

Audit and Governance Committee

DATE 29 November 2023

Community Safety Services Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Statement of Assurance 2022/23

Report by Matt Cook, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is RECOMMENDED to

Consider and approve the Community Safety Services, Statement of Assurance 2022/23 for publication. This document is procedural and not recommending any policy decision, strategy or project involving major change.

Executive Summary

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for England 2018 sets out a requirement for all fire and rescue authorities to provide annual assurance on financial, governance and operational matters through publishing an Annual Statement of Assurance. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services, Annual Statement of Assurance confirms that we are demonstrating due regard to the requirements included in the framework and the expectations set out in the authorities' risk management plans. It covers activities across the Service including Fire and Rescue response, Road Safety, Emergency Planning, Trading Standards and Gypsy and Traveller Services.

Exempt Information

2. No areas of exemption requested. Content will be public facing and open to public scrutiny.

About the Community Safety Services, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Statement of Assurance 2021/22

Purpose

3. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority is the designated Fire and Rescue Authority for the County of Oxfordshire. It has a primary responsibility to protect the community, reduce harm and save lives. The Chief Fire Officer and the Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety ensure the Council meets its legal and operational responsibilities to provide an effective fire and rescue service for Oxfordshire's communities.

4. The Community Safety Services, Statement of Assurance is published in line with statutory reporting requirements. It provides assurance against the four strategic areas of protection, prevention, response and people outlined in the Services 2022-23 Fire and Rescue, Service Delivery Plan.
5. The Statement of Assurance supports principles of good governance by ensuring transparency, regular reporting and public accountability across the Services strategic priorities. Information has been presented with “readability” and engagement in mind and will be available online.
6. The Statement of Assurance signposts readers to further information to support understanding of the Directorates activities and performance. For example, the CSS Directorates Annual Report 2022/23 which is submitted to this Committee for approval as a separate document. The Annual Report includes a more detailed breakdown of the types and numbers of incidents fire crews attended. Both documents support assurance and good governance enabling elected members and communities to scrutinise how outcomes are being achieved efficiently, effectively and in accordance with statutory requirements.

Aligning with Oxfordshire County Council’s Corporate Policies and Priorities

7. The Statement of Assurance is aligned directly to the Councils Vision, Values, Objectives and Strategic Priorities. The document highlights how Community Safety Services contribute in particular to the following strategic priorities:
 - 1) Taking action to address the climate emergency in the way we work
 - 2) Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire
 - 3) Prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents through our prevention and response work
 - 4) Supporting carers and the social care system through safeguarding and consumer protection
 - 5) Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential through education, work experience and fire cadets
 - 6) Engaging with our communities to play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
 - 7) Working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

Financial Implications

7. There are no new or additional financial implications arising from the Statement of Assurance. The document forms part of the annual procedural reporting process.

Legal Implications

8. There are no new or additional legal implications arising from the Statement of Assurance. The document forms part of the annual procedural reporting process.

Staff Implications

- 9. There are no new or additional resourcing implications. The document forms part of the annual procedural reporting process.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

- 9. There are no additional equality and inclusion implications. The Community Safety Services Directorate aims to ensure all areas of service delivery are considered within a risk based framework targeting those most vulnerable from harm. The Statement of Assurance contains references to initiatives designed to develop inclusivity within the Community Safety Services Directorate. All policies, procedures and working practices are assessed against an Equality Impact assessment. The Statement of Assurance document has been produced with accessibility and readability in mind.

Sustainability Implications

- 10. There are no sustainability implications within this proposal. Consideration has been given to limit environmental impact from printing and the publication will be made available to the general public as an online publication.

Risk Management

- 11. Community Safety Services activities are managed through robust national and local risk assessment frameworks. These include utilising and aligning with National Fire Chiefs Council guidance and National Fire Standards to manage operational and strategic risks. The Service also maintains a Directorate risk register and acts as the local authorities lead agency in business continuity, resilience, and emergency planning. The Service also Chairs the Local Resilience Forum, the CBRN (Chemical Biological Radioactive and Nuclear) group and engages in regular interoperability training with Category 1 and 2 responders. This report is not recommending any policy decision, strategy or project that would impact on the existing risk management strategy.

Consultations

- 12. There were no specific consultation requirements to producing the Community Safety Services, Statement of Assurance.

NAME Rob MacDougall, Director of Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer

Annex: Community Safety Services, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Statement of Assurance 2022-23

Background papers: CSS Annual Report, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Statement of Assurance 2022-23

Other Documents

- [Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Community Risk Management Plan, 2022-26](#)
- [HMICFRS Inspection Report 2021/22, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Effectiveness efficiency and people.](#)

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November 2023