

For Publication

Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Audit and Standards Committee
5 December 2019
Item No. 11

REPORT AUTHOR: HEAD OF TRAINING AND ASSURANCE

SUBJECT: STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

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Background Papers: Audit and Standards Committee Paper – Statement of Assurance 2018 / 2019

Implications (tick ✓):

LEGAL			FINANCIAL	
HUMAN RESOURCES			EQUALITY IMPACT	
ENVIRONMENTAL			POLICY	✓
CORPORATE RISK	Known	✓	OTHER (please specify)	
	New			

Any implications affecting this report are noted at the end of the report.

PURPOSE:

For Members of the Audit and Standards Committee to receive and approve the Service's Annual Statement of Assurance for 2018/19.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Members scrutinise and review the Statement of Assurance for 2018/19, and subject to any amendments, the Chair of the Committee to sign off the Statement of Assurance for reporting to the full Fire and Rescue Authority Meeting.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England (2018) placed a requirement on English Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) to produce and publish an annual Statement of Assurance.
- 1.2 One of the principal aims of the Statement of Assurance is to provide communities, Government, local authorities and partners with an opportunity to make a valid judgement on the performance of their local Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 1.3 In February 2014 the Audit and Standards Committee signed off the Authority's first Annual Statement of Assurance for 2012/13. This was authorised following direction by the Fire and Rescue Authority for an amendment to the Terms of Reference of the Audit and Standards Committee to include:
 - To oversee the production of, and approve the Authority's Annual Statement of Assurance fulfilling the requirements as set out in the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England.
- 1.4 Therefore, as part of the changes to the Terms of Reference the Statement of Assurance for 2018/19 is attached for approval by Audit and Standards Committee.

2. Content of the Statement of Assurance

2.1 The content of the Authority's Statement of Assurance has been developed in line with the guidance issued by the government and includes the following detail:

- **Financial Assurance** – Informs the assessment with regard to the Authority's statement of accounts and associated structures, and the financial procedures adopted within Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority (BFRA).
- **Governance Framework** – Details including the current arrangements of the BFRA and how they review the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal controls.
- **Operational Assurance** – Information regarding legislative structures, the Community Risk Management Plan and consultation, resilience, peer reviews including cross-border, multi-authority and national arrangements; and,
- **Future Improvements** – Details with regard to planned improvements in all areas of the Statement of Assurance where applicable including where plans are underway.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Subject to any amendments and subsequent approval by the Audit and Standards Committee, the Statement of Assurance for 2018/19 will be reported to the full Fire and Rescue Authority prior to being published on the Service's website.

4. Implications

4.1 Corporate Risk – Known

The Statement of Assurance aims to help Fire and Rescue Authorities strengthen local accountability and provide assurance that the Service is efficient and effective in the delivery of its services to the communities.

4.2 Policy

Any policy change as a consequence of issues raised within this report will follow normal policy development structures.

**AREA COMMANDER GARY JEFFERY
HEAD OF TRAINING AND ASSURANCE**