



ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20 **(Updated 3 September 2020)**

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 adopted a process during 2018/19 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 2018/19, and has been used to inform this AGS and GIP. 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. We regularly review and update strategies and policies in line with set timescales. 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 review of the Internal Control Management Assurance Framework considered Ethical Standards and Conduct. The associated risk assessment did not identify any areas as 'red' risks. An amber risk was identified in relation to staff training and awareness and suggested that further work could be undertaken. 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 FRA Risk Register and the Fire and Rescue Service Risk Register can be viewed [here](#). 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 2020. 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. 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 and will be refreshed in 2020.
- 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.
- 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 is being delivered from April 2019, and FRA Members will be included in this, when timely, alongside staff from the Service.

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](#).
- A report on the first year of the new Performance Review system for staff was presented to Performance and Scrutiny Board in July 2019.
- 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.

Areas for Improvement identified in the 2018/19 AGS

- *Human Resources (HR) and Occupational Health (OH) related policies are in the process of being reviewed and are published and communicated to staff as they are updated. There is still further work to do in this area however. The Service is compliant with the Gender Pay Gap reporting requirements.*

All HR policies have been reviewed and are now published on the SYFR Intranet. A HR policy matrix shows the review dates. All HR policies are scheduled to be reviewed bi-annually. OH policies still require updating.

- *Embed the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy once finalised.*

We have just secured agreement to make a temporary internal secondment into a permanent role, which will enable us to fully embed EDI. The new postholder will undertake intensive work, under the direction of the Equality and Inclusion Board, to develop the Strategy and working across the organisation on actions to address the identified gaps.

- *Further embed the aspirations and behaviours within the organisation to ensure everyone is displaying these in everything they do in their work, on a day-to-day basis.*

Work has already taken place to communicate the service's purpose, aspirations and behaviours to staff and these have been embedded in everything from document templates, performance measures and meeting reports, to fire station and departmental plans. Next, the service must ensure these elements are reflected in its service wide objectives and decision making, for example in its corporate plan and next IRMP.

New Areas for Improvement

- Lessons are being learned from the Authority's Appeals process and policies and procedures will be reviewed to ensure they remain fit-for-purpose.

HMICFRS areas for improvement

- To identify and tackle barriers to equality of opportunity, and make its workforce more representative, the service should ensure the value of positive action is well-understood by staff.

- The service should assure itself that it has effective grievance procedures. It should identify and implement ways to improve staff confidence in the grievance process.

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) in September 2019. 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 2020 and the 2020/21 Council Tax Setting can be found [here](#).
- 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 / 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 Departmental Plan 2019-2020 can be viewed [here](#). This plan is currently under review for 2020/21.
- A joint Head of Estates and Facilities Management has been appointed between SYFR and South Yorkshire (SY) Police to oversee collaboration under a shared strategy. The Estates Plan forms the Service Plan, with progress monitored via an action plan reported to the Service's Property and Project Board and the Fire and Rescue Authority. An Outline Business Case has been written to recommend further collaborative options within this area of work for consideration by senior leaders. A Full Business Case is planned for later in 2020 to develop these recommendations further.
- A joint Head of Vehicle Fleet Management Services has been appointed 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. A Collaboration Manager has been appointed by the Service to identify and capture collaboration opportunities and to evaluate and support ongoing collaboration projects.

- Outside of the main project, 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.
- Furthermore, regional Fire and Rescue collaboration has provided various efficiency and effectiveness benefits for SYFR and our regional partners. This includes a regional Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) procurement project, the creation and implementation of a business case for shared Command Support Units, and the standardisation of command packs across the region.
- The **Authority's Stronger, Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) Fund** which was introduced in 2014 set aside (over 3 rounds) £4m from the FRA Reserves to enhance partnership work on community fire safety, and invited community organisations and groups to bid for money to carry out projects that supported the Authority's priorities and objectives. A decision was taken by the Fire Authority in March 2020 in respect of unallocated funds. It was decided to enhance the SSCR's sprinkler fund element and fund a new wider partnership referral project to build in the strength of community engagement achieved by the SSCR funded projects.

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 Authority on 16 September 2019](#). The Fire Authority approved the report in principle, however with three caveats, which are set out in the [minutes](#) of the meeting. The caveats included exploring alternative methods to achieve the predicted budget shortfall and riding four on frontline appliances if the budget cuts could not be achieved. The outcome of the Fire Authority meeting was communicated to staff on 18 September 2019 via the Staff News on the Service's Intranet.

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 have been working 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 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.

Evaluation of our external communications campaigns takes place on a regular basis to determine the impact of our work.

Areas for Improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *Further development of consultation forums with under-represented groups*

Fire and rescue services have consulted on IRMPs for many years. Traditionally, they've done little to seek or respond to the views of local people away from these though. A clear message from HMICFRS is that this needs to change- engaging with the public more regularly about what they want from their fire and rescue service and using this information to shape service design.

The service has already used qualitative research to inform its fire safety campaigns, including considering the views of diverse groups, and providing good evidence of gathering a wide range of views as part of its 2019 IRMP consultation.

Next, it intends to use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods to ask the public some fundamental questions like "what do you want from your local fire and rescue service?" or "which services do you want your fire service to focus on" whilst our plans are still at a formative stage.

- *Continue to develop the programme governance arrangements and drive forward collaboration with all suitable partners*

We continue to work on various collaboration activities with both South Yorkshire Police e.g. joint community safety department and other fire and rescue services e.g. PPE.

New Areas for improvement

HMICFRS area for improvement:

- The service should ensure it effectively monitors, reviews and evaluates the benefits and outcomes of any collaboration.

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 vision and intended outcomes for its communities, and consulted on its latest IRMP, published in September 2019.
- 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](#).
- The Service has a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and Approved Capital Programme. This can be found [here](#). Besides the identification of corporate savings, managers were asked to identify 10% savings on non-pay budgets. These delivered on average £1.9m of savings a year across the MTFP. Regular monitoring and reports are received by the Fire Authority on the progress made against our Annual Budget, MTFP and Capital Programme.
- The **Financial Regulations** and **Financial Procedures** for the Authority form part of the FRA Constitution, and these were reviewed in September 2018 and October 2018 respectively.

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.
- Over 2019/20 the Service has delivered procurement savings of £1,328,425 through collaboration, better market intelligence, stakeholder engagement and improved procurement performance. There continues to be opportunities to identify further savings.
- 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 review of the SSCR funded community projects run since 2014 included a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis, undertaken using external consultants to provide feedback on the first two rounds. This research found that projects delivered through the Fund produced nearly £5m worth of benefits to local people. A report on the Round 3 SROI will be presented to 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. This includes measures relating to financial management.

Areas for improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *Further embed 'Our Story' vision, behaviours and aspirations in everything we do.*

Work has already taken place to communicate the service's purpose, aspirations and behaviours to staff and these have been embedded in everything from document templates, performance measures and meeting reports, to fire station and departmental plans. Next, the service must ensure these elements are reflected in its service wide objectives and decision making, for example in its corporate plan and next IRMP.

- *Develop a benefits realisation approach for projects to better identify, monitor and deliver benefits including social, economic and environmental benefits.*

This has been developed and is being trialled on new projects being initiated. Further work is required to embed throughout the programmes of work.

- *Update our Environmental Policy*

The Environmental Policy has not been reviewed. This action has been carried over to 2020/21.

- *Finalise the IRMP following consultation.*

The IRMP was published in September 2019 following consultation. Work is beginning to review the IRMP against the backdrop of the current financial situation/ Government settlement for 2020/21 and the impact of Covid19. There will be a robust consultation process, both internally and externally, as part of the development of the IRMP.

New Areas for Improvement

- Update our Environmental Policy – carried over from 2019/20.
- Development of a Sustainability Strategy
- Review the Performance Management Framework to include environmental/ sustainability targets.

HMICFRS areas for improvement:

- The service should ensure it has sufficiently robust plans in place which consider the medium-term financial challenges beyond 2020 so it can prepare to secure the right level of savings.
The Service updated its MTFP in November 2019 to ensure it has an affordable and sustainable plan for the period 2020-2023. This will continue to be reviewed.
- The service should assure itself it fully exploits external funding opportunities and options for generating income.
The Service is discussing with HMICFRS example options FRSs should be exploring.

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 all projects detailing options and benefits, and risks associated with those options. These are submitted to the Service's Corporate Management Board, Project and Programme Boards 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 Strategic 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 Fire and Rescue Service. Examples that have been progressed include:

- Joint Community Safety Team.
- Joint Head of Estates and Facilities Management and the creation of an Outline Business Case for collaborative options.
- 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.
- Joint Collaboration Project Manager appointed and supporting the delivery of the joint project with SYP
- 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

An 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. The most recent session took place in February 2020. In recent years, this session has been broadened out to include 'Effective Audit Committees' and issues around the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

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 Stronger, Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) Fund commenced in 2013/14 Following two successful rounds a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis was undertaken using

external consultants to provide feedback on the first two rounds. This research found that projects delivered through the Fund produced nearly £5m worth of benefits to local people.

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.

Areas for Improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *Evaluation*

An evaluation of our community safety programme and interventions was commissioned to determine the social value they deliver. Further work is required to develop wider evaluation of activities.

- *Developing and embedding benefits realisation processes.*

A benefits realisation approach has been developed and is being trialled with new projects. Further work is required to embed this across all Programmes of work.

New Areas for Improvement

- Corporate planning – further improvements to corporate planning processes, and the development of a Corporate Plan 2020-23. The Service's corporate objectives will be aligned to a revised performance management framework.
- Further develop and embed the evaluation of our activities and services delivered, building on the evaluation of our community safety work.

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. The Chair suggested introducing a 360 Degree Appraisal in the early part of 2019, but the take-up for this has been low. This will be re-visited during 2020-21. 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.

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 will be 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.

A Workforce Planning Board 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 second tier Workforce Planning Group has also been set up, consisting of Heads of Function and the HR Business Partners. A Workforce Planning Policy has been agreed and will be 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 and updated in 2018. A review of training has also been completed, and a series of actions are now underway 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 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, attendance at Middle Manager Engagement Days, youth engagement events etc. These are publicised, where appropriate, via articles and photographs on 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.

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 is now concluding and a report on the residual funds will be considered at the FRA to be held in September 2020.

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 is regularly reviewed, 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 and an evaluation reports submitted to the Annual Meeting. 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, including two of our newer Members who joined in 2019.

Areas for Improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *A new Workforce Planning Board to be set up to lead strategic workforce planning.*

This was completed during 2019/20.

The service has developed a new approach to workforce planning that includes a new policy and management process and strategic governance of the workforce planning arrangements to ensure we understand our requirements for the future and plan for these effectively.

The Workforce Planning Board consists of Heads of Function and the HR Business Partners.

New Areas for Improvement

HMICFRS areas for improvement

- The service should ensure its workforce plan addresses any gaps in capability which affect the availability of fire engines.
- The service needs to assure itself that all staff are appropriately trained for their role. It needs to ensure all staff keep their skills up to date and have a consistent method of recording when they have received training.
- The service should put in place an open and fair process to identify, develop and support high-potential staff and aspiring leaders.

The new workforce planning arrangements referred to above will ensure we address any gaps in capability which affect the availability of fire engines.

Our training needs analysis of all roles and the recording of staff training against this, along with our maintenance of competence (MOC) programmes, ensures we can keep track of training. The current situation with coronavirus has impacted on some training, but plans are in place to address the limited slippage in skills updates.

The service has a clear promotions policy and very open and transparent selection processes that are trusted by staff. Through the PR process, staff aspirations are discussed and high-potential staff are identified, encouraged and supported to progress.

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 Policy and Strategy](#) that has been developed in conjunction with the Service. This has been reviewed in early 2020 and a decision 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 Fire Governance Board, which meets approximately six times per year, also monitors both Authority and Service Risks. The Authority and Service Risk Registers are reported quarterly to the Audit and Governance Committee.

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.

Managing Performance

Monthly Corporate Performance Briefings (reported to the Corporate Management Board), Quarterly Corporate Performance Report (reported to the 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.

Performance reports are being made more dynamic and interactive for Managers and Fire Authority Members, using Microsoft PowerBI reporting software.

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.

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. However, a review of the Corporate Risk Management arrangements is due to take place in 2020/21, to see if improvements can be made.

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. The Satisfaction Survey also provides an opportunity for the Governance Unit to take on board suggestions for improvement and different ways of providing the services.

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.

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.

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.

Barnsley MBC Internal Audit provided the Audit and Governance Committee with an annual, independent assurance opinion toon the governance, risk and internal control framework. However, from 1st April 2020 the Authority's Internal Audit service will be no longer be provided by Barnsley MBC following a diligent procurement process. The service will be provided by RSM Risk Assurance Services LLP, Leeds and will realise a cost saving.

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](#).

The Annual Statement of Assurance and Annual Report were combined in one report for 2018/19, as agreed by Members.

<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 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 agreed and published an [Efficiency Plan](#) in October 2016, which enabled the Government to provide certainty over future funding until 2020. 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 2020-23](#) was published in November 2019, 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 as part of the overall refresh of the Constitution in 2018. The Authority's Pay Policy Statement is submitted to the Authority on an annual basis and published on the Authority's [website](#).

Areas for Improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *Embed timely performance management and data analysis reporting via software reporting tool.*

Performance reports are being made more dynamic and interactive for Managers and Fire Authority Members, using Microsoft PowerBI reporting software. These will continue to be developed into a suite of reports to enable effective performance management and scrutiny across all levels and all areas of the Service.

- *Embed the ICMAF within the Service and the Annual Governance Statement process.*

The ICMAF has been regularly updated and reviewed, the Officer Assurance Statement template for the Service has been updated to reflect the ICMAF domains. The risks and actions from the ICMAF have been considered as this AGS has been drafted.

New Areas for Improvement

- Review the performance management framework in line with the development of the Service's Corporate Plan, to ensure it enables monitoring and measurement of key priorities and objectives.
- Review the Corporate Risk Management Framework and arrangements, to identify where improvements could be made.
- Review the organisational learning outcomes from our response to Covid19 to inform and improve our Business Continuity planning and ways of working.

HMICFRS areas for improvement:

- The service should ensure it has sufficiently robust plans in place which consider the medium-term financial challenges beyond 2020 so it can prepare to secure the right level of savings.
- Update: The Service updated its MTFP in November 2019 to ensure it has an affordable and sustainable plan for the period 2020-2023. This will continue to be reviewed.
- The service should assure itself it fully exploits external funding opportunities and options for generating income.
- Update: The Service is discussing with HMICFRS example options FRSs should be exploring.

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 www.southyorks.gov.uk. 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.

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 Protocol, which was developed in consultation with the Centre for 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 2019, the Authority published its 2018-19 Annual Statement of Assurance. 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](#).

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 can be reviewed in 2020-21.

Areas for Improvement from the 2018/19 AGS

- *Follow up on any recommendations made from the HMICFRS inspection process, and ensure the organisation has appropriate structures and processes in place to manage improvement actions going forward.*

The Service has produced an improvement plan based on the recommendations made in the HMICFRS inspection report. This will be monitored and reported to the Fire & Rescue Authority.

A Group Manager for service improvement is now in post and part of this role is to manage the improvement actions going forward. This work will also include recommendations relating to Grenfell.

New Areas for Improvement

- Implement the improvement plan developed based on the recommendations made in the HMICFRS report.
- Undertake an internal audit into governance arrangements during Summer 2020.

11. 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. A full review of the Authority's governance arrangements was undertaken in 2016/17. This involved Fire Authority Members. The review was reported to the Annual Meeting of the FRA. A 'light-touch' review was undertaken in 2017 and reported to the Authority. The latter recommended minor amendments. There has been none since as the Authority governance arrangements remain fit for purpose.

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 based 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.

12. Head of Internal Audit's Interim Assurance Opinion

Based on the systems reviewed and reported on by Internal Audit during the year to date, together with management's response to issues raised as recorded in Section 2 above and Appendix A, I am able to give a **reasonable** (positive) assurance opinion regarding the effectiveness of the control, risk and governance environment.

Of the 8 completed pieces of work where an assurance opinion was provided, 7 received a positive opinion (i.e. substantial or reasonable). Therefore, 87.5% of completed work received a positive assurance opinion.

The number of implications reported was the same as in 2018/19 (15) and the implementation of agreed actions has been good with none that remain outstanding six months after the issue of the final version of the Internal Audit Report or that had more than three revisions to the original agreed implementation date.

Internal Audit work cannot provide absolute assurance and this opinion is based on the limited but risk-based work undertaken. The resources available to Internal Audit by default limit coverage and therefore the assurance opinion provided. As the Committee is aware, and somewhat based on this improving trend, the number of days for the 2019/20 audit year was reduced to 169.

The Authority and Service will be acutely aware that there remain significant financial and operational pressures to manage over the next few years. This period will inevitably bring with it further demands on the Service (and Authority) which will highlight significant risks and challenges.

It is ever more important therefore that the Authority and Service maintain and further improve the control, risk and governance arrangements in place to support change, innovation and maintain high standards of transparency and accountability.

The Authority and Service Senior Management will need to remain focussed that whilst implementing the necessary operational changes (particularly in relation to the revised arrangements in response to COVID-19) they maintain a sound control, governance and risk framework.

Internal Audit is aware of the extent and nature of overall scrutiny, oversight, inspection and challenge the Fire Service is subject to. Of continued importance will be to ensure the building of effective working relationships between the new Internal Audit provider and Service and Authority senior management to minimise the risk of duplication and to ensure audit resources are directed to the most important areas of risk. The liaison arrangements in place should ensure that Internal Audit is made aware of issues, developments or concerns at the earliest opportunity.

13. Significant Governance Issues

The review of effectiveness has generated a number of governance issues for strengthening and improvement during 2019/20.

These are summarised below:

1. Stronger Safer Communities Reserve (SSCR) governance arrangements

The Authority set aside a total of £4m from its reserves to support the most vulnerable in our communities, further promoting the Community Fire Safety agenda, enhancing partnership working and sharing data amongst partners. This enabled a focus of resources on priority areas and individuals.

2. Risk Management

Further embed risk management within South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to include:-

- A review of the Risk Management Framework to identify improvements that can be made to integrate risk management further into day-to-day working and decision making. Identify best practise and learning from other organisations.
- Set up a task and finish group to identify and assess options for the revised framework.

An internal audit of risk management arrangements will be conducted in January 2021.

3. Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Following the CPC Judicial Review judgement in April 2018, which found in favour of the Fire Brigades Union, South Yorkshire Fire Rescue became obligated to instigate due process to remove Close Proximity Crewing (CPC) from our service. The cessation of CPC being achieved through a full and comprehensive review of our Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

Fire and Rescue Authorities are required by the National Framework to produce a local IRMP that sets out the Authority's strategy in collaboration with other agencies, for reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents.

In South Yorkshire, the IRMP provides a flexible plan which will ensure the Service can operate within the uncertain financial future that it faces.

4. 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.

5. COVID-19 Response – Governance

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

6. 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.

An internal audit will be conducted in November 2020 which will review how the organisation has responded to the HMICFRS report to ensure actions are followed up.

The Authority proposes, over the coming year, to take steps to address the above matters to enhance the governance arrangements. The Authority is satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements identified in the review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of the next annual review.

Signed:

Chair of the Authority

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'R' followed by a long horizontal line.

Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a stylized 'M' and ending with a long horizontal line.

Treasurer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Coplay' followed by a stylized flourish.