Investigation**

Working in partnership with West Midlands Fire Service, we have access to a dedicated team of Fire Investigators who are on call 24/7; this includes the use of fire dogs. This partnership allows the service to call upon specialist officers when we experience a fire related injury or death, or a fire resulting in significant community or business loss. Joint training supports continual professional development, which allows all of our investigators to become expert witnesses.

### **Call Management and Incident Support**

Staffordshire and West Midlands operate a shared Fire Control, providing a joint command and control function based at West Midlands Fire Service Headquarters.

Systems within Fire Control provide dynamic incident information to the Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) on each fire appliance such as mobilising information and site specific risk data directly from a system called Vision. The automatic vehicle location system (fire appliances and officers) provides accurate predicted attendance-time information to control staff in order that varying risk-based response options can be considered or quickest-response resources mobilised.

## **Communications - Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (ESMCP)**

The Service is actively engaged with ESMCP, dedicating resources to the national project to ensure we are able to maintain effective communications at operational incidents once our current equipment and technology becomes obsolete. The purpose of ESMCP is to provide the next generation communication system for the three emergency services and other users such as Transport for London and the Coast Guard. ESMCP will be delivered via The Emergency Services Network (ESN) which is a mobile communications network with extensive coverage, high resilience, appropriate security and public safety functionality allowing organisations to communicate even under the most challenging circumstances.

## **Business Continuity**

Our Business Continuity Management System aligns with the Civil Contingencies Act and the international standard ISO 22301:2012. This provides a best-practice framework for implementing an optimised BCMS (business continuity management system), enabling us to minimise business disruption and continue operating in the event of an incident. These initiatives have been developed with our partners along with other business-related activities to increase and improve business opportunities and make a significant contribution to the economic development within our County.

## **Protective Security**

The Service is registered as a Data Controller, meaning that under the Data Protection Act 2018 we have a legal obligation to ensure appropriate and proportionate security of the personal data held. Through our Information Security Policy, the Service applies appropriate technical and organisational measures against the unauthorised or unlawful processing of personal data, and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, personal data.

The Protective Security Steering Group (PSSG) has been initiated by the Service in order to facilitate and ensure consistent security measures are taken in Service undertakings, supporting business objectives. The PSSG will continue to provide support and direction to the implementation of protective security controls, approaching security and risk holistically, whilst co-ordinating policy and procedure to support the implementation of the Service's Internal Security Management System. Further to this, staff training and assessments have been provided to fully embed protective security within the Service.

Our preparations for the EU General Data Protection Regulation and new Data Protection Act 2018 were audited and resulted in substantial assurance with no recommendations.

## **Shared Services – Collaboration and Integration**

The Service continues to drive a number of areas of shared and joint working, maintaining a high level of service, coupled with achieving economies of scale. This collaborative approach will continue going forwards to support improved ways of working whilst deliver efficiencies for our communities.

Joint services being provided during 2017/18 period include:

- Shared Occupational Health Service with Staffordshire Police
- Joint Supplies and Logistics Department with Staffordshire Police
- Joint Transport Centre of Excellence with Staffordshire Police
- Integrated Postal Service with Staffordshire Police
- Driver Development and Education Teams with Staffordshire Police and other agencies.
- The Service hosts JESIP training on a regional basis

- The Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), providing local level, multi-agency incident co-ordination
- Community Fire Stations offering shared facilities and response hubs for Fire, Police, Ambulance, Health, Local Authorities, and the Voluntary Sector
- LGV Testing Centre – Stone Community Fire Station
- DVSA training area – Stafford Community Fire Station

### **Peak District National Park Fire Operations Group (FOG)**

The Service continues to play an integral role in the Peak District Fire Operations Group (FOG). The main aims of the Group are to contribute to the sustainable management of the Peak District National Park by protecting its economy, ecology, environment, heritage and rural communities from potentially devastating impacts of wildland fires and to reduce the scale and impact of wildfires when they do occur. This work forms part of our wider planning, research and development in terms of the broader impacts of a changing climate to ensure we are able to adapt to emerging threats.

### **Resilience**

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 allow mutual assistance arrangements to be agreed with neighbouring Authorities to improve resilience and capacity in bordering areas. The Authority has arrangements in place with the following Services for response to incidents:

- Cheshire
- Derbyshire
- Shropshire
- Warwickshire
- West Midlands

### **Assurance**

Concluding in April 2018 the Service supported Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescues Services (HMICFRS) as one of 3 Fire & Rescue Services selected to test the draft inspection framework prior its approval by the Home Secretary. The framework is based around three core areas of efficiency, effectiveness and people to establish how well a Service is performing. The new Inspection process is being rolled out across all 45 Fire & Recue Services in England between 2018 and 2019. Findings from the pilot inspection were relayed to the Executive Team for future consideration in readiness for the full inspection in mid 2019. These findings were captured within an action plan which will be owned and monitored by the Service Delivery Board (SDB) with the Service now continuing to ensure that it is inspection ready and compliant with each stage of the Inspection framework and that improvement can be evidenced against this plan.

### **Performance Summary**

Leaders in the Service recognise that there is a need for a performance management culture and system in the organisation. This is reflected within all strategies and delivery plans and evidenced through our determination to continually learn and improve. As detailed within our CSP we monitor performance against a suite of strategic indicators which are monitored and scrutinised to help shape our services.

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