



SOUTH YORKSHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE  
AUTHORITY

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT**  
**2020-21**

**FINAL VERSION**

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## **1. Scope of Responsibility**

The 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 has been revised 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. Members approved the amended Code at their meeting held on 13th May 2019, and it will be reviewed in March 2022 or 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.

## **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 Service has adopted a 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. It is an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Authority's aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. A robust first assessment of the principal risks facing the authority's performance and achievement of objectives has been carried out in 2020/21. Incremental reviews take place to monitor the ICMAF and associated risks and actions.

#### **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 Service's behaviours (i.e. our identifiable characteristic traits) have been developed by staff and reflect what means the most to them, and these are '**Honesty, Integrity and Respect**'.

All our staff are expected to display these behaviours every day in everything they do. The overall Vision for both the Authority and the Service is '**Making South Yorkshire Safer and Stronger**'.

##### **Aspirations**

- Be a great place to work
- Put People First
- Strive to be the best

##### **What we have done:**

- The service has continued 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, values 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 now included in the LearnPro online induction process.
- 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 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.
- Codes of Conduct and Register of Interests are in place for Members and Officers that set out the behaviours expected of all employees and reinforce its values and standards. The Member Code of Conduct was reviewed in March 2021. The Appeals and Standards Committee exists to deal with any breaches of ethics / behaviour.
- The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and supporting documents include reference to the Bribery Act and aligns itself with contemporary policies and procedures. These were last reviewed in December 2019, and are currently being re-visited (May 2021). A Performance Management Policy is in place and regularly reviewed and updated.
- A new five year People Strategy was introduced in 2018, 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.

- 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. An associated action plan is being delivered under the direction of the Equality and Improvement Board. This is scrutinised by the Performance and Scrutiny Board.
- The EDI post has been re-established to ensure the services focus on EDI is maintained to deliver the Strategy and working across the organisation on actions to address the identified gaps. We have just secured agreement to make this a permanent role within SYFRS which will really enable us to fully embed EDI.
- We have ensured compliance with the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirement. The service has participated in all EDI consultations with the NFCC.
- 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.
- All new projects or initiatives are supported by an Equality Analysis where appropriate (formerly Equality Impact Assessments). Further training and awareness around the importance and production of appropriate Equality Analysis is planned within the Service. Updated equality, diversity and inclusion training has been delivered during 2021-21 and FRA Members have received two sessions – one in October 2020 around EDI Essentials and one in March 2021 around Equality analysis. FRA Members have also been granted access to the Services e-learning (LEARNPRO) system online.

## 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:-  
<https://meetings.southyorks.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1&zTS=D>
- The Authority and Audit and Governance are webcast live and available on the website afterwards. The webcasts are available online 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 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021** - Since the relaxation of the restrictions in June 2021, public meetings have resumed physically 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 meetings have been recorded (audio) but the equipment was not available to live-stream the meetings (webcast). Public attendance is allowed by pre-registering interest to attend. This helps to limit the numbers.

- A report on the Performance Review system for staff was presented to Performance and Scrutiny Board in March 2021. “Orca” the new business intelligence-reporting site is now live. An electronic and revised version of the Performance report will be placed on Orca for the fire authority to view. Power BI is also developed and able to produce LPI reports in a number of areas of service delivery.
- 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 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements, and the Service have no known issues of significance. Regular reports on the associated action plan are presented to the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA). Staff have had the necessary training and are aware of how to report breaches. There is regular contact and communication with the DPO to ensure that any GDPR issues are picked up and actioned.

### **New Areas for Improvement**

- a. The new business intelligence-reporting site is now live. An electronic and revised version of the Performance report will be placed on Orca for the fire authority to access regularly. A plan is in place for the roll-out and the effective implementation of this online performance reporting system in 2021/22, including providing training and support to Authority members and SYFR departments.
- b. Performance Management is an area that has been reviewed with regular reports to the FRA on the progress of this work. A new internal 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 will be clearly defined in the new meeting structure, terms of reference and the new reporting on corporate performance will commence from April 2021.

## 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 has communicated its purpose, 10 year vision and intended outcomes for its communities, and published its' latest Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) and Annual Service Plan, both of which were approved by the [FRA on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021](#). Alongside the development of the IRMP financial scenario planning took place, considering our funding settlement from Central Government. An updated 3 year MTFP 2020-23 was subsequently presented to the Authority for approval in November 2019. The papers relating to our Financial Performance for the year ending 31 March 2021 and the 2021/22 Council Tax Setting can be found [here](#). (see Item 13)
- 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 now has a Joint Community Safety Department consisting of a range of SYFR and SY Police staff. These staff are 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 Fleet Strategy and performance framework has been agreed. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be developed to support the monitoring and reporting of performance. 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. The training work stream has delivered thousands of pounds of savings for both SYFR and SYP primarily through the delivery of training courses for one another.
- 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, and the approval in principle of a business case for regional Command Support Units. SYFR have recently jointly procured regional PPE / Fire kit and joint procurement arrangements, with plans to develop co-procurement further within the region.



- 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. It is anticipated that over the forthcoming financial year the Fund will reduce to a zero balance.

## 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 subsequent minutes of all meetings are placed on the Authority's [website](#).

A regular e-newsletter is produced by the Fire and Rescue 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 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 each year, which outlines the issues it will focus upon.

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 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The outcome of the most recent IRMP consultation, which involved surveys, focus groups and consultation with stakeholders and staff was reported to the [Fire and Rescue Authority on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021](#). Although the IRMP has been approved and published, an IRMP board continues to meet for internal stakeholders to monitor the progress of the IRMP 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.

A Community Advisory Group has been set up on a trial basis as a way of getting ongoing feedback on the service's work from a broader range of local people. It is intended that the group will meet twice a year. In addition, other new ways of enhancing consultation reach will be considered as part of consultation on the new IRMP planned for later this year.

## Service User Feedback

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



Committee on a regular basis. During 2019/20 we worked with 2 local Universities to improve our HSC surveys and analyse the results to help inform our prevention activities.

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. 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.

### **New Areas for improvement**

- a. A 2021/22 review of the service's Information, Projects, Governance, Data and Performance teams, is in place to establish a dedicated, engaging and proactive Service Improvement team. This Service Improvement team will strengthen the service's response to governance and collaboration opportunities.

## **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 IRMP, published in January 2021
- 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 IRMP, which considers the means by which operational response to incidents will be delivered whilst meeting significant financial challenges. The IRMP 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 documents relating to the IRMP consultation can be found here (see [item 11 – Appendices B & C](#)).
- The Service has a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and Approved Capital Programme. The MTFP is set for 2021-2024 and can be found [here](#). 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 these are currently being reviewed and updated.

### **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 IRMP have delivered anticipated outcomes and benefits.
- A report on the Round 3 SSCR Fund SROI will be presented to a future Fire and Rescue Authority.

- 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 boards, so they can measure progress in delivering intended outcomes. A full review of the Performance Management Framework has been conducted in conjunction with key stakeholders and approved by the FRA in Feb 21. This includes measures relating to financial management.
- The HMICFRS in their inspection did comment one area for improvement is how evaluation of partnerships takes place and especially the financial benefits realised. In 2020 an external evaluation was commissioned for the SYP SYFR collaborations, and it included positive Social Return on Investment (SROI) assessments.
- A SYFR Benefits Realisation approach was approved in June 2020, which implemented a consistent approach to identifying and monitoring benefits for SYFR projects and programmes. This approach applies to new projects or programmes. This included the introduction of benefits profiles, maps and workshops. To date, 11 projects or programmes have received some form of benefits realisation analysis.

### **New Areas for Improvement**

- a. Update our Environmental Policy – carried over from 2019/20.
- b. Review the Performance Management Framework to include environmental/ sustainability targets.
- c. Embed our benefits realisation approach, utilising the resource expected from the Service Improvement Team review to improve project governance and outcomes.

## **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 Service's Corporate Management Board or Business Change SLT meetings for approval and regular monitoring.

### ***Planning interventions***

A forward register (work programme) is in place for all FRA meetings, which are regularly reviewed at the Service's Corporate Management Board. Reports such as the Annual Statement of Accounts, Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Budget Monitoring are submitted on a regular bi-monthly 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 appointed and the collaboration project is well established. Work has progressed on the relocation of the Police Paint and Body Shop to Eastwood, Rotherham and both police and fire ICT departments are working towards delivering the 'one' fleet management system (Tranman) project.
- A vehicle telematics project is also being progressed utilising a Police Regional Procurement contract.
- Co-location of SYFR / SYP staff at Maltby Fire Station and allowing Yorkshire Ambulance Service to develop touch down points on our stations as required
- The development of non-project work streams, such as training and equality and diversity.

The Governance Co-ordination Group, consisting of officers from the Authority and Service, 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). The most recent session took place in February 2020, but there are plans to deliver these again in autumn 2021, including new members.

### ***Optimising achievement of intended outcomes***

As mentioned above, 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.

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. It is anticipated that over the forthcoming financial year the Fund will reduce to a zero balance.

### **Monitoring**

- 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.

### **New Areas for Improvement**

- a. The general work around collaboration has been impacted by the pandemic, but a review of the team and roles that can support the progress of collaboration ideas will aim to increase the number of initiatives being considered by the service as we move forward.

## **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 was 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. Learning and development takes many forms – including the Corporate Advisory Group meetings, visits to Stations, engagement with Service Leads, the LGA Annual Fire Conference and LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Programme.<sup>1</sup>

**Update 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 – Member Learning and development has resumed, but sessions are being held virtually to reduce travel and maximise attendance.**

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. Because of the progress made in this area the Authority was re-awarded Member Development Charter Status in February 2016. Given the changes to Member Learning and Development, capacity and austerity measures, the Authority decided not to go for re-assessment in 2019. The situation is being kept under review.

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.

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<sup>1</sup> The LGA Fire Conference in March 2021 was held virtually over 4 days. There have been no LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Programmes due to the COVID pandemic. These are anticipated to resume from June 2021.

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.

The HR Function Review that was completed in the latter part of 2018 has been fully embedded. This has ensured clarity of roles and responsibilities and further training and development has been completed to ensure staff have transitioned into their roles effectively.

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.

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?'** Copies are available via the Service Intranet.
- **Member visits / interaction with the Service** take place on a regular basis, e.g. visits to Stations<sup>2</sup>, 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 Board has been set up to lead strategic workforce planning. The Board consists of members of the Executive Team, Heads of Function, the HR Business Partners (OD & ER) and rep bodies.

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<sup>2</sup> During 2020, and the COVID pandemic, physical visits to Fire Stations have not taken place.



## ***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. Since 2014, the Board has overseen the Authority's Stronger, Safer, Communities Reserve (SSCR) Grant Fund, and the outcomes of the various projects funded. The work in this area has now concluded and a report on the residual funds will be considered.

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 2021, 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<sup>3</sup> (up to two places per year). The Authority currently have six Members who have undertaken the Leadership Programme within the past 5 years,

### **New Areas for Improvement**

- a. Areas of improvement include providing more support and training for the data quality audit process, in order to increase the accuracy of IRS returns at the point of submission by operational personnel.
- b. The service will publish the 2021 Employee Code of Conduct, provided a refreshed and robust code.

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<sup>3</sup> Due to the COVID pandemic, the LGA Fire Leadership Essentials Programme did not run during 2020.

## **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 combine the Authority and Service Risk Registers which is reported quarterly to the Audit and Governance Committee.

The IRMP Board designed and developed a new IRMP for SYFR and this was approved in January 2021. This is based on a revised methodology for how IRMPs 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 in February 2020, and the next one will take place during the municipal year 2021-22.

### ***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 are now being further 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 first phase of an in-depth review of South Yorkshire's (SYFR's) Performance Management Framework was undertaken during 2020/21. This focussed on the Corporate Level Performance Measures. The Corporate Level Performance Measures were approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority on 22 February 2021. 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 are being made more dynamic and interactive for Managers and Fire Authority Members, using Microsoft PowerBI reporting software. A plan is now in place 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. The reports show the distribution of incidents on 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.

In 2019 the CIPFA Financial Management Code (FM Code) was released with the intentions that Authorities should be demonstrating, by 31 March 2021, working towards compliance. Financial year 2021/22 was intended to be the first full year of compliance, with compliance in a way that is appropriate and proportional to the Authorities own circumstances. The FM Code identifies the risk to financial sustainability and introduces an overarching framework of assurance which builds on existing financial management good practice. The authority and service is working to establish a baseline position against the code, which will result in an action plan and schedule for appropriate and proportional compliance.

### ***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 this was reviewed in 2018, 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 will be 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 chairs the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) 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 will review its plans in light of 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.

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 will be set up to provide targeted support for SYFR's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report. A number of vacancies within the Business Fire Safety team remain following several recruitment attempts.

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<sup>st</sup> 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](#).

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 the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) on 25th May 2018, the Service appointed a dedicated Data Protection Officer. All relevant key policies have been re-visited as part of GDPR compliance. Data Protection audits of stations and departments have been conducted. An Information Governance update, including FOI and GDPR is submitted to the Fire Authority Audit and Governance Committee meeting on a six monthly basis. A Data Sharing Policy and Data Transfer Policy exists, as well as Information Sharing guidance for staff.

### ***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 November 2020, 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.
    - The South Yorkshire Joint Authorities Governance Unit, under the management of Barnsley MBC's Executive Director (Core Services), provides strategic and governance support to the two Joint Authorities of Fire and Pensions, the Police and Crime Panel, the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority (and associated Committees) as well as other bodies. Barnsley MBC's Service Director – Finance provides the Authority's Treasurer (Section 151 Officer) role.
    - The Fire 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**

- a. There is a clear link between data and performance and risk management processes. Service Performance framework is being reviewed to ensure Service and LPIs are relevant and embedded within Service and functional plans. 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.
- b. 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 will be set up to provide targeted support for SYFR's response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report.
- c. In January 2021 a new, joint Authority and Service corporate risk register was approved. 2021/22 will see the embedding of this approach, as well as the continued review of the Risk Management Framework to identify further areas for improvement. Work has started in this area with regards to risk appetite.



- d. The authority and service is working to establish a baseline position against the CIPFA financial code, which will result in an action plan and schedule for appropriate and proportional 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 [agendas 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.

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 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, such as a recent FOI overview session at the Yorkshire & Humber Information Group.

### ***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 2020, the Authority published its 2019-20 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. 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

The Authority's Member Learning and Development arrangements were subject to national assessment in 2016, which resulted in the award of Regional Charter Status for the second time. The Authority is the only FRA in the Yorkshire and Humberside region to have attained this award. The Authority was due to be re-assessed in autumn 2019, but Members took the decision not to go forward due to capacity, cost and other priorities. This decision will be kept under review.

This year there is 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. There will be three specified reporting criteria – Financial Sustainability, Governance and Improving Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. The Authority and Service will work through the impact of these changes and respond appropriately and compliantly.

## **New Areas for Improvement**

- a. The Service Improvement Review is expected to provide adequate resources moving forward to cover HMICFRS action planning, the outcomes from Grenfell and the Annual Plan – with priorities 1 to 6, and priority 9 all currently supported by staff within the Service Delivery Support department. It is recognised there will be a need to move towards a drive for continual improvement.
- b. The Service and the Authority will work through the impact of the financial Value for Money (VFM) changes and respond appropriately and compliantly.



## 11. Areas for Improvement Summary

<u>Principle</u>	<u>New Areas for Improvement</u>
Principle A – Behaving with Integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of the law	<p>a. The new business intelligence-reporting site is now live. An electronic and revised version of the Performance report will be placed on Orca for the fire authority to access regularly. A plan is in place for the roll-out and the effective implementation of this online performance reporting system in 2021/22, including providing training and support to Authority members and SYFR departments.</p> <p>b. Performance Management is an area that has been reviewed with regular reports to the FRA on the progress of this work. A new internal 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 will be clearly defined in the new meeting structure, terms of reference and the new reporting on corporate performance will commence from April 2021.</p>
Principle B – Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement	<p>a. A 2021/22 review of the service’s Information, Projects, Governance, Data and Performance teams, is in place to establish a dedicated, engaging and proactive Service Improvement team. This Service Improvement team will strengthen the service’s response to governance and collaboration opportunities.</p>
Principle C – Defining Outcomes in terms of Sustainable Economic, Social and Environmental Benefits	<p>a. Update our Environmental Policy – carried over from 2019/20.</p> <p>b. Review the Performance Management Framework to include environmental/ sustainability targets.</p> <p>c. Embed our benefits realisation approach, utilising the resource expected from the Service Improvement Team review to improve project governance and outcomes.</p>
Principle D – Determining the Interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes	<p>a. The general work around collaboration has been impacted by the pandemic, but a review of the team and roles that can support the progress of collaboration ideas will aim to increase the number of initiatives being considered by the service as we move forward.</p>
Principle E – Developing the Entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it	<p>a. Areas of improvement include providing more support and training for the data quality audit process, in order to increase the accuracy of IRS returns at the point of submission by operational personnel.</p> <p>b. The service will publish the 2021 Employee Code of Conduct, provided a refreshed and robust code.</p>
Principle F – Managing Risks and Performance through robust internal	<p>a. There is a clear link between data and performance and risk management processes. Service Performance framework is being reviewed to ensure Service and LPIs are relevant and embedded within Service and functional plans. 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.</p>

<p>control and strong public financial management</p>	<p>b. A service improvement budget is now being use to progress areas from Grenfell findings and HMICFRS areas for improvement. In 2021 the Grenfell Action Implementation Team will be set up to provided targeted support for SYFR’s response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry report.</p> <p>c. In January 2021 a new, joint Authority and Service corporate risk register was approved. 2021/22 will see the embedding of this approach, as well the continued review of the Risk Management Framework to identify further areas for improvement. Work has started in this area with regards to risk appetite.</p> <p>d. The authority and service is working to establish a baseline position against the CIPFA financial code, which will result in an action plan and schedule for appropriate and proportional compliance.</p>
<p>Principle G – Implementing good practices in transparency and audit to deliver effective accountability</p>	<p>a. The Service Improvement Review is expected to provide adequate resources moving forward to cover HMICFRS action planning, the outcomes from Grenfell and the Annual Plan – with priorities 1 to 6, and priority 9 all currently supported by staff within the Service Delivery Support department. It is recognised there will be a need to move towards a drive for continual improvement.</p> <p>b. The Service and the Authority will work through the impact of the financial Value for Money (VFM) changes and respond appropriately and compliantly.</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). In addition, the current COVID19 pandemic and its impact on the operations of the Service will obviously need to be reflected in the annual governance statement.

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 was submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 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 202-22.

**These are summarised below:**

**COVID-19 Response – Operational**

Robust decision making and effective business continuity planning is essential to ensure the continuity of service delivery during the response to COVID-19.

The Service's response and recovery planning will provide the framework for its activity during this period.

Organisational learning should be captured as an opportunity for wider service improvement, and to further strengthen our business continuity and resilience planning activities.

HMICFRS have been commissioned by the Home Secretary to carry out a themed inspection on the response to Covid-19. HMICFRS will inspect every fire and rescue service and determine:

- (a) how the fire sector is responding to the Covid-19 outbreak;
- (b) what is working well and what is being learned;
- (c) how the sector is dealing with the problems it faces; and
- (d) what changes are likely or appropriate for the fire and rescue sector as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **COVID-19 Response – Governance**

To ensure the continuation of governance, scrutiny and support for Members during the pandemic and restrictions.

### **HMICFRS Service Improvement Plan**

HMICFRS found that SYFR are 'good' in the Effectiveness, Efficiency and People pillars on the inspection framework.

However, the Inspectorate identified a number of areas for improvement that SYFR are required to address. Areas for improvement were also highlighted in the HMICFRS State of Fire report. Where appropriate these areas will also need to be addressed by SYFR. SYFR must develop and implement an improvement plan based on the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report.

Appropriate governance arrangements will be put in place to ensure the overall performance of SYFR against the areas for improvement contained within the Service Improvement Plan are scrutinised and challenged.

### **Fire Reform White paper – Governance**

The Home Office intend to publish a White Paper for consultation post-elections. The consultation will run for 12 weeks to the Autumn.

The White Paper will set out their reform agenda in further detail and explore the Phase 1 PCC Review proposals on fire governance. These include consulting on whether to mandate the transfer of fire and rescue functions to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner model across England where boundaries are coterminous unless there is an option to transfer fire governance directly to an elected Mayor.

This could have significant implications for the future of the Fire and Rescue Authority and the governance and scrutiny of the Service.

### **Update 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021**

The publication of the White Paper has been put back to Autumn 2021. Phase 2 of the Home Office review of Police and Crime Commissioners has been announced, but this is – largely – an internal review that will involve a small group of stakeholders and report to the Minister in November 2021.

### **Service Improvement Team**

A 2021/22 review of the Service's Information, Projects, Governance, Data and Performance teams, is in place to establish a dedicated, engaging and proactive Service Improvement team. This Service Improvement team will strengthen the service's response to governance and collaboration opportunities, as well as further embed the service's project management, programme management and benefits realisation approach across the service. An investment in business and data analysts is expected, with a subsequent proactive assessment of our data and

how we utilise this more effectively for robust performance management. This review will also provide further staffing resource to continuous improvement such as HMICFRS activity and Grenfell findings activities.

Signed:

Chair of the Authority

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

Treasurer