



SOUTH YORKSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE
AUTHORITY

Annual Governance Statement 2021-22

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1. Scope of Responsibility

The South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority has a responsibility to conduct its business and deliver its services within the laws that govern Fire and Rescue Authorities, and to make sure that public money is safeguarded and used in an efficient and effective way. Putting in place proper arrangements for its governance is crucial to deliver this.

The Authority has set out its arrangements for governance in its Constitution, and a copy of this can be found on our website [here](#).

The Constitution includes a local Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) / Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework '**Delivering Good Governance in Local Government**' (2016 edition). Local Codes should reflect each Authority's own approach to governance to enable delivery of its objectives and priorities in a transparent and accountable way.

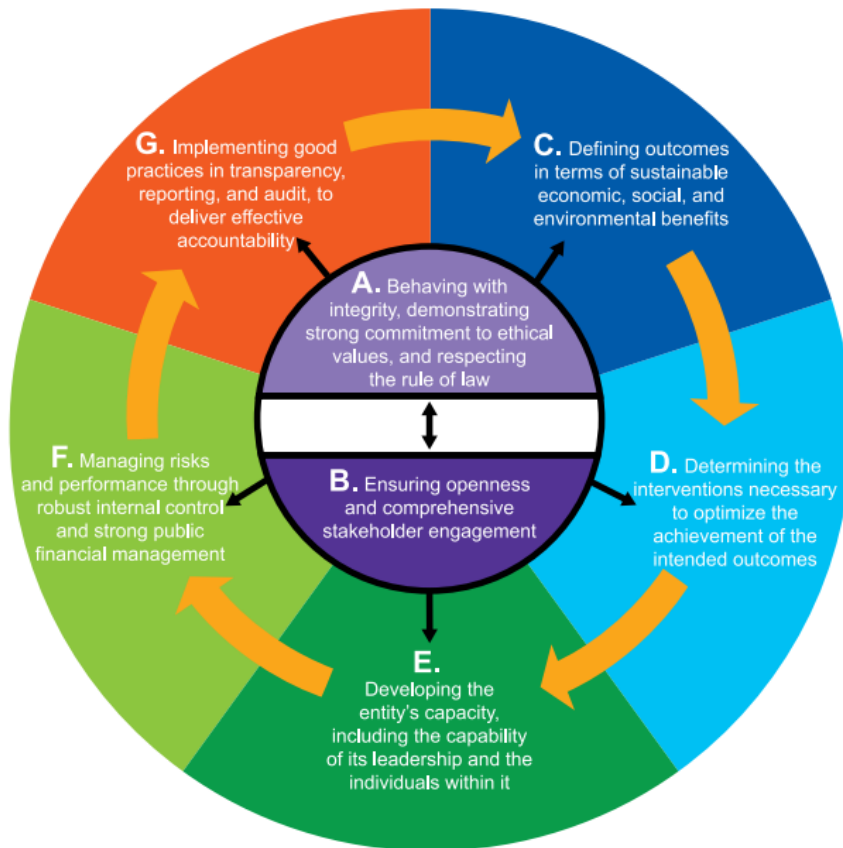
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority's Code was revised in May 2019 to reflect this framework, and sets out how the Authority will deliver its services in an efficient, effective, open and honest way, taking into the account the needs of the people and communities it serves. The structure of the Code sets out, against each of the seven principles, what the Authority will commit to do, how it will do it, and how it will measure how well it is doing. The Code will be reviewed as required by any national policy / legislative changes.

Good Governance arrangements are the foundations on which the Authority establishes the services it delivers to the community. The Annual Governance Statement is the opportunity to ensure that the fundamentals of good governance remain in place, and that they are responding to internal and external changes.

This statement explains how the Authority has complied with its local Code, meeting the requirements of regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, which requires it to prepare and publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS). It also identifies areas for improvement, which are supported by a Governance Improvement Plan (GIP).

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises of the systems, processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and managed, and the activities through which it accounts to, and engages with the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of the right services in a cost effective way.



[International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector, Executive Summary; CIPFA].

3. The Governance Framework

As well as setting out how the Authority has complied with its own code of governance and governance framework, the Annual Governance Statement is an opportunity to formally review its 'system of internal control'.

The national CIPFA Good Governance Framework (Delivering Good Governance in Local Government) requires the Fire and Rescue Authority to publish an Annual Governance Statement signed by the Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Clerk, the Treasurer and the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive. The outcome of the review of internal control will be subsumed within it.

Many sources of evidence contribute to the review. Key sources of evidence are Officer Assurance Statements (OAS) where direct assurances are sought from the statutory officers supporting the Authority, the Service's Executive Team and Heads of Function on the adequacy of governance, risk and control arrangements within their areas of responsibility, including any gaps or weaknesses that they are aware of and any actual or intended actions taken to deal with them. This covers the whole of the financial year in question.

The Service has adopted an additional process to capture, assess and review its key governance domains that make up the system of internal control. The Internal Control Management Assurance Framework (ICMAF) was developed by Internal Audit for the Service. The framework was developed by Internal Audit at the request of the Director of Support Services to provide assurance to the Service and its managers on key areas of governance within the Service. 12 domain areas were agreed as part of the scoping for the development of the framework, and lead responsible officers identified for each. These 12

domains have been built into the Officer Assurance Statements (OAS), and therefore they have been built into the wider Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

In previous year the ICMAF was updated 6 monthly. In 2021 this was updated annually, in line with the Annual Governance Statement process via the completion of the 12 domain areas in the Officer Assurance Statements, and regularly reported on via the Governance Improvement Plan (GIP). It is recommended that the ICMAF process remain as a single annual update, with more regularly monitoring via the GIP.

4. Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of the law

The Authority fosters a culture of behaviour based on shared values, high ethical principles and conduct.

The overall Vision and purpose for both the Authority and the Service is ‘**Making South Yorkshire Safer and Stronger**’ and this is supported by our **Aspirations** which form the basis of everything we do.

- *Be a great place to work* - creating the right culture, values and behaviours to make this a brilliant place to work that is inclusive for all
- *Put People First* - spending money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve.
- *Strive to be the best* - working with others, make the most of technology and develop leaders to help us to become the very best at what we can be.

The Service’s behaviours (i.e. our identifiable characteristic traits) were developed by staff and reflect what means the most to them. All our staff are expected to display these behaviours every day in everything they do.

Honesty – be open and honest in everything we do

Integrity – do what we say we do and follow through on promises

Respect – respect people and trust them to do a good job.

What we have done:

- The Service continues to work hard to embed key parts of its organisational narrative, “Our Story” into its plans and objectives at a departmental, station and personal level. This [video explains the contribution all staff make](#) regardless of their rank or role, to our story.
- A range of policies, procedures and strategies, which staff are made aware of and adhere to through appropriate awareness and training, supports this. Our personal review process facilitates discussions around expected behaviours and aspirations with individuals.
- Human Resources staff are regularly trained and updated about changes in employment legislation. This ensures that the advice they provide to the organisation is accurate and timely.
- The Induction process has been reviewed and updated and includes policies and procedures relating to conduct and standards. The employee code of conduct is included in the LearnPro online induction process for new members of staff.
- Codes of Conduct and Register of Interests are in place for Fire Authority Members and all Service staff that set out the behaviours expected of all employees and reinforce its values and standards. The Appeals and Standards Committee exists to deal with any breaches of ethics / behaviour.
- The Authority and Service Risk Registers were combined in late 2020 with the Authority’s approval and the Authority and Corporate Risk Register can be viewed on the Fire and Rescue Authority website. The risk trend, guidance and matrix are included within the documentation.

- Assessment is based on analysis of existence of controls and compliance. If the control has been assessed as exists fully and complied with fully, then it is deemed 'Green'. If the control has been assessed as partial for either then it is deemed 'Amber'. If the control is assessed as not existing or not compliant then it is deemed 'Red'.
- The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and supporting documents include reference to the Bribery Act and aligns itself with contemporary policies and procedures. A Performance Management Policy is in place and regularly reviewed and updated.
- A People Strategy was introduced in 2018-2022, which supports the Service's Vision and 'Our Story, and sets out six thematic aims to help achieve our aspirations and embed our behaviours; leadership, wellbeing, culture, diversity, flexibility and development. The Strategy is evaluated each year and a 3 year People Strategy Evaluation report was presented to the Fire Authority on [22/11/2021](#) agenda item 13
- During 2019 under the direction of the Service's Equality and Improvement Board, the Service's Equality and Inclusion strategies were refreshed. After consultation with the public on the draft strategy, the Equality and Inclusion Strategy 2019 - 22 was published in 2019. The Board has now become the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee within the Service governance meeting structure and monitors and reports progress on an associated EDI action plan, Service Staff Groups and recruitment and retention. This is scrutinised by the Performance and Scrutiny Board, receiving regular reports.
- Our EDI Strategy 2019-2022 is divided into the following priorities, which are: 1. Improving diversity, 2. Inclusive culture, 3. Fair treatment, 4. Inclusive services, 5. Engaging communities. These priorities are supported by a delivery action plan. The action plan is updated annually, to reflect changing priorities. Action leads are in the process of updating their actions, as well as considering new or emerging issues that need to be included in the following 12 months.
- A permanent EDI post has been re-established to ensure the Service's focus on EDI is maintained to deliver the Strategy and working across the organisation on actions to address the identified gaps. A temporary additional EDI Support Officer has been secured agreement to enable us to fully embed EDI.
- An internal evaluation of the HR Function Review that concluded in 2018 has taken place. Following the introduction of new work streams and initiatives, a restructure to reconfigure and introduce additional roles has commenced and is expected to conclude in the second quarter of 2022.
- We have ensured compliance with the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirement. The Service has participated in all EDI consultations with the NFCC.
- All new projects or initiatives are supported by the NFCC Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) where appropriate. An Equality Analysis Learnpro module is available for Service Managers. Updated equality, diversity and inclusion training has been delivered during 2021-22. Two FRA Member sessions were held in November 2021, which provided general equality, diversity and inclusion within SYFR, together with equality analysis and LEARNPRO. FRA Members have been granted access to the Service's e-learning (LEARNPRO) system online.
- The Service already has a set of behaviours and aspirations told through 'Our Story' and the Staff Code of ethics compliments this work.

Monitoring

- The Authority and Service have established processes in place to receive and record compliments and complaints, and to report on the outcome of investigations to resolve complaints. The Audit and Governance Committee receives regular reports on Service Compliments and Complaints. The reports can be found under meetings and agendas on the Fire Authority's [website](#).
- The Authority and Audit and Governance are webcast live and available online [here](#) on the website afterwards. The webcasts are available for a period of six months following the date of the meeting.
- Since the Government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff who could remotely access have been. Virtual meetings have been held with public access and these are available for viewing on the [website](#).
- **Update 15 June 2022** - Since the relaxation of the restrictions in June 2021, public meetings have resumed physically, some of these in larger venues to allow for social distancing. All the necessary health and safety measures have been put in place to protect staff and those attending meetings. Non-public meetings and training continue to be held virtually where possible. The webcasting of main Authority meetings has resumed, along with public attendance.
- The Service regularly reports on HMICFRS areas of improvement through the Service Improvement Plan and the Service Improvement Board, inviting staff into the board to present on their actions by exception. This provides a level of internal control and assurance, which is reported on approximately every quarter. These reports can be found on the Authority website, therefore they are not included in this Annual Governance Statement.
- The Service's Data Protection Officer (DPO) has undertaken a review in line with UK Data Protection laws, and the Service have no known issues of significance. Regular Information Governance reports are presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). Staff receive annual training via a GDPR LearnPro module and are aware of how to report breaches. Those functions deemed to be "high risk", for example Safeguarding, OHU, HR etc also receive annual face to face data protection training by the DPO. There is regular contact and communication with the DPO to ensure that any data protection issues are quickly identified and actioned.
- In May 2021, a new Core Code of Ethics was produced specifically for Fire and Rescue Services by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. The Core Code sets out five ethical principles providing a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.
- Orca' the new business intelligence-reporting site has been in use since March 2021. An electronic and revised version of the Quarterly Performance report is available in Orca for all employees to view as well as being available for Fire Authority Members. Fire Authority Members are given the option of familiarisation and provided with access to the report each year. Along with the Quarterly Performance report, the Response Standards report is generally available to both internal staff and fire authority. The response standards report details our Call Handling times as well as the time it takes an appliance to reach locations based upon risk.

- 'Orca' is providing an electronic and revised version of the Performance report for the Fire Authority Members to access regularly. This has been supported with Member training and support. A plan is in place for the roll-out and the effective implementation of this online performance reporting system in 2022/23, including providing training and support to SYFR departments.
- Performance Management is an area that has been reviewed with regular reports to the Authority on the progress of this work. A new Service internal governance meeting structure aims to realign responsibility for monitoring and making improvements to performance across the whole Service whilst the reporting of performance will sit with a dedicated committee. These new arrangements are clearly defined in the new meeting structure, terms of reference and the new reporting on corporate performance.

New Areas for Improvement

- a. We have adopted the Core Code of Ethics, with all new entrants signing up the code. Work is ongoing to promote these. A project is already underway to embed the Core Code of Ethics in our work.
- b. SYFR has developed a new staff '@Pledge' that all new firefighters deliver during their trainee pass out parade. As yet this has not been broadened to include wider staff groups but members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) have signed up to the pledge. There is some national work on a Service 'Oath' that may link to our own pledge. We will remain aware of the national work on a Service 'Oath' that may link to our own pledge.

5. **Principle B: Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement**

Openness

Our aspiration to 'Put People First' states that we will “*spend money carefully, use our resources wisely and collaborate with others to provide the best deal to the communities we serve*”.

What we have done:

- The Authority and Service communicated its purpose, 10 year vision and intended outcomes for its communities publishing the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2021-24 and Annual Service Plan 2022-23.
 - An annual review of the Service’s CRMP has been completed resulting in a revised title Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2022 to 2025. Many Services have now renamed their Integrated Risk Management Plans to CRMPs. The CRMP is an up-to-date analysis of local risk and describes how we will effectively coordinate our prevention, protection, response and resilience work to improve public safety and save lives and was approved at the Fire Authority meeting on [10/01/2022](#)
 - An annual review of the Service’s Annual Plan 2022-23 has been completing providing eight priorities for the year ahead, in addition to our longer term objectives and aspirations and was approved at the Fire Authority meeting on [10/01/2022](#)
- Alongside the development of the CRMP financial scenario planning took place, considering our funding settlement from Central Government. An updated 3 year Medium Term Financial Plan(MTFP) 2022-25 was presented to the Authority for approval on [11/11/2021 agenda item 12](#)
- The Authority received and approved the 2021/22 Annual Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting at their meeting on 22/02/2022 [agenda item 13](#).
- Financial Performance is reported to the Fire Authority on a quarterly basis and the Financial Outturn Report for year ended 31 March 2022 was presented at the 20 June 2022 FRA meeting [agenda item 11](#).
- Formal collaboration projects are in place with South Yorkshire Police, and our neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services in order to ensure that we fulfil our duty to collaborate. We involve our partners as stakeholders in the development of our strategies and priorities, and consider whether opportunities to collaborate exist to deliver services in a more efficient and effective way. A Police and Fire Collaboration Board meets regularly involving senior officers from SY Fire and Rescue, SY Police, Barnsley MBC as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chair of the Authority. A ‘Strategic Intention’ document has been signed up to and is published on the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) website [here](#).

A number of areas have been progressed to joint delivery as follows:

- The Service has a Joint Community Safety Department consisting of a range of SYFR and SY Police staff responsible for engaging with all sections of society and key stakeholders, including various specialist officers in areas such as arson reduction, education, safeguarding and fire protection measures. The Joint Community Safety

Department regularly updates on the work of the collaborative department, with an overview of their 2020 activities published to the public, found [here](#).

- A joint Head of Vehicle Fleet Management Services is in post to oversee the collaboration between SYFR and SY Police. A joint Vehicle Fleet Management Strategy and performance framework has been agreed. The joint collaboration with SY Police on fleet has been recognised as best practice nationally. South Yorkshire Police body shop staff have relocated to a new building at the SYFR Eastwood site. The move has helped to create a new central stores facility for the fire service, creating a better place to store, secure and administer equipment for frontline firefighters.
- Outside of the main projects, less formal collaboration has also been encouraged, with staff across equality and diversity, training and wellbeing working together to deliver collaborative activities where appropriate. A collaboration register is in place to capture the collaborative activities, which includes an overview of collaborative projects, activities and in 2021/22 this saw an increased additional of Local resilience Forum (LRF) and resilience activities.
- Regional Fire and Rescue collaboration has provided various efficiency and effectiveness benefits for SYFR and our regional partners. This includes regional co-procurement, regional command packs and training. SYFR have jointly procured regional PPE / Fire kit and enhanced joint procurement arrangements through the set-up of a regional procurement group, with the inaugural meeting in January 2022.
- The Authority's Stronger, Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) Fund, introduced in 2014 set aside (over 3 rounds) £4m from FRA Reserves to enhance partnership work on community fire safety, inviting community organisations and groups to bid for money to carry out projects that supported the Authority's priorities and objectives. In March 2020 the Authority took the decision to focus remaining funding on the Sprinkler Fund element of the SSCR, whilst maintaining a strong correlation with organisational objectives and to fund a new wider partnership referral project to build in the strength of community engagement achieved by the SSCR funded projects since inception.
- In 2021-22 SYFR experienced a reduced interest in installing Sprinkler systems due to Covid and the nature of the properties we wish to support. For year ending March 2022 SYFR contributed £104,000 towards 2 joint funded projects in Dementia Care Facilities, a 74 bed and 54 bed residential properties to year ending March 2022. Four further properties are being assessed.
- A Partnership Committee is part of the Service internal governance meeting structure which reports on the work to develop effective partnerships with other organisations.
- The Service seeks feedback from the public on its work via an annual residents survey with a representative sample of local people, including those with protected characteristics. The results of this survey are reported to the Fire Authority via the Stakeholder Planning Board and are also used to help inform the Service's key strategies, including the annual review of its Community Risk Management Plan.

Transparency

The Authority [webcasts](#) its meetings of Authority and Audit and Governance Committee live over the internet. These are subsequently archived for a period of 6 months for ongoing reference and scrutiny. The reports and minutes of all meetings are placed on the Authority's website.

A regular e-newsletter is produced by the Service, and this is circulated to all elected representatives of the four district authorities across South Yorkshire, South Yorkshire MPs, Town and Parish Councils and a range of other key stakeholders.

The Authority and Service abides by the Government's Transparency Code and publishes information required [here](#). It also abides by the Freedom of Information and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) legislation set out by the Information Commissioner's Office, and this is regularly monitored by the Audit and Governance Committee, reports of which can be found on the Authority's website under meetings and agendas.

Consultation and Engagement

The Service uses a wide variety of methods to engage with local people, from face-to-face contact and education work, to communication in the media and online.

The Service's core work is around campaigns to prevent emergency incidents and a campaign calendar is published internally each year, which outlines the issues it will focus upon. Public information for each individual campaign is published on the Service Website and social media platforms.

Where formal consultation is required, this is conducted in accordance with the consultation principles set out for local and national government bodies.

Consultation with the public and staff is carried out where changes to its core services are planned, for example during the development of its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) and Annual Plan.

The outcome of the most recent CRMP consultation, involved surveys, focus groups and consultation with stakeholders and staff was reported to the [Fire and Rescue Authority on 10 January 2022](#). Although the CRMP has been approved and published, a CRMP Board continues to meet for internal stakeholders to monitor the progress of the CRMP and to undertake the mandatory yearly review. This includes consultation with the public where appropriate, with various methods and timeframes of consultation in relation to the impact and extent of which the public could be affected by any proposed changes.

Service User Feedback

The Service asks for feedback from residents who used our services where we have attended an accidental dwelling fire or where we have undertaken a Home Safety Check, given fire safety advice and fitted smoke alarms. We analyse and report information to the Audit and Governance Committee.

A short staff 'pulse' survey takes place every two months to give staff an opportunity to provide feedback on their work life. Anonymised results are published alongside the steps the Service is taking to address the findings, so that trends can be identified and understood. A performance measure has been introduced to monitor trends.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) undertake surveys of staff and the public as part of their inspection process. These results were referenced within the Service's HMICFRS report, published in December 2019. Another HMICFRS survey was released in 2022 which has seen a positive completion rate, albeit the result and findings are yet to be released. Last year HMICFRS also undertook a Covid-19 themed HMICFRS inspection to find out how well they had responded to the first stages of the pandemic. This included positive feedback about the Service's support of

South Yorkshire communities. The findings have been published in a letter on the HMICFRS website, [which is available here](#).

Evaluation of our external communications campaigns takes place on a regular basis to determine the impact of our work. A summary of leading campaigns 'Campaign Highlights 2021' and measurable outcomes was provided the Fire Authority Stakeholder Planning Board in March 2022.

2021/22 saw a review of the Service's Information, Projects, Governance, Data and Performance teams. This has been completed, establishing a dedicated, engaging and proactive Service Improvement department consisting of the Governance, Projects and Collaboration team and the Business Intelligence team. This Service Improvement department will strengthen the Service's response to governance and collaboration opportunities.

New Areas for improvement

- a. As the SLT members change in the next year we will need to ensure these relationships with partners remain strong, particularly at the leadership level.
- b. The White paper could progress further partnership work which would require Service and FRA attention.
- c. We now have a regional procurement group to consider any regional opportunities. This will include planning and mapping the replacement and procurement of equipment.
- d. A collaborative estates debrief paper is due and once the findings are known we will respond accordingly.

6. Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Identifying and defining outcomes

The Authority will, in exercising Strategic Leadership, communicate its purpose and 10-year vision and intended outcomes for citizens and service users.

What we have done:

- The Authority and Service has communicated its purpose, 10-year Our Story vision and intended outcomes for its communities, and consulted on its latest CRMP, published in January 2022
- The Authority understands that the decisions it makes now on the delivery of its services will affect future generations, and it has a responsibility when making decisions to identify and assess the longer-term impacts of these.
- Consultation took place on the latest CRMP, which considers the means by which operational response to incidents will be delivered whilst meeting significant financial challenges. The CRMP is developed based on extensive work to analyse local risk, both now and in the future, to ensure that changes to the delivery of services is future proofed. The consideration of risk within the county includes risks to important heritage sites, environmental risks such as flooding and extreme weather events, and how our resources need to be matched to respond to the risks. Through our work with partners via the Local Resilience Forum, we put plans in place to respond to these risks to protect our communities should these events occur.
- The Service has a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and Approved Capital Programme. The MTFP is set for 2022-2025 and can be found [here agenda item 12](#). This provides a clear demonstration as to the likely scale of potential financial challenges, risks and uncertainties facing the Authority but, more positively the workforce and other investments it will make to continue to enhance operational performance and standards and keep the communities and residents of South Yorkshire safer and stronger with the resources made available to it.
- The Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures for the Authority form part of the [FRA Constitution](#), and were both reviewed in May 2021.
- The Contract Standing Orders for the Authority, part of the FRA Constitution were reviewed in October 2021.

Consider Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental benefits

- The Service's Procurement Strategy and Policy includes sustainable procurement guidelines to ensure that at a planning stage, social value is taken into account when procuring goods and services. At the quotation stage, we aim to invite two local suppliers to participate, and our contract specifications and operating procedures aim to safeguard the natural environment and avoid any adverse consequences. Under the Transparency code, the Authority publishes details of current contracts and framework agreements with a total value in excess of £5k on its website.
- Equality assessments take place when changes are proposed, to understand the impact they may have on different groups in society. Equality Assessments, site surveys and

environmental surveys are also carried out for all new build projects. Post Implementation Reviews take place for projects, to ensure those related to the delivery of our CRMP have delivered anticipated outcomes and benefits.

- The Service's Performance Management Framework ensures that key performance measures and targets are regularly reported to senior managers and the Fire Authority Performance and Scrutiny Board, so they can measure progress in delivering intended outcomes. A review of the Performance Management Framework commenced in 2021/22 to progress the inclusion of a number of existing Local Performance Indicators into the Power BI software reporting system. This work is progressing with Heads of Department into 2022/23.
- In June 2020 South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFR) launched a Benefits Realisation Approach. Benefits Management is a key activity in project and programme management, which helps SYFR understand whether the changes made result in improvements in the service delivered. SYFR are at the early stages of the benefits realisation journey and have focused resource on the set up of benefits for new projects and programmes. At the time of the last Benefits Realisation report in April 2021, 18 projects or programmes had either draft or final benefits identified, each at various stages of monitoring.
- The Service produced an Environmental Policy Statement in January 2022 which sets out the environmental aims of South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and its commitment to continuous improvement. The team aims for the strategy to align with the Carbon Management Policy / Energy Policy / Biodiversity Policy and Green Plan (Strategy). Progress is being made against these policies and the estates team aim to generate them through a sustainability committee, to be set up in the 2022/23 financial year.
- The Strategic Fleet Committee and the Property Committee report to the Asset Management Board within the Service internal governance meeting structure of economic and sustainability improvements for Service vehicles and buildings.
- An Estates Asset Management Plan 2022 – 2030 has been drafted in 2022 and is pending formal ratification.

New Areas for Improvement

- a. Review the Performance Management Framework to include environmental/ sustainability targets.
- b. A new sustainability Committee will be added to the Service new internal governance meeting structure supported by the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer. Expected progress includes the introduction of a Green Plan and greater sustainability compliance.

7. Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

Determining interventions

What we have done:-

Members of the Authority are provided with briefings, contextual information and support information as required for meetings within the FRA governance structure. They are also provided with briefing notes when attending outside bodies, e.g. the four District Community Safety Partnerships, Local Government Association (LGA) Fire Commission, Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Association etc.

The FRA report template is structured to ensure that all relevant information is captured to allow informed decision-making, including financial implications, risk, equality implications, business continuity and health and safety implications.

- The Service's Corporate Planning Cycle has been updated and strengthened.
- Corporate Advisory Group meetings are currently held approximately every six weeks. The Group is informal, and has no decision-making powers. It provides an opportunity for Members to consider key topics facing the Service both locally and nationally, and provide guidance and feedback on the Service's proposals around service delivery / budget planning etc.
- Business cases are written for key projects detailing options and benefits, and risks associated with those options. These are submitted to the relevant internal governance board for approval and regular monitoring, such as the Service's Corporate Management Board or Business Change Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meetings.

Our new Governance, Projects and Collaboration team work within Service Improvement to improve the professional delivery of projects and programmes.

Planning interventions

A Forward Register (work programme) is in place for all FRA meetings, which is reviewed at the Service's Corporate Management Board meeting. Reports such as the Annual Statement of Accounts, Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget Monitoring are submitted on a regular quarterly basis.

A Police / Fire Collaboration Board was established in January 2017. This Board involves senior officers from Fire, Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority and Chair of the FRA. The Board looks at all aspects and opportunities for joint collaboration between South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Examples that have been progressed include:

- Joint Community Safety Department
- Joint Head of Vehicle Fleet including a joint Fire and Police site at Rotherham
- A vehicle telematics progressed utilising a Police Regional Procurement contract.
- Co-location of SYFR / SYP staff at Maltby Fire Station
- Yorkshire Ambulance Service to located at some fire station, utilising the locations as touch down points on our stations as required
- The development of non-project work streams, such as training and equality and diversity.

A joint Service and Authority Officer Governance Co-ordination Group meets approximately six times per year prior to the Audit and Governance Committee and considers a range of governance and control issues' including risk, the Annual Governance Statement process, Internal Audit etc, leading to the development of an Annual Governance Improvement Plan.

Members are provided with annual Audit and Risk Management awareness sessions to increase their knowledge in this area. This includes information on 'Effective Audit Committees' and issues around the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Optimising achievement of intended outcomes

Members attending the Corporate Advisory Group, are consulted in advance around future budget planning prior to the formal budget and Council tax setting. Regular reports to the Authority ensure early identification of variances to assist in budget preparations for future years.

Project and Programme Monitoring

- A central projects team exists to support the Service's Project Managers and Sponsors. 2021 saw a change to the team post-restructure, with the whole team new to post from November 2021 onwards. Their work to date includes reviewing all key project documents and developing a project framework.
- Recording and reviewing the delivery of outcomes takes place through project governance, such as post implementation reviews and lessons learnt reviews, regular reviews of partnerships, corporate risk management processes, and performance management arrangements.
- An internal programme methodology was introduced in 2020 to effectively capture, monitor and support the progress of complex programmes at the appropriate level. Since summer 2020 this has included the introduction of the On Call Improvement Programme, the Wildfire Improvement Programme, the Trade Dispute Resolution Programme, and the Digital Transformation 2 Programme. 2021 saw the development of two provisional programmes: the Specialisms Review Programme and the Leadership Priority Programme, which both have Programme Briefs signed and are in the process of developing Business Cases or Initiation Documents.
- A Project Framework has been drafted to support staff at all levels of the organisation to effectively manage a programme or a project. It provides clarity on roles and responsibilities, documentation, governance and decision-making. It is expected that the framework will be approved in 2022/23.
- Some variation to project processes exists across the Service, such as in the teams where project management is part of their existing roles or managed by external companies. These teams are working with the central projects team to align this work, however they are doing this post restructures or with capacity difficulties, and so this is expected to be a gradual process in the next year.

New Areas for Improvement

- a. There are new property projects and programme role within estates team. This is bringing a more joined up approach to project management and expected to see further change towards this in 2022/23.
- b. We are aware that some teams need to upskill in this their project management skills once their restructures are complete in 2022/23.

8. Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

Developing capacity

Developing the Authority's capacity (to deliver its services) including supporting those in leadership with governance responsibility.

What we have done

The Authority maintains forward Work Programmes across all its Committees, Boards etc., and future strategy is co-ordinated by the Corporate Advisory Group along with the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk (or his/her representative). The Corporate Advisory Group currently meets every four to six weeks, and has no delegated (decision-making) powers.

A robust [Member Learning and Development Strategy](#) is in place, which includes annual Induction bespoke to the Authority, as well as a separate Service Induction. The Strategy and Induction are reviewed annually.

Annual Development discussions are offered to all Authority Members to identify learning and development needs. This results in an agreed, but informal, Learning and Development Schedule. There is ongoing monitoring of learning and development needs in response to individual requests, legislative requirements etc. Member Learning and Development is supported by the Chair of the Authority. Non-mandatory 360 Degree Appraisal was introduced in 2019, but take-up has been low. This was offered again during 2020-21 but, due to the situation with COVID-19 and virtual meetings, the learning and development offer was significantly scaled back. This improved again in 2021/22 with sessions taking place and will continue to form part of the learning and development offer.

Learning and development takes many forms, including the Corporate Advisory Group meetings, visits to fire stations, engagement with Service Leads, the LGA Annual Fire Conference and LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Programme.

Update 15 June 2022 Several Member learning and development sessions were held during 2021–22, but held virtually to maximise time and attendance. Where face-to-face sessions are felt to be more beneficial, discussions are held with the Chair and training provider.

Members can request contextual information, briefings, research and support to assist them in making decisions that are more informed.

Members are also supported with briefings for attendance at external bodies, together with policy and scrutiny advice on key issues.

As mentioned above, Members attend the annual LGA Fire Conference as part of their learning and development package, which provides them with a national overview of fire, and rescue related activities.

The Service have in place a People Strategy, with a comprehensive, four year action plan that sits beneath that. The action plan contains six interrelated strategic aims, supporting the organisational priorities, aspirations, values and behaviours and an Organisational Workforce Plan. In respect of succession planning the Service have a new agreed process in place, and the first phase of the roll out of this has now been completed which has included the identification by Function Heads, and others, of roles within the Service which

are identified as critical to service delivery. Following the completion of the initial meetings within the new Personal Review process in order to create short, medium and long-term succession and (where required) resourcing plans for their departments.

A Workforce Planning Committee has been set up to lead strategic workforce planning. This consists of members of the Executive Team, Heads of Function, the Organisational Development and Employee Relations HR Business Partners and the Representative Bodies. A Workforce Planning Policy has been agreed and implemented.

The Service, via the Leadership and Management Development Framework, continue to develop the senior management through a variety of behaviourally based programmes and core leadership and management qualifications including CMI Levels 3, 5 and higher-level qualifications for those at a more senior level.

The Employee Code of Conduct has been reviewed in 2021 following consultation. Public trust and confidence in our service relies on us all demonstrating ethical behaviours. A new national Core Code sets out these ethical principles and helps us continuously improve our organisational culture and workforce diversity and assists us in supporting our community in the best way. It is effective only when we all consistently demonstrate the ethical behaviours. Everyone is expected to follow the Core Code. The new Core Code aligns well with our existing vision and values, set out in 'Our Story', and our Code of Conduct.

A review of training has also been completed, and a series of actions were undertaken to ensure the continued professional development of staff in line with industry best practice, taking cognisance of any operational impact.

An internal evaluation of the HR Function Review that concluded in 2018 has taken place. Following the introduction of new work streams and initiatives, a restructure to reconfigure and introduce additional roles has commenced and is expected to conclude in the second quarter of 2022.

The Service has a current People Strategy that covers the period up to 2022. It aligns to the other strategic documents such as IRMP and Your Story and captures the Service vision and aspirations and how these can be supported through workforce planning, training and development and personal reviews etc. There has been some impact on the PDR and development processes due to Covid-19 but the percentage rate of completed PDRs has still remained high.

The people strategy has given a clear direction to the Service. The New appointments to the OD department will improve OD over the coming year. Clear recruitment and selection procedures are creating fair and transparent selection processes and striving to employ a more diverse workforce.

We have new arrangements for workforce planning including a dedicated planning event that will allow specific business cases to be considered where additional resources are considered, aligned to the priorities set out within the Service strategic plans. Each department is required to complete a department specific workforce planning template looking at demands and levels of resourcing and these in turn inform the overall workforce planning process for the Service.

Code of Ethics linked to leadership

The role and profile of the Fire and Rescue Authority has been raised amongst the workforce in the following ways:

- Leaflet produced outlining the role and responsibilities of the Authority – ‘**Who are we and what do we do?**’
- **Member visits / interaction with the Service** take place on a regular basis, e.g. visits to Stations, attendance at Middle Manager Engagement Days, youth engagement events and meetings with their District Commander etc. Where appropriate, these are publicised, via articles and photographs in the Service’s weekly bulletin and monthly e-newsletter.
- A new Workforce Planning Committee has been created to lead strategic workforce planning. The Committee consists of, Heads of Function, the HR Business Partners (Organisational Development and Employee Relations) and representative bodies.

Developing the capability of the Authority’s leadership and other officers

The Authority’s decision-making structures provide for increased challenge and overview. The Authority has in place a Performance and Scrutiny Board and a Stakeholder Planning Board, which afford greater opportunity for Members to discuss issues in more detail and provide support, leadership and challenge. The Corporate Advisory Group provides scope to consider a range of issues relating to governance and service delivery, including agenda management, budget, Service planning issues and future policy direction.

Role Profiles are in place for the FRA Chair, FRA Members and those involved in external bodies, e.g. Community Safety Partnerships.

The Authority’s Performance and Scrutiny Board meets on a quarterly basis and has in place an agreed work programme, which is reviewed regularly by the Chair and Service Executive Lead. The Board, primarily, considers the quarterly performance reports, Equality and Inclusion, specific operational updates, emerging areas from inspection or audit, together with a more detailed examination of a particular area of performance each quarter. The Board can also ‘call in’ decisions from the FRA or Audit and Governance Committee and undertake post or pre-implementation reviews where it would add value. The Board provides additional capacity to the Authority and the opportunity for greater constructive challenge on a range of strategic issues.

A Stakeholder Planning Board also meets quarterly with responsibility for monitoring consultation and communication with the public, businesses and other stakeholders including community groups and the voluntary sector. It considers the Authority’s involvement in key strategic partnerships and quarterly performance for Prevention and Protection.

The Authority has a [Local Pension Board](#) which was established as a result of the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 requiring all Authorities, including Fire and Rescue Authorities, to establish such Boards. The Board acts in a monitoring and scrutiny capacity on behalf of the Scheme Manager (the FRA) in respect of the Firefighters’ Pensions Schemes. The Board has an Independent Chair, representation on behalf of the employees and employer, an agreed Constitution and established work programme.

The Authority’s Section 41 Members (under Part IV of the LG Act 1985) report back to their respective District Councils on FRA business.

The FRA Constitution contains a [Scheme of Delegation](#) which was reviewed in March 2022, and sets out the decision-making powers and roles permitted to undertake these decisions. Reports submitted to the Authority have a section on delegated powers.

As mentioned above, the Authority has a Learning and Development offer supported by a Learning and Development Strategy, annual Development Discussions, an informal, but targeted, Learning and Development Schedule. Members have the opportunity to attend the LGA's two-day Fire Leadership Essentials Programme (up to two places per year). The Authority currently have six Members who have undertaken the Leadership Programme within the past 5 years,

Leadership development forms part of the Service's Annual Plan for 2022/23.

The below areas of improvement have been gathered from the 'Workforce / HR management' section of the Officer Assurance Statements.

New Areas for Improvement

- a. Personal review completion rates require improving.
- b. Job descriptions to be reviewed.

9. Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Managing risk

What we have done

A number of internal audit recommendations have been completed in 2019/20 to improve the risk management arrangements in place. All departmental and project risk registers have been reviewed for robustness.

The Authority has in place a [Risk Management Strategy](#) which was reviewed in June 2020, and developed in conjunction with the Service. During the review a decision was taken to split the combined strategy, policy and framework elements into separate documents.

Corporate Risk is managed at all levels within the Service, and separately by the Authority. The Service Corporate Management Board reviews risk at least quarterly. The Authority's Governance Co-ordination Group (GCG), which meets approximately six times per year, also monitors both Authority and Service Risks. A decision was taken by Members in autumn 2020 to combined the Authority and Service Risk Registers which is reported quarterly to the Audit and Governance Committee.

The CRMP Board designed and developed a new CRMP for SYFR and this was approved in January 2021. This is based on a revised methodology for how CRMPs are designed and takes account of a more comprehensive analysis of risk within the community to inform our service delivery activities.

Barnsley MBC and officers supporting the Authority have worked together to develop an annual learning and development session for Members of the Authority (including co-opted members). The session covers 'The Effective Audit Committee', 'The Role of Internal Audit and Risk Management', as well as information around GDPR. Feedback from Members on the session has been very positive in terms of reinforcing their existing knowledge and providing them with the skills to ask questions that are more detailed about risk. The Authority's Lead Member for Risk Management, is the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. The last session was held in October 2021, and the next one will take place during the municipal year 2022-23.

The Medium Term Financial Plan is approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority and reviewed every year.

Risks that sit on the Corporate Risk Register are reported to the FRA Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis with good internal risk management controls.

Managing Performance

Quarterly Corporate Performance Report (reported to the Corporate Management Board, Performance and Scrutiny Board and Annual Corporate Performance Report (reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority), are based upon the Service's suite of Performance Measures. These reports have now been developed to include in-depth analysis and associated commentary, provided by District Managers, to show the actions they are taking in their areas to improve performance.

The Business Intelligence Team continues to work with local teams to provide Supporting / Diagnostic Measures, which sit below Corporate Performance Measures. The second phase of the review will take place during 2021/22 and will concentrate on the Supporting / Diagnostic Level Performance Measures, which sit below the Corporate Level Measures.

Performance reports have been made more dynamic and interactive for Managers and Fire Authority Members, using Microsoft PowerBI reporting software. Work is ongoing to implement more detailed performance management information at department levels. Performance management is also now devolved into the new internal governance structure.

Station personnel now have access to dynamic Station Level Reports consisting of dashboards and maps within ORCA. The reports show the distribution of incidents through charts and maps, and allow the users to drill down to specific areas of concern within their area. Performance Review Meetings for Emergency Response were introduced in March 2019. These take place on a quarterly basis and provide an opportunity for District Group Managers to have open and honest discussion about the previous quarter's performance and the proactive actions and measures that have been employed and the outcomes. These discussions take place with Heads of Function.

The CIPFA's Financial Management Code of Practice was introduced on the 1st April 2021. The Authority has assessed itself against the requirements code which shows that the current financial management arrangements in place meet its requirements. This assessment is subject to an ongoing review with any improvements being implemented accordingly.

In addition, the Authority also undertook an assessment to gain assurance against the new Value for Money framework. The VFM external audit opinion is still awaited for 2020/21 and will inform the 2021/22 assessment.

Robust internal control

A Service Internal Control Management Assurance Framework has been developed, and is used to measure the governance arrangements and identify any risks to achievement. One of the governance domains included in the framework is risk management, and found no significant risks. A recent review of the Corporate Risk Management arrangements took place in 2020/21, with improvements being rolled out across the Service.

As part of the review, research has been undertaken into how other fire and rescue services and organisations manage risk, to help us identify best practice. A gap analysis was carried out to assess the Service's compliance against the risk management guidance contained in BS ISO 31000:2018 and the Government's Orange Book.

An outcome of the review is the merger of the Authority's and Service's Risk Registers into one document, to introduce a more streamlined approach. This reduces the duplication that existed between risks residing on both registers and the time taken to update them. The benefits of a combined Authority and Service Risk Register and reporting approach are that it enables better focus on the key risks that present a threat (or opportunity) to the delivery of strategic objectives, and provides members with clear information to undertake their assurance role. Research has begun into the procurement of risk management software. This would enable the automation of key corporate risk management processes and deliver improved real-time information to inform decision-making. The review is still ongoing. Future work will include investigating the best way of managing risk appetite.

The Joint Authorities Governance Unit (which is part of Barnsley MBC) provides support to the Fire and Rescue Authority and Service (as well as other clients). An annual Customer Satisfaction Survey is undertaken across all clients and the feedback collated and shared. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Survey was not circulated in 2020. However, this was reviewed and revised and circulated in early autumn 2021 to ensure that suggestions for improvement and different ways of providing the services are taken on board.

Business Continuity is a particular strength within the Service. The lead officer for Business Continuity is the Vice Chair of the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) Business Continuity Group and Chair of the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Business Continuity Group. All sections of the Service and Authority have Business Continuity Plans, which are regularly reviewed and tested. Regular external emergency planning exercises are carried out in conjunction with partners. A Community Risk Register for South Yorkshire is maintained by the Local Resilience Forum, of which the Service is a member. This is used to inform Corporate Risk management within the Service, alongside other sources of risk information both locally and nationally. The effectiveness of these arrangements has been demonstrated with the combined LRF response to the Covid19 pandemic. The Service has reviewed plans in light of Covid-19 lessons learned.

Department managers attend the annual business continuity meetings and attend relevant training as appropriate. This year staff have completed a refreshed business continuity module in LearnPro.

Business continuity plans are reviewed and tested in line with organisational requirements. This has been validated through our positive response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The HMICFRS Covid-19 audit was extremely positive and highlighted not only did SYFR maintain its statutory obligations, it has contributed to the safety of the community through the LRF.

In addition, the Service has in place an ambitious Property Capital Programme that will need to be appropriately forward planned and resourced to minimise any implications for service delivery. The Service has been actively reviewing its staffing structures, contracting / supply chain and project / client management arrangements. This will improve value-for-money and ensure robust management of the design, scheduling and delivery of each scheme; so that schemes consistently meet future business needs. This is being supported by the changes from the Estates team restructure in 2021/22.

A Service Improvement budget is now being used to progress areas from Grenfell findings and HMICFRS areas for improvement. In 2021 the Grenfell Action Implementation Team was set up to provide targeted support for SYFR's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report. Progress against this work is reported through SYFR and Fire Authority meetings. At the time of writing the last Service Improvement update (June 2022) explained that Following analysis of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 1 Report Overview, 7 actions were determined to be of high priority. Of these, 4 are completed, 2 are on schedule and 1 is behind schedule.

A number of these areas for improvement are reliant on the recommended changes in legislation that to date have not occurred. Although some of these areas are not aimed at FRSs specifically, SYFR continue to work with responsible persons and encourage improvements based on the recommendations from the GTI report. However, in many areas the lack of legislation to enable enforcement is proving to be a significant barrier to achievement.

The recently formed Grenfell Actions Implementation Team (GAIT) is now in place and responsible for addressing the identified learning from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report. Although GAIT will work towards delivering the improvements and deliver presentations on the progress of this work directly to the FRA, an overview of progress will continue to be reported within the Service Improvement Board Update.

The decision has been made to include the remaining 23 recommendations from the GTI Phase 1 Report. Until now, most recommendations from the GTI report that have been placed on the Service Improvement Plan are for the attention of fire and rescue services'. Although these additional recommendations are not aimed at fire and rescue services', it is thought that SYFR may be able to influence this work by working with the managers and responsible persons of high-rise buildings.

The Authority receives its Legal Services from Barnsley MBC and, through the Monitoring Officer maintains a check on legality and ethical factors. The Clerk is required to report to the Authority any unlawful or potentially unlawful expenditure by Members or officers, and systems are in place for ensuring compliance with the Authority's Constitution and other accounting and financial standards.

RSM UK Ltd provide the Authority's internal audit services (from 1 April 2020).

The annual Internal Audit Plan will continue to be developed in consultation with management and members, and be risk-based and provide for flexibility to incorporate changes in priority throughout the year.

Transparency Data

The Authority has to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code, which requires public bodies to publish certain information. E.g. spending over £500. This information is available on the Service's website [here](#).

<http://www.syfire.gov.uk/performance/>

As previously mentioned, the Authority has a Corporate Advisory Group at which key corporate / strategic planning processes are considered in greater detail. All Members, the Service's Executive team and officers supporting the Authority, attend this Group. It has no decision-making powers.

To comply with UK data protection law, the Service have a dedicated Data Protection Officer. All relevant key policies have been re-visited as part of compliance, including the Data Breach Policy and Procedure, the Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy, the Data Protection Policy and the Data Subject Request Policy and Procedure. Information Governance updates, including FOI and GDPR is submitted to the Fire Authority Audit and Governance Committee on a six monthly basis. The Service have an Information Governance Committee that meets internally each quarter with representatives from all relevant departments. The minutes of which, feed into the Corporate Management Board.

Strong public financial management

The Authority has a robust financial planning framework in place which the Treasurer develops in conjunction with the Director of Support Services. A revised MTFP for 2021-24 was approved in February 2021, which included reviewing the financial planning assumptions to aid the understanding of the financial challenges, risks and uncertainties facing the Authority and demonstrate that the Service had an affordable and sustainable Plan.

Budget monitoring reports are submitted quarterly to the Authority and Members regularly monitor financial risk and levels of reserves.

The CIPFA Statement on The Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016) sets out five principles that define the core activities and behaviours that belong to the role of the Chief Financial Officer and the governance arrangements needed to support them. These are that the Chief Financial Officer should:

- Be a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the organisation's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest
- Be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer term implications, opportunities and risk are fully considered, and alignment with the organisation's financial strategy
- Lead the promotion and delivery by the whole organisation of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively
- Lead and direct a finance function that is resourced and fit for purpose
- Be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

The Authority had the following financial arrangements during the year which demonstrate compliance with the above key principles:

- The Chief Executive of Barnsley MBC is the Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- Barnsley's MBC Governance Unit, under the lead of Barnsley MBC's Executive Director (Core Services), provides strategic and governance support to the two Joint Authorities of Fire and the Police and Crime Panel, as well as other bodies.
- Barnsley MBC's Service Director Finance, provides the Authority's Treasurer (Section 151 Officer) role.
- The Service employs a Director of Support Services who is a member of the Service's Executive Team and responsible for leading the finance function within the Service and works closely with the Treasurer to deliver sound financial management across both organisations.
- Finance staff across both organisations are suitably qualified and experienced and have regular training as required to ensure continuing professional development. The Financial Regulations and Financial Procedures (FRA Constitution) were reviewed in March 2021.
- The Authority's Pay Policy Statement is submitted to the Authority on an annual basis and published on the Authority's [website](#).

New Areas for Improvement

The below areas of improvement have been gathered from the 'Risk Management' section of the Officer Assurance Statements.

- a. Annual plan priorities are now included in the functional plan process, namely priority number 2, 'Performance Information'. All heads of department are monitoring their work against this in 2022/23.
- b. The Authority is still awaiting the upgrade to the Tranman system which is due to be linked with the Police. This delays the performance monitoring and management information for fleet and will continue to be monitored in 2022/23.
- c. RPaC to consider reviewing the evidence of testing business continuity plans.

- d. Minor gaps for IOSH completion and availability of fire wardens for HQ.
- e. The Systel mobilising system still causes some challenges with its resilience. This is still being delayed and is currently with legal services, South and West Yorkshire to manage.
- f. A review of the devolved risk management will be carried out to ensure compliance.

10. Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency and audit to deliver effective accountability

Implementing good practice in transparency

The Authority has to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code, which requires public bodies to publish certain information, e.g. spending over £500. This information is available on the Service's website [here](#).

The Authority has an agreed [Constitution](#) which sets out in various documents how it operates, how decisions are made, roles and responsibilities and the procedures, which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens. Some of these processes are required by law, whilst others are a matter for the Authority to determine. The Authority's Constitution can be accessed via hyperlink above or at <https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/south-yorkshire-governance>. The Authority's [agenda and minutes](#) are also published on the website.

There is an undertaking to review the Constitution every three years (or when individual Parts require updating due to a change in policy, legislation etc.), and this is monitored by officers from both the Service and Authority. Updates to all Parts have been ongoing during 2021-22 and the Constitution has, largely, been updated.

The Authority and Audit and Governance Committee meetings are webcast live and archived [here](#). Papers for these meetings are published on the Authority's [website](#), along with Local Pension Board, Appointments Committee and Appeals and Standards Committee.

[Freedom of Information \(FOI\)](#) provides guidance on the release of information, and the Service regularly provides monitoring reports to the Audit and Governance Committee on the FOI requests it has processed.

The Service presents information governance reports to the Authority's Audit and Governance Committee. SYFR monitor and report the time taken to respond to FOIs and capture specific areas of interest. SYFR has an incident management policy in place for GDPR issues and data breaches and the policy gives guidance on what to do when breaches occur. There is a requirement to complete a data protection impact assessment for any high risk data processing arrangements and this is dealt with by the Service's data protection officer.

Staff are aware of the process for reporting data breaches, and Information and Governance staff work closely with the Data Protection Officer in their day-to-day work to ensure compliance with legislation, and consider the DP implications when responding to FOIs, and customer complaints. FOI training is included where appropriate, in the last year this has been internally focused FOI training to the Information and Governance team. External Customer Care training was received by Information and Governance staff in August 2021.

Implementing good practices in reporting

In respect of Scrutiny, the Authority has a separate Performance and Scrutiny Board. (The Fire and Rescue National Framework published in 2012 set a requirement for all FRAs to have separate scrutiny arrangements). A refresh of the Framework in 2018 did not amend or remove that requirement. The Board is supported by a work programme, which is regularly reviewed by the Chair and Service Executive Lead. The Board is underpinned by a Scrutiny and Assurance Protocol, which was developed in consultation with the Centre for Governance and Public Scrutiny. This is reviewed on an annual basis to take account of any national policy or legislative changes, or any local amendments.

The [Statement of Accounts](#) is submitted to the Authority and available on the website.

Assurance and effective accountability

The Authority is also required to produce an [Annual Statement of Assurance](#) as part of the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England. The purpose of this statement is to provide independent assurance to communities and the government that the service is being delivered efficiently and effectively. Whilst the Fire and Rescue National Framework sets out the Government's priorities and objectives for fire and rescue authorities in England, it does not prescribe operational matters as these are determined locally by fire and rescue authorities. In September 2021, the Authority published its 2020-21 Statement of Assurance and Annual Report. All Authority meetings have work programmes that ensure consideration of statutory and other reports in advance of meetings.

Whilst the Authority has not been subject to a peer review for a number of years, it has been held to account through various Internal and External Audits. As part of the Fire Reform programme, the remit of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was extended to include inspections of fire and rescue services. The Service was inspected as part of tranche three in the summer of 2019, with a further inspection completed in June 2022. Prior to this, a self-assessment was undertaken in readiness for the inspection.

The assessments consist of three pillars:

- The operational effectiveness of the service provided to the public.
- The efficiency of the service.
- The organisational arrangements (i.e. people) of the service.

Inspections result in a graded judgement of performance. The HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR was published in December 2019. The inspectorate found that SYFR are 'good' at providing an effective service to the public. SYFR are 'good' in the efficiency of services and making the best use of resources. HMICFRS also found that SYFR are 'good' at looking after its people. The full inspection report can be found [here](#). A Covid-19 specific inspection took place in 2020, which has positive outcomes and highlighted not only did SYFR maintain its statutory obligations, it has contributed to the safety of the community through the LRF.

Following the first inspection a robust monitoring process was set up for HMICFRS Areas for Improvement (AFIs). This included the creation of the Service Improvement plan, and the utilisation of the Service Improvement Board to monitor and manage the actions and their progress. The 2019 HMICFRS inspection report for SYFR identified 17 Areas for Improvement. All of these areas for improvement have been determined to be high priority. At the time of the last FRA update (20 June 2022) of these priority actions, 12 are completed, 1 is on schedule and 4 are behind schedule.

2021 saw a new approach to Value for Money (VFM) which forms part of the Annual Report to those charged with governance. External Auditors are required to consider whether the

Authority and Service has put in place 'proper arrangements' for securing VFM. An assessment has been made against three specified reporting criteria; Financial Sustainability, Governance and Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. The Authority and Service has worked through the impact of these changes have responded including providing evidence accordingly to External Audit. The VFM Opinion from the External Auditors for 2020/21 is currently awaited, with any improvements/recommendations being implemented during 2022/23.

New Areas for Improvement

Nothing identified.

11. Areas for Improvement Summary

Principle	New Areas for Improvement
Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A project is already underway to embed the Core Code of Ethics in our work. b. SYFR has developed a new staff ‘Pledge’ that all new firefighters deliver during their trainee pass out parade. As yet this has not been broadened to include wider staff groups but members of SLT have signed up to the pledge. There is some national work on a Service ‘Oath’ that may link to our own pledge. We will remain aware of the national work on a Service ‘Oath’ that may link to our own pledge.
Principle B – Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As the SLT members change in the next year we will need to ensure these relationships with partners remain strong, particularly at the leadership level. b. The White paper could progress further partnership work which would require Service and FRA attention. c. We now have a regional procurement group to consider any regional opportunities. This will include planning and mapping the replacement and procurement of equipment. d. A collaborative estates debrief paper is due and once the findings are known we will respond accordingly.
Principle C – Defining Outcomes in terms of Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A new sustainability Committee will be added to the Service new internal governance meeting structure supported by the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer. Expected progress includes the introduction of a Green Plan and greater sustainability compliance.
Principle D – Determining the Interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. There are new property projects and programme role within estates team. This is bringing a more joined up approach to project management and expected to see further change towards this in 2022/23. b. We are aware that some teams need to upskill in this their project management skills once their restructures are complete in 2022/23.
Principle E – Developing the Entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Personal review completion rates require improving. b. Job descriptions to be reviewed.
Principle F – Managing Risks and Performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Annual plan priorities are now included in the functional plan process, namely priority number 2, ‘Performance Information’. All heads of department are monitoring their work against this in 2022/23.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. We are still awaiting the upgrade to the Tranman system which is due to be linked with the Police. This delays the performance monitoring and management information for fleet and will continue to be monitored in 2022/23. c. Resilience, Planning and Contingencies (RPaC) to consider reviewing the evidence of testing business continuity plans. d. Minor gaps for IOSH completion and availability of fire wardens for HQ. e. The Systel mobilising system still causes some challenges with its resilience. This is still being delayed and is currently with legal services, South and West Yorkshire to manage. f. A review of the devolved risk management will be carried out to ensure compliance.
<p>Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<p>Nothing identified.</p>

12. Review of Effectiveness

The Authority has a responsibility for conducting regular reviews of the effectiveness of its governance framework, including its risk management arrangements and system of internal control.

Governance arrangements are ultimately the responsibility of the Authority itself and the Audit and Governance Committee has a specific role in co-ordinating the process and ensuring that any review of governance is timely, proportionate and linked to other key processes – such as the Statement of Accounts and the auditors' reports.

To provide Members of the Authority with the necessary advice and guidance on governance, an officer Governance Co-ordination Group is in place, chaired by the Deputy Clerk and comprising of senior managers supporting the Authority, Barnsley MBC (on behalf of the four South Yorkshire Local Authorities), and the Service with responsibilities for aspects of the governance framework. The testing and self-assessment processes have been co-ordinated by the Group, and the Annual Governance Statement has been prepared by officers for approval.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the governance framework has been accomplished in several different ways:

Through the normal ongoing business of the Authority

- Meetings of the Authority and its committees
- Review and re-statement of objectives and performance targets
- Regular reporting of performance
- Budget monitoring and consideration of the Authority's Statement of Accounts
- Approval of a Code of Corporate Governance
- Review of the Authority's role and involvement in external partnerships, including Community Safety Partnerships and other relevant partnerships, e.g. health, children and young people etc.
- Formal approval of updates to financial regulations, standing orders and scheme of delegation
- Updating of the Members' Allowance Scheme
- Monitoring the performance of Chief Officers

Through formal processes of independent assurance

- The work of the internal audit team and the HoIA Annual Report (including assurance opinion)
- The external auditor's reports and studies
- The work of the Appeals and Standards Committee

By the adoption of the Internal Control Management Assurance Framework

- Self-assessment of compliance against the governance domains identified
- Identification of risks RAG rated and with mitigating actions and completion dates
- Regular review and monitoring of compliance and progress against the actions identified.

By the adoption of Risk Management

- Risk monitoring within the Service
- Maintenance of an Authority and Corporate risk register
- Joint reporting to Members
- Annual risk management learning and development for Members

By participating externally in processes which enhance the quality of governance

- Participation in national Fire Finance Network and regional meetings
- Participation in the HMICFRS inspection programme.
- Participation in the Association of Metropolitan Fire and Rescue Authorities (AMFRA).

- Participation in the NFCC Information Governance Group
- Participation in the regional Yorkshire and Humber Information Governance Group
- The Authority has Member representation on the following bodies:
 - Local Government Association Fire Services Commission.
 - Yorkshire and Humberside Employers' Association.

Through other processes in support of the main review

- Officer assurance statements have been sought from within the Service and the Authority.
- Officer Governance Co-ordination Group.
- Various SYFR internal Boards and Groups e.g. IRMP Board; Information Governance Group.
- A review of minutes
- A review of compliments and complaints received
- Monitoring the actions of other Authorities in establishing and strengthening good governance

The Audit and Governance Committee has overseen the whole process of review, and this statement is for the purpose of advising the Authority on the implications of the review, including a plan to address weaknesses and ensure that continuous improvement takes place.

13. Head of Internal Audit's Assurance Opinion

The following has been provided by the Authority's Internal Auditor – RSM UK:

Topics judged relevant for consideration as part of the Annual Governance Statement.

Based on the work we have undertaken on the organisation's system of internal control; we do not consider that within these areas there are any issues that need to be flagged as significant control issues within the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

The organisation has an adequate and effective framework for risk management, governance and internal control. However, our work has identified further enhancements to the framework of risk management, governance and internal control to ensure that it remains adequate and effective.

RSM UK's full Annual Report 2021/22 was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 May 2022 and can be viewed [here](#) (see Item 11).

14. Significant Governance Issues

The review of effectiveness has generated a number of governance issues for strengthening and improvement during 2021-22.

These are summarised below:

HMICFRS Service Improvement Plan

Following the 2018 HMICFRS inspection where SYFR were rated 'good' in the Effectiveness, Efficiency and People pillars on the inspection framework, a Service Improvement Plan was implemented based on the recommendations with the report. The plan evolved to include areas for improvement that SYFR were required to address from the HMICFRS State of Fire reports, HMICFRS COVID-19 inspection and Grenfell Tower report. The progression of the Service Improvement Plan is to continue monitoring the remaining areas for improvement and to capture the new 22/23 areas for improvement.

Fire Reform White paper – Governance

The Home office released the Fire Reform White Paper in May 2022. The paper is open for consultation until 26 July 2022 and will include feedback from the FRA and SYFR. The resulting decisions and impact of the paper will affect SYFRA to some extent and will require change.

Core Code of Ethics

A project is underway to embed SYFR's Core Code of Ethics into the Service's work. SYFR had developed a new staff 'Pledge' that all new firefighters deliver during their trainee pass out parade. The project is progressing well with the creation of a stakeholder group to put together a clear gap analysis and plan of action.

Regional Procurement

A regional procurement group has been established to consider any regional opportunities. This will include planning and mapping of the replacement and procurement of equipment. The group has met twice and established a forum for regional discussion.

Sustainability

A new Sustainability Committee is to be added to SYFR's new internal governance meeting structure, which will be supported by the recruitment of a new Sustainability Officer that is now in place. Progress has started on the introduction of a Green Plan and greater sustainability compliance.

Embedding Consistent Project Management

A new property projects and a programme role has been appointed within the Estates Team, which will bring a more joined up approach to project management. Further change towards this is expected in 2022/23. On 29 June 2022, the draft project framework was released for internal consultation, which included feedback requests from the new Estates Team.

Annual Plan Priorities

The priorities of the Annual Plan are now included in the functional plan process, in particular priority number 2 'Performance Information'. All Heads of Department are monitoring their work against this in 2022/23. Work is underway with ACFO Strelczenie and CFO Kirby to ensure the Annual Plan 2022-23 priorities and monitoring are embedded and focused on at the meetings of the Corporate Management Board.

Signed:

Councillor Tony Damms
Chair
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Chris Kirby
Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue

Neil Copley
Treasurer
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority